



Birmingham Federation
Maintained Nursery Schools

Allens Croft Nursery School
Jakeman Nursery School
Shenley Fields Nursery School

Lillian De Lissa Nursery School
Newtown Nursery School
St Thomas Nursery School

Adderley Nursery School
Gracelands Nursery School
Highfield Nursery School

HOME VISITS POLICY

(INITIAL HOME VISITS & SAFEGUARDING HOME VISITS)

Cluster:

Gracelands Nursery School
Jakeman Nursery School

Local Committee Approved: 08 December 2022

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Chair of Governors: Sean Delaney

Executive Head Teacher: Samantha Richards

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RRS – The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child links

Article 2 (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 5 (parental guidance and a child’s evolving capacities) Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child’s increasing capacity to make their own choices.

Article 15 (freedom of association) Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16 (right to privacy) Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child’s private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Introduction

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all school staff carrying out home visits. EYFS home visits will always take place with staff in pairs. Home visits can only take place when the policy and protocols are fully met. Policy and procedures must be consistently applied.

Rationale for Carrying Out Initial Home Visits

Childhood experiences lay the foundations for later life. Parenting has a critical impact on children’s emotional, behavioural and educational development, and their health and wellbeing. The school works in partnership with parents to ensure positive outcomes for children. One of the first steps in this partnership is to home visit families prior to the child (and family) coming to Gracelands and Jakeman Nursery Schools.

Visiting children and their family members in their home environment prior to them starting Nursery has huge benefits. The insights that staff have gained into each child’s home and background greatly helps them to assess their level of need in school and prepare for the child’s entry into the setting. The children also benefit from their key person visiting them at home, it often becomes a talking point upon the first few visits at Nursery and beyond, providing a basis for the new relationship forming.

For teachers and support staff, a home visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact
- build up a warm caring relationship with the child and parent/carer before the child starts school
- meet children in their own familiar setting
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children
- encourage parents to share with us as much information as possible about their child to support with settling in and future learning needs being met
- get a 'wider view' of the family such as customs, beliefs, child rearing practices and systems upon which to build or support
- work in partnership with parent/carers and their children to support early intervention on specific issues relating to their child's development. These usually take the form of behaviour, speech and language, personal, social and physical development
- share information about the school and break barriers down, especially if parent/carers have deep rooted anxieties about schools and institutions
- get a picture of the child's interests to begin our planning with a child-initiated approach to learning
- understand the problems that children might encounter at school, and also to appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home

Guidelines for Staff

Structure of EYFS home visits

Staff make home visit in pairs. As well as the obvious safety implications, this allows one staff member to talk to the child's parents / carers and the other to focus solely on the child. This means that the parent / carer has focused time with a member of our staff team. Thirty minutes is the standard period of time devoted to each home visit. Visits typically take place either during the term before children are due to start attending nursery or at the beginning of their start term. Parents are always contacted in advance to confirm the appointment.

Equipment needed

All visits need careful structuring and prepared resources. Visiting staff members will take an information pack with them when visiting a child and their parents / carers in their home. This would usually contain photographs of staff, details of the Nursery day, along with the standard forms that would need to be filled in by the parents/ carers. A child may then engage in activity with a staff member whilst the other staff member interacts with the parent / carer.

Staff should also take a mobile phone for safety reasons, a map to locate addresses, and a range of toys and books for the child to play with.

Before the visit

- Make appointments in advance and offer alternative dates/times
- Ensure that parents know when you will arrive, how long you will stay, what will happen, what kinds of questions you will be asking and what information you will bring (Appendix 2 – Parents' Information Sheet)
- Ask them to think about the information they need from you in advance of the meeting
- Accept the right of a family not to accept a home visit

- Confirm parents / carers name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child
- Do not assume that all parents/ carers are literate
- Make sure you consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientation
- Familiarise yourself with the location of the home and the route you will take before you leave
- Leave details of your visiting schedule with another member of staff
- Ensure you have a charged mobile phone

During the visit

- Wear the school lanyard with ID badge on to inform the parent of who you are
- Show respect for parents / carers as equal partners
- Be a good listener
- Be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home
- Sit near a door or exit and if you feel uneasy or worried at any time, make an excuse and leave
- Staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made on their home or lifestyle
- Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures
- They should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc.
- Staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents

After the visit

- Complete and put the 'All About Me (Appendix 1) form in the child's administration file. Making note of particular interests for planning settling in days
- Hand Early Help Form to Deputy Head Teacher to review and signpost family to Hall Green Families for support or escalate obtaining parental consent
- Staff to complete My Concern if any safeguarding concerns identified
- If any incident has occurred or any concerns arise with regards to safeguarding, staff should record concerns and contact Head teacher/ Deputy Head teacher immediately
- Team to meet to reflect current procedures and disseminate any relevant information to all staff

Protocols for All Home Visits

Risk Assessment:

- Where possible, check records to see what information is available
- Talk to other professionals who may already have had contact or involvement with the family
- Obtain information about the location of the home visit. For example, does the area have a reputation for being unsafe, isolated or poorly lit?
- Discuss strategies to adopt when working with a potentially challenging parent / carer / family member with a line manager
- Where risks are identified, arrange an alternative meeting environment

