



**STAMFORD
PARK TRUST**

HOME VISIT POLICY, PROCEDURE AND RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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LEGAL FRAMEWORK/STATUTORY GUIDANCE:	See section 2

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1. Statement of intent

Stamford Park Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of trust employees when making home visits. It is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard both staff and students, who can be more vulnerable in these situations.

This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

The trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees.

The roles of some staff, including attendance teams, family support workers, learning mentors and child-centred support staff, are crucial to the overall performance of the trust. With this in mind, we have established this policy for any trust employee who is required to make home visits.

All work with students and parents should usually be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it may be necessary to make a one-off or regular home visit. For this reason, the trust believes that clear procedures must be in place and followed to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

2. Key Policies/Legislation

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies and documents including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality policy
- Community Lone Working Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education

3. Purpose

- The purpose of the home visit policy is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking them.
- To ensure that designated staff follow the correct procedures and policies prior, during and after carrying out a home visit.

- That necessary information has been obtained prior to home visit in order to carry out the risk assessment.
- A general risk assessment should be prepared to cover home visits.

4. 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.

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

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 student is at home when parents/carers are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Unannounced visits should be avoided wherever possible. However, they should be considered where there is a concern over the safety of a student such as unexplained absence of a vulnerable child.

Where there is a significant and immediate concern about the safety of a child the police should be contacted and a police welfare call requested.

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 student to enable the individual needs of the student to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents/carers for the best interests of the student.

5. Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to stay in contact with parents/carers, but within their home environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
When students are being temporarily educated at home
- 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 student 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 student is safe if they are absent from school for 3 days or more, and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response and where we may have 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 or drop off a student at home where there are concerns for a student's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- To drop off or collect work for a student when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a fixed term suspension or medical issue.
- To visit a student 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 student 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).

6. Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents/carers and students, 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 student.
- Meet family members that are important to the student.
- Talk about the student and their needs

7. Home Visit Procedures

The aim of the home visit 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 (Appendix 1) ensuring it is signed a member of the Safeguarding team and logged on CPOMs by the end of the working day
- 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.
- Refer to the 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment' (appendix 2), and ensure you have read and understood the 'Community Lone Working Policy'
- If required, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you
- 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 student.
- 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.

During the Visit

- Park in a well lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.

- Introduce yourself, have your school 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 student 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 student's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a student/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 student is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate a member of the safeguarding team will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a student/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure parent/carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively. Explain that you will need to take notes during the meeting.
- 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.
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.

After the visit

- Report back to the school and log the completed Home Visit Form on CPOMS
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the Safeguarding team on arrival back to school.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular students.

8. Home Visit Form (Appendix 1)

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make.
- If an incident does occur, the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor, advice should be sought from the head of school as soon as possible.
- Home Visit forms should be logged on CPOMS

9. Risk Assessments (Appendix 2)

- Risk assessments should include evaluation of any known risk factors regarding the student, parents/carers and any others living in the household, including animals.
- Risk assessments should consider any circumstances that may render the member of staff becoming more vulnerable to an allegation being made e.g. hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to employees who make visits outside of 'school hours' or during school holidays if staff work full year.
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to visits in remote or secluded locations.
- Following a risk assessment, identified control measures must be put in place before a visit is undertaken.
- Employees making a home visit must adhere to the agreed risk management strategies identified on the visit's risk assessment.
- If a trust employee identifies any additional risk during a visit they must end the visit immediately.
- If a trust employee feels that they are in immediate danger, they must contact the police or their school emergency contact who will call the police.
- If following completion of a risk assessment there are any remaining concerns about staff safety relating to a home visit further advice should be sought from the trust and/or the LA safeguarding team.

10. 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

- Ensure your mobile phone is charged and is carried 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 and always be professional and polite
- Don't carry large sums of money.
- Park in a well-lit area

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 and **log the home visit on CPOMS**
- 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' Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Home Visit Form: All Home visits MUST be logged on CPOMS

Name of staff member conducting the home visit: _____

Role: _____

Address visited: _____

Date and Time of Visit: _____

Student Name: _____

Reason for home visit:

Comments:

Outcome of home visit

Safeguarding Concerns:

Actions from Home Visit

Please ensure all home visits are recorded on CPOMS

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 and Community Lone Working 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 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 Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Post incident support
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury	Remote	low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate 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 Ensure appropriate and safe behaviour near animals

I have read and understood the Risk Assessment and my safe word is : _____ My mobile number is: _____

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date _____