



LONG FIELD ACADEMY

Home Visit Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Home visits provide an opportunity to develop and sustain positive and successful working relationships with parents/carer. They are particularly important when supporting more vulnerable families in an effort to improve their children's academic achievement and general experience in the Academy. While most staff at the Academy may never make a home visit, for those with a more pastoral role a home visit may be appropriate to promote the inclusion of the more vulnerable students. This guidance will be of particular relevance to social work students on placement - conducting home visits is common practice in the social work role and they are necessary to gain a holistic picture of the family in which all possible issues/needs can be identified.

1. PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING A HOME VISIT

- 1.1 Preparation for a home visit should include reading up on the case history – in addition to any files the Academy may hold, further information may be available from informal sources such as colleagues. Where little or no information is available, home visits should not be made alone.
- 1.2 A risk assessment should be undertaken prior to a home visit and should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints and grievances can make adults more vulnerable to an allegation. If any of these factors are identified, a joint visit may be more appropriate. The initial risk assessment must be recorded.
- 1.3 Your line manager should determine if limited practice experience is likely to be an issue - their agreement must be sought before undertaking a home visit.
- 1.4 You must make the Academy aware of where your visit is, the time of your departure from the office, the time of your expected return and a contact number (you should always take a mobile phone with you on home visits, in case of an emergency) – if you anticipate that the visit may run over, let someone at the Academy know as soon as possible.
- 1.5 Service users should be informed of your intention to visit in advance, with effort made to ensure the purpose of the visit is clear.
- 1.6 Should you need to cancel a visit, service users should be made aware at the earliest opportunity. Equally, if you are going to be late for whatever reason, you should always let the service user know.

- 1.7 If your intention is to speak with a child alone in the home, there should be an agreement that the parent, or another suitable adult, should remain in the home throughout the session – never go into the home if an adult is not present, as this may raise child protection concerns and allegations could be made about your conduct – if you get to the address and the child is there alone, return to the Academy immediately and notify your line manager/on-site supervisor.
- 1.8 If you feel the child's welfare is at risk due to being alone, it may be appropriate to inform the local social services departments' central duty team with your concerns – discuss this first with your line manager/on-site supervisor.

2. DURING THE HOME VISIT

- 2.1 You should be aware of your body language, appearance and social presentation whilst on a home visit and behave in a professional manner at all times.
- 2.2 You must show respect for service users at all time – be aware of any cultural/religious norms that may have a bearing on how you are expected to behave/dress appropriately.
- 2.3 Have your identification badge on show at all times.
- 2.4 If an unfamiliar person answers the door, you should make sure the person you intend to see is home before entering. If they are not there or you feel unsafe, it may be necessary to abandon the visit.
- 2.5 You should continually assess risk during the home visit – if you feel uncomfortable for any reason, you should leave as soon as possible.
- 2.6 Should tensions rise at any point and you feel unsafe, you should, as calmly as possible, leave. Do not get drawn into a confrontation/argument that may put you at risk.
- 2.7 You should be aware of the exit routes in the home and, if possible, you should position yourself closer to exit routes.
- 2.8 You must contact the Academy at the earliest opportunity if the visit is going to run past the expected time.

3. AFTER THE HOME VISIT

- 3.1 Any concerns should be communicated immediately to your line manager/on-site supervisor.

- 3.2 You should keep an accurate record of what was discussed during the home visit, with explicit reference to any concerns raised by the member of staff conducting the visit or the family.
- 3.3 In order to continually assess risk, following your home visit you should evaluate your initial risk assessment, with consideration being given to the information gathered at the visit. Your initial risk assessment should then be amended (if appropriate) to reflect the findings of the visit, which can then be used to inform the nature of further visits.

4. ACADEMY RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 There should be a designated member of staff responsible for tracking home visits.
- 4.2 If the member of staff on a home visit does not arrive back at the Academy at the expected time, every effort should be made to contact them to ensure they are safe. This should include efforts to contact the location of the visit. If you cannot contact them, it may be appropriate to call the police.
- 4.3 If the member of staff does not have a personal mobile telephone on which they can be contacted, then they should be provided with one even if just for the purpose of a home visit.