



Malmesbury Primary School

Home Visit Policy

Prepared by	Local Authority
Committee responsible	Standards
Date ratified by Governors	April 2025
Date for review	April 2028
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Headteacher)	

Malmesbury Primary School understands the importance of establishing close, effective working relationships with our families. Home visits are an important part of the transition process into school and a positive way to create a welcoming and supportive learning relationship with families so that all children are able to get the very best from their time at school.

In addition to the transition process visits may be carried out for a number of other reasons including in an emergency, for welfare checks or to provide remote learning resources to children.

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all parties carrying out home visits. Wherever possible, all work with children and parents/carers should be undertaken in the school. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits. Where home visits take place, a risk assessment should be completed in advance. This will identify any concerns about potential risk and appropriate measures to be taken. If specific information is known about the families, this should be added to the risk assessment.

Parents/carers will be informed of the home visit prior to arrival, however there are 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 for emergency safeguarding visits. Notice periods for home visits will vary depending on the nature of the visit and will be decided on a case by case basis. We aim to provide as much notice as possible.

Definition

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

Aims

At Malmesbury Primary School we recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

- To establish a partnership between parents/carers and staff so 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 and carers for the best interests of the child.
- To provide support to families in order to overcome barriers that may be impacting their child's learning.

Reasons for Home Visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new parents/carers or those experiencing any difficulties. They are particularly useful as they enable the parent/carer to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment.

Home visits are used for the following reasons (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Pupils are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues or concerns
- To work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to medical issues, so that they do not feel isolated from school
- When a pupil is showing significantly different behaviour at home

- When pupils are being educated at home
- When all other means of contact with the family has failed
- To try to establish that the child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response and we have welfare or safeguarding concerns for the pupil
- Where it is deemed a home visit is in the best interest of the child or family
- If a parent/carer is unable to visit the school due to physical disability or any other medical reason.
- A child is ill for a SAT's exam and this has to be completed in the child's home.
- Foundation Stage staff visit families prior to children starting school, usually in Nursery or Reception to gain a full understanding of the whole child.

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents, carers, guardians 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.

Procedures

All home visits carry potential risks i.e. violence. Although risks may not be totally eliminated, they can be reduced by correctly following procedures outlined in this policy.

Prior to any visit, the Home Visit Risk Assessment should be checked and followed, in addition individual family checks should be made with the SLT.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for home visits to be conducted by one member of staff. In such cases, this will be discussed prior to the visit with the Headteacher or a member of SLT to establish appropriate control measures. All lone visits must be agreed by the DSL.

- never undertake a home visit without the agreement of the Headteacher or a member of SLT
- always undertake risk assessments and adhere to agreed risk management strategies
- always make detailed records including time of arrival and departure, work undertaken
- follow the school's policies, including those for safeguarding

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
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and staff members involved
- Make practical arrangements for an appropriate person to accompany you (home visits in most cases should be done in pairs). Clarify each person's role and the subject of the visit

- Collect all necessary documentation
- Identify who you need to see (one/both parents/carers with or without the child) and ensure this is made clear to parents/carers
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances
- Wherever possible/appropriate make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family. The appointment should be confirmed by either a letter/email or text.
- Inform office staff and a member of SLT of your intended location before leaving for a home visit. Give as much detail as possible including times, address and name of parent/carer including the estimated return time.
- Ensure you have access to a mobile telephone (school mobile phone) and an emergency contact person arranged
- Ensure all appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed
- Make a phone call the day before the visit to confirm the appointment and who you will be seeing (1 parent/carer or both, etc). Also check if animals are in the house and if a dog/cat ask for them to be out of the room if needed.

During the visit

- Whenever possible travel on foot
- Park in a sensible well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving
- Dress appropriately and wear lanyards for identification at all times
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child, only when invited by a responsible adult
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility or another adult delegated and given permission by the parent/carer to speak about their child, prior to the visit
- Clarify the adult is the correct person. If not, thank them and explain you will need to arrange for another appointment to be made. Do not discuss the visit with any siblings or unknown person
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe to and necessary. Do not enter a child's bedroom
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than opinions
- Use your professional judgement as to when to leave. Do not out stay your welcome.