Health and Safety

- A home visits risk assessment should be read and understood by staff members undertaking home visits. This will identify any potential risks and appropriate measures to be taken
- Inform a nominated member of staff when you are leaving for a home visit
- Leave the details of the home visit schedule with a senior member of staff. Include a list of visit addresses and times including family name, child's name, address and telephone number. If a safeguarding visit is being carried out, ensure a senior member of staff remaining in school knows the reason for the visit
- You must inform the nominated person if there is a cancellation or alteration to the time
- Carry with you and show the parent some form of identification
- Demonstrate normal courtesy – wait to be invited into the home
- If a child answers the door, ask if an adult is present in the house before entering. Do not enter if an adult is not present
- If the parent / carer appears at all uncomfortable about the visit continuing, staff should offer to leave, offer to continue the contact with a telephone call and give the parent / carer the telephone number of the school
- Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels dangerous or threatening – leave
- When entering homes, call the designated person back at school when entering the house and again immediately after leaving the house
- The designated person will call to check in if the visit has taken longer than 30 minutes. If the phone is not answered on 2 occasions, an alert will be made and help will be sought

Safeguarding Home Visits

Where a home visit is required in order to comply with the school's Attendance Policy, visits are unannounced and therefore the procedure for ensuring staff safety is:

- Door step visits only, staff will not go into the family home
- A DSL must attend the visit alongside another member of staff
- Knock and step back at around 3 metres away from the front door
- Always wear your school identity card
- Inform the parent why you are visiting (no contact, school safeguarding procedure)
- Ensure you have physically seen the child. If the child is not available to physically be seen, a follow up home visit must be arranged
- Document your visit onto the school's My Concern database at the first possible opportunity
- Share your concerns with any other professionals involved. If children are on a Child Protection or CIN plan, inform the social worker

Key related policies

This list of related policies is not exhaustive:

- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings
- Health and Safety
- Data Privacy Notice
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Lone Working
- Code of Conduct School Staff

Appendix 1 - Risk assessment example

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| ASSESSMENT No | HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT | HIGHEST RISK LEVEL | | | |
| AREA / LOCATION | ASSESSOR | DATE | | | |
| PROJECT | Brief outline. Append separate page if needed to include outcome benefits | | | | |
| TASK(s) | Brief outline. Append separate page if needed. | | | | |
| REVIEW DATE | REVIEW COMMENTS | REVIEWED BY | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| STEP BY STEP GUIDANCE on ASSESSMENT | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify hazards. • Identify persons at risk. • State existing control measures if any. • Estimate initial Severity Rating (SR). • Estimate initial Probability Rating (PR). • Calculate initial Risk Level from matrix. • State any further controls measures if required. • Estimate final SR. • Estimate final PR. • Calculate final Risk Level | | | | | |
| SEVERITY AND PROBABILITY RATINGS | | | | | |
| SEVERITY RATING (SR) (OUTCOME) | | PROBABILITY RATING (PR) (LIKELIHOOD) | | | |
| SR | DESCRIPTION GUIDANCE | PR | DESCRIPTION GUIDANCE | | |
| 1 | Minimal (strain, shaken) | 1 | Improbable (unlikely to occur) | | |
| 2 | Moderate (cuts, bruises, sickness) | 2 | Possible (may occur sometime) | | |
| 3 | High (fractures, serious burns) | 3 | Probable (likely to occur) | | |
| 4 | Major (Fatality, loss of limbs) | 4 | Certain (common or frequent) | | |
| RISK LEVEL MATRIX | | | ACTION TIMESCALES | | |
| PROBABILITY (LIKELIHOOD) | 4 | Low | High | Very High | Very High |
| | 3 | Low | Med | High | Very High |
| | 2 | Low | Low | Med | High |
| | 1 | Low | Low | Low | Low |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | SEVERITY (OUTCOME) | | | |
| <p>VERY HIGH risk – Do not start activity, or stop activity immediately. Seek further control measures or alternative method of achieving task HIGH risk – Implement control measures before task commenced. MEDIUM risk – Implement controls within one week. Seek further control measures where reasonably practicable. (i.e. balance cost against risk) LOW risk – No further control measures are required but the situation should be monitored.</p> <p>Final risk level should be as low as possible but in any event should not be above Medium Risk Level</p> | | | | | |

HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

| Hazard | Persons at Risk | Existing Control Measures (if any) | Initial Risk Rating | | | Additional Control Measures (if required) | Final Risk Rating | | |
|--------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------|--|-------------------|--------|---------------|
| | | | S R | P R | Risk Level | | S R | P R | Risk Level |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

What is a home visit?

As the name suggests, a home visit is an informal visit to your home by school staff.

It is usually carried out when your child has been offered a place at the setting but before they actually start.

Why do home visits?

Home visits are a really good way for staff to begin to get to know both you and your child and vice versa.

It is a great opportunity to spend some time in a relaxed atmosphere, exchanging information and planning your child's start at the setting. You will also have the chance to ask questions and express any concerns you may have.

It is not an inspection of you or your home!

You are under no obligation to accept a home visit and a meeting can be arranged at the setting if you prefer.

All information is considered confidential and will not be shared without your permission.

Practicalities

Who will do the home visit?

2 members of school staff will visit your home.

How long will it take?

The length of the visit can vary; it is usually around 30 minutes.

What will happen at the home visit?

We know that children like to be busy and active!

One member of staff will usually get to know your child by playing with them and showing them books or photos of the setting.

Your child may also like to share some of their favourite toys or activities with the practitioner.

The other member of staff will complete some basic information forms with you, give you a welcome pack and go through some details about your child starting nursery school.

You will also have the opportunity to ask any questions or share any concerns you may have.

How should I prepare for a home visit?

- Have some basic information to hand such as your doctor's name and address, your emergency contact details etc. in order to speed up the form filling process.
- Try to remove any distractions, for example family pets. It is also helpful if the television has been turned off.
- Have some of your child's favourite toys or play things available as these can help the practitioner to engage with your child.
- Prepare a list of questions you may want to ask.
- If you have any questions, worries or concerns about your home visit or would like any further information, please contact us at the setting.