Home Visit Policy and Procedure

LIME HILLS ACADEMY

Next Review Date September 2025

Policies/Documents referred to in this policy	Persons named in this policy
This policy **links to other school policies** on: Safeguarding Attendance Lone Working	Safeguarding team Designated Safeguarding Lead

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF *MUST* BE AUTHORISED BY A MEMBER OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM (THIS INCLUDES THE PRINCIPAL) PRIOR TO THE VISIT TAKING PLACE.

In addition, wherever possible parents/carers should be informed of the home visit prior to arrival; there will be exceptions to this, for example a visit to confirm that an absent child is at home when parents/carers are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition:

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent or carer in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

Aims
- At Lime Hills we recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is:
- To establish a partnership between parents/carers and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents/carers for the best interests of the child.
- To deliver home tuition and check ins to EBSA students or students on an adjusted timetable.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parents/carers. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with parents/carers to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school *or* where it would be difficult for a parents/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner.

- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school for a week or more, and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- To collect from or drop a child off at home where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a fixed term suspension or medical issue.
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).
- Some children will have a provision where tuition is provided in the home.

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents/carers and children, a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with. Other opportunities are to:
- Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the child.
- Meet family members that are important to the child.
- Talk about the child and their needs.
- To maintain learning where the child is not able to attend school including EBSA and Mental Health

Procedures

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.

Before the Visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents/carers to come into the school)
- Complete the Home Visit form ensuring it is signed a member of the Safeguarding team
- Discuss with the Safeguarding team whether it is deemed appropriate for the visit to be made alone or whether an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety.
- If required, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; home visits should be conducted in pairs where the safeguarding team believe there is a risk. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents/carers, with or without the child.
- Wherever possible make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send a letter.
- Refer to the **'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment' (appendix 1),** and inform reception of your intended location before departing for a home visit.

During the Visit

- Park in a well lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility (Parents/carers) or another responsible adult whom apparent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parents/carers are available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then **ONLY** if you deem it completely safe to do so and necessary.
- Do not enter a child's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the schools safeguarding team straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate a member of the safeguarding team will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure parent/carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the head teacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Be sympathetic but remain neutral. Don't get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation, do not gossip about the school or staff.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.

After the visit

- Complete Home Visit log on CPOMS to evidence visit
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the Safeguarding team on arrival back to school or on the phone if urgent.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

Making Safe Home Visits:
summary Before

- Complete/hand in, 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment'
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, if required.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.

- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going, has your mobile telephone number and your safe word is recorded on the Community Lone Working Risk Assessment.

During
- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.

Action to take if you are threatened
- If you are threatened or prevented from leaving stay calm and try to control the situation. Try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and not be enticed into an argument. Try

to diffuse situation by saying you will seek advice from a senior member of staff or colleague.

- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry.
- If staff attend as a pair wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived. Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties.
- If working as a pair agree a code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.
- The same code word should be used if you contact school to alert them that you are in danger and need support.
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately.

After

Report back in
school. or
If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the residence.

If you are concerned about your safety do not visit.

It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening home visit.

Safe word: To be agreed and recorded on the 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment'.

Community Lone Working Risk Assessment *Appendix 1*
WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT
Task being undertaken: - Lone Working Risk Assessment –
out of office Occupations:-. All Staff
Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk:- Safeguarding team aware of
named visit Date of assessment:- Any

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others aware Take mobile phone for communication
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency Advise team or partner where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	remote	Low	Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or public transport if available Post incident support
Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed or	Illness or injury	Remote	low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate

	injured				

		Take mobile communications			Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete injury at work protocol on return
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements

I have read and understand the Lone Working Risk

Assessment. My mobile telephone number is:

My safe word is:

Signed: _____

Date and time: _____