

Home Visits Policy

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Signed By:	Barry Nolan – Chair of the Board of Trustees
Author:	Paul Van Walwyk – Director for Schools and Education Services
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Version Control

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1	June 2019	Policy and procedure drafted by Jarlath O'Brien, Director for Schools
2	September 2022	Cyclical review. Updated for new senior leadership structure; approval forms and risk assessment updated and integrated into single process

This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

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1. Rationale

The Eden Academy Trust (the Trust) recognises the importance of establishing close working relations with parents and carers. There are many occasions where it is felt that a home visit is appropriate. On these occasions members of staff will follow the agreed procedure of this policy. The frequency of these visits will vary according to the pupils' needs. Home visits are an important part of the overall information gathering process. They provide an opportunity for parents and carers and the school to work closely together to best meet the needs of the child. Home visits provide an opportunity for parents and carers to express their opinions in an environment in which they feel confident.

2. Line management

This policy applies equally to school-based staff, family services and therapy staff, but the authorising line managers are different. To avoid excessive repetition below the term 'authorising manager' will be used. For school-based staff this person is the Head¹, Deputy Head or Assistant Head, and for family services or therapy staff this person is the Team Leader or Service Manager.

3. Procedures

Before a home visit is arranged, the member of staff must ensure that the visit is planned and then agreed by the authorising manager and that procedures that are specified in the Home Visits Policy are followed:

- The staff member fills out the first section of the home visit form, the risk assessment and gives it to the authorising manager.
- The staff member identifies any measures needed to make the visit safer where appropriate and lists these on the form
- The authorising manager assesses the visit based on the form and adds any further safety measures to the form where appropriate
- The Home Visit Risk Assessment must be used to plan the visit
- The staff member making the visit ensures that the school admin team has a copy of the form before leaving the school
- The staff member must carry a mobile phone, and have it switched on. The authorising manager and the admin staff must hold the number of the mobile phone.
- When off-site on school business and planning to return home directly without returning to school first, the authorising manager must be made aware of this.

¹ For the purposes of this policy Head refers to Headteacher or Head of School as appropriate

- When off-site on school business and planning to return to school the member of staff must ensure someone at school (usually the school admin team) knows the plans, where the member of staff is working and what time the member of staff plans to be returning to the school.
- The member of staff carrying out the home visit must make themselves aware of the pupil's details and relevant history
- Staff members must always have a clearly identifiable Trust ID badge when making a visit.
- During the visit the member of staff is representing the school. It is important that the discussion focuses on the initial reasons why a home visit has been deemed necessary.
- Any issues raised by parent at the meeting outside of the scope of the initial reason should be noted and forwarded to a relevant member of staff on return to school.
- During the visit, if there are any new concerns of unexpected situations upon arrival or during the meeting, the member of staff must consider if it is safe to proceed or continue with the meeting. If there is any doubt, they must leave and make alternative arrangements to meet with the parents/carers, accompanied by another member of the team if appropriate.

4. Post-visit

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After the visit the member of staff must:

- On returning to the school site, sign in at Reception.
- Complete a record of the discussions and any action points identified during the visit.

If the member of staff does not return to school at the agreed expected time of return:

- It is the responsibility in the first instance for the authorising manager to contact the staff member via their mobile phone number on the form.
- In their absence, an alternative member of staff will ring.
- If contact is not possible, the authorising manager will call the student's home contact details.
- Where necessary, the authorising manager will call the member of staff's family contact
- If there is significant concern and the member of staff's welfare remains unconfirmed, consideration to contacting the Police will be given.

Appendix: Family services home visit form

Family Services Home Visit Form				
Name of Family being visited		Address		Family Contact Details Home phone: Mobile:
Name of Staff Member(s) Visiting:		Car Registration(s)		Mobile Number(s):
Date form Completed		Authorising Manager		Approval signature
Pre-Visit Risk Assessment			Yes	No
Is this a family that has been visited before by the Family Services or school teams?				
Have any risks or concerns regarding this family been identified by any other agencies in relation to home visits?				
Will the parent be accompanied by another family member or friend when the visit takes place?				
Have the family been advised of the fact that smoking would not be acceptable during the visit?				
Are there any pets in the home that could pose any threat?				

Will the visit take place and end during daylight hours?			
Are there any known dangers associated with the property or its location?			
Is there parking near the property that will allow for no longer than a 2 minute walk from the staff member's car?			
Is the property located in a well populated location?			
Is the property easily accessible i.e. without multiple stairs or the use of a lift?			
Will you be accompanied by another adult on this visit?			
Are you confident about your safety and welfare in relation to this visit?			
Please list below any questions that received an answer of 'no' and list any actions that will help to eliminate the risk			
Area(s) of concern	Actions		

If the visit is out of school hours, have you informed a member of your family or friends at home of the visit and expected return time?			
If the visit is in school time, have the admin team been informed of your expected return time?			