Safeguarding issues or concerns:

- If you believe that a child is in immediate danger contact the emergency services 999.
- If you are concerned that a child is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger contact the schools designated safeguarding lead **immediately** to discuss your observations and get further support and advice. If appropriate the DSL will make a referral to social care.

- Assure parents/carers that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively. Explain that you may need to take notes during the visit. **Do not** promise not to relay information to school

Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report any disclosures or suspicions to the DSL immediately.

After the visit

- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school to confirm you have left the home and your next intended location
- Discuss any safeguarding concerns/worries with DSL
- Write a report/notes on visit and pass to appropriate SLT member
- Do not discuss any home visits with any staff who are not directly involved with the family

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 the situation by saying you will seek advice from a senior member of staff
- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry
- Have an agreed code word or phrase (must tell office SLT this before leaving) to alert colleagues you need assistance or unable to leave or are in danger and need support

MONITORING and REVIEW

It is the responsibility of all staff undertaking any home visits to read and follow this policy.

Monitoring of the procedures identified in this policy will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team whenever a home visit request is made.

Foundation Stage Home Visits

At Malmesbury Primary School we understand that starting school can be daunting for everyone involved. It is therefore our aim to make the process as stress free and enjoyable as possible for families and their children. We believe that home visits, prior to starting school, enables parents/carers and children to meet members of staff in the place where they feel most at ease, at home.

AIM:

- To provide an opportunity for a new foundation stage child and family to meet staff in their own home prior to the child starting school.
- To help the child, family and staff get to know more about each other in the home environment where the child usually feels most relaxed.
- All parents/carers of a new foundation stage child are given the opportunity to participate in a home visit during the first three weeks of their child starting school in September.

The class teacher will take a small selection of activities for the child to choose from and will play with the child during the home visit while the other member of staff completes any necessary paperwork and checks the application form (or vice versa as appropriate).

If school based staff are aware of special circumstances or arrangements for home visiting, these must be discussed with the Headteacher or a member of SLT in advance, who will decide on the necessary additional arrangements required to carry out the visit.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS lead to go through this policy with all staff in September prior to visits.

It is the responsibility of all staff to follow this policy.

Risk Assessment Form Cover sheet

School/Establishment

Form No. _____

School / Centre : ~~Malmesbury Primary School~~ _____

Department : _____

Activity/Person/Area Assessed : ~~Home Visits~~ _____

Date of Assessment : _____

Copy of form sent to Trade Union Safety Representative : YES / NO Date : _____

Risk assessment Form A attached : YES / NO

Is action required? : YES / NO

Confirmed by Line Manager ? : YES / NO

Lead Assessor's Name (please print) :

Signed :

Date :

Has action been taken ? : YES / NO / NONE REQUIRED (Please circle)

Manager's Name (please print) :

Signed :

Date :

Risk assessment Form B attached : YES / NO

Risk Assessment carried out by:

Site Location:

Activity/Situation: Home Visits

HAZARD = Anything that can CAUSE harm

RISK = The chance, high, medium or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard.

How to use this form

1. Identify potential hazards, e.g. traffic, getting lost, ice on roads, rivers/lakes cliff edge, exposure to sun.
2. Identify those at risk, e.g. young people, leaders and other adults
3. Identify potential outcome and its likelihood and give a numerical value. **Multiply** your two values to arrive at your risk rating.
4. Where the risk is medium or high, either identify over-leaf the action required to reduce the risk or do not proceed with the activity.

