



HOME VISITS PROCEDURES Including Guidelines

For additional information regarding home visits during a pandemic please refer to the Academy's Covid FSM Collections & deliveries Risk Assessment)

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Home visits are an important part of EYSL/Learning Mentor/Safeguarding role. These may be conducted for a variety of reasons.

When completing home visits, use professional judgment regarding going alone and take someone with you.

Home visits should be scheduled with families in advance whenever possible. If you cannot reach a family by telephone, a letter should be sent out informing the family that you have been trying to contact them, the reason they are being contacted and your intention to meet with them regarding their child. In the letter you may schedule a home visit (date and time) with information for the family to contact you if they cannot meet with you during this time.

There may be times where home visits are not able to be scheduled. An attempt should be made to contact parents by telephone prior to going to the home.

Before leaving for a home visit, inform the Business Manager or other senior member of staff that you are leaving to complete a home visit. Be sure to leave necessary information with the school including the address of where you are going, your mobile telephone number and an expected time of when you should be returning (This allows the school to alert the appropriate people in case a problem arises). After you have completed or leave a home visit, contact the school regarding your whereabouts.

When possible, schedule visits to problem areas to particular times of day, such as morning when parents are around taking children to school, and when drug activity and drunkenness should be minimal. If a home visit is being completed after school hours, inform your line manager using the steps as listed above.

Make sure that you have the parent's names and remember that the parent's names are not always the same as the pupils last name prior to leaving the school. Take any pertinent information regarding the pupil with you (grades, attendance, discipline notes, etc), along with a letter informing the family that you were at their dwelling in case the parents are not home.

If you are unsure as to where the house is located, use Google Maps or a similar search engine to get directions. It is often worth the extra moment to have directions than to be lost in an unfamiliar area. Make sure some one knows if your itinerary changes.

If you have a mobile phone, make sure your phone is fully charged prior to going on a visit. You may want to keep a charger in your car or at work.

Safety Measures when completing home visits

*Be aware of your surroundings. When you first arrive at a house **take note** of the number of cars in the driveway, look for evidence of animals (dog toys, food bowls, dog chains etc). Look to see if there are any neighbours outside or close by.



*Always **park** towards the end of the driveway and back in when possible. In case you need to leave quickly, it is important that you are not blocked in.

* Make sure your **keys are accessible** in your pocket in case you need to leave quickly. When you do leave the home, have your key out and ready.

* Leave your handbag and other **personal belongings** at the office or locked and covered in the car. Be mindful of your clothing. High heels, flashy jewellery should not be worn on home visits.

*Before getting out of your car, **wait at least 30 seconds**. Sometimes if there is a family pet outside, it will approach the car out of curiosity.

*Upon approaching a house, if there is a fence surrounding the house, **shake the fence**. This can also alert you that the family owns a pet before you proceed.

*Upon approaching the house **scan** the area. Are there any blinds open? Is there a build up of mail and/or newspapers? Is there a build up of rubbish outside? Are there any strange noises, smells coming from the home? Stand well clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking, standing sideways to present a narrow protected target.

*Before going into a house, **introduce yourself**. Wear your name badge. Be sure to say that you work for Christ church Academy and your reason for coming to the home. Follow occupants in when entering building.

*You may **request that pets be properly secured** when making visits, if appropriate. Back away, never run from an animal, and maintain escape routes.

*To **protect yourself from lice**, avoid coming into direct contact with furniture or clothing in the house. You can sit on the edge of furniture rather than leaning back. Also, you may want to tie up long hair before entering the residence.

*Remember colds and viruses are spread through direct contact. Frequently wash your hands and do not touch your mouth or face with your hands after a visit until you have thoroughly washed you hands. It is helpful to keep hand sanitizer in your car or bag, with **universal precautions**.

*Upon going inside the house, **position yourself nearest to the door** with your back to the wall. This is in case you need to leave quickly and also a way for you to keep track of where people in the house are

*Treat parents courteously, remembering that they are in their own home, and **you are the guest**.

*If you have a mobile phone, make sure it is accessible. Keep it in your pocket and **have emergency numbers programmed and their corresponding speed dial number memorised**.



***If at any time you feel uncomfortable for any reason end the visit.** If a parent or individual in the home appears to be intoxicated, end the visit. If a parent or individual is becoming agitated, end the visit. If a parent appears to be mentally unstable, leave. If a parent or individual is not fully dressed, politely say you will wait outside while they get dressed.

*Remember to **trust your instincts**. Often times, we do not listen to that inner voice and think we can handle situations that we may not be able to. It is better to leave and reschedule a visit rather than place yourself in a potentially volatile situation.

These are general guidelines, and as professionals you know what works best for you. You must use professional judgment and share collaborative skills with the school team when completing home visits. Be interdependently proactive with foresight to positively impact pupil learning through direct coordination of community resources in a focused and timely manner.

On return to school ensure the Home Visits pro forma is completed in full electronically and any appropriate action taken. A copy must be retained in the Home Visits file in alphabetical order.

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