Potential Outcome	Numerical Value		Likelihood/Probability	Numerical Value	
Minor injury	1		Unlikely	1	
Injury needing medical attention	2		Low possibility	2	
Injury – off work/school	3		Possible	3	
Serious injury/long term sickness	4		Probable	4	
Fatality	5		Near Certainty	5	

Risk Level	Risk rating	Actions & Timescales		Persons at risk
Low	1-5	Reduce & monitor		Staff [S]
Medium	6-11	Reduction measure implemented within defined period		Young person/student/pupil [YP]
High	12+	Give priority to removing or reducing the risk. Urgent action should be taken.		Volunteer adult [V] Member of public/visitor [PV] Other adult [OA]

Risk Assessment Form A

Hazards Identified		Person/s at risk	Potential Outcome	Likelihood/ Probability	Overall Risk (=potential * Probability) L/M/H	Adjustments required to facilitate inclusion/reduce risk
1	Road traffic accidents when travelling to and from client's homes	Staff, public	5	2 Low	10 Medium	Staff to follow home visits procedures ie. notifying office staff or SLT of destination, times and expected return time. Staff to ensure appropriate motor insurance for work use. Staff to carry ID during visits. Staff to be mindful of local road restrictions and use caution when crossing roads. Avoid travelling with students/parents in car where possible and only if absolutely necessary with children travelling in the back of the car with age/size appropriate car seats..
2	Violence and aggression	Staff, public	5	2 Low	10 Medium	Wherever possible attend in pairs. Leave full contact details of visit with office e.g. time, name, address, telephone number. Leave mobile phone number with office and ensure staff have school number saved on phone. Office to check time and telephone staff if not returned. Use of code word/phrase to be agreed prior to visit and used by staff if help is needed. Wherever possible staff to park in a well-lit accessible parking space, if parking on a client's drive due to limited/restricted local parking, staff should reverse on to allow

						easier egress. Staff to make themselves aware of exits upon entering the home and where possible observe how to open the door.
3	Violence and aggression when working alone with clients.	Staff	5	2 Low	10 Medium	- Check SLT for information before visit – assess risk with manager if warning already logged, taking into consideration the information provided. - Follow guidance of ASSH Guidelines and Procedures for Preventing and Dealing with Violence at Work which links with 'Violence at Work Procedures' in 'Accidents/Incidents' in the Corporate Health and Safety Manual. - Lone working arrangements – follow Lone Working Policy and Guidance – local procedures are in place regarding contact arrangements (e.g. mobile phones) and what to do if unable to locate/contact e.g. two people to visit last known location.
4	Bites, scratches from domestic animals	Staff	4	1	4 Low	Staff to ask clients to tie up pets or move to another room. Staff to leave visit if they feel unsafe or client refuses to cooperate
5	Passive smoking, infection from biological hazards e.g. food poisoning	Staff	3	1	3 Low	Staff to make clear prior to visit that clients will be requested not to smoke during visit, staff should decline food/drinks if concerned about hygiene standards.

6	Musculoskeletal injuries from carrying heavy bags and equipment to/from visit	Staff	3	1	3 Low	Staff to only take equipment needed for visit. Appropriate mechanisms for transport should be used ie. a trolley/wheelie case as appropriate. If heavy equipment is needed, help should be sought from site manager/second member of staff and manual handling procedures should be followed.
7	Trip Hazards	Staff	1	3 Possible	3 Low	Staff to be aware of surroundings and remove/request removal of hazards as necessary.
8	Allegations against staff	Staff	4	1 Unlikely	4 Low	Where possible home visits to be carried out by 2 members of staff, SLT to be consulted for any known previous allegations, staff not to enter home with no adult present, staff not to go into child's bedroom *See HV policy for more in-depth recommendations. DBS carried out for all staff along with safer recruitment processes being followed.

Risk Rating: High = current controls totally inadequate with serious consequences: death(s), serious injury, long-term ill health, or there is a very high frequency of the hazard occurring

Medium = current controls still poor but consequences less serious: minor injury, short-term ill health with no lasting effects,

Low = current controls are adequate to minimise the risk so far as reasonably practicable