



Home Visits Policy – Addendum

Version Control

This is version 1.0 of this addendum. It will be reviewed by our Safeguarding Lead on a weekly basis or as circumstances continue to evolve or following any updated advice. It will be shared with all headteachers, DSL's and those who may be asked to undertake a home visit.

New Guidance

The CV-19 outbreak has seen unprecedented challenges as our schools are now closed to all but a minority of children. At the same time, we have been tasked with, ensuring that our vulnerable children, who are not in school, remain safe.

Under normal circumstances, safe and well visits would have been our main mechanism for checking up on the wellbeing of a child. However, these are not normal circumstances and as such, and to ensure the safety of our staff, we **are now not allowing staff** to enter a child's home. This is in line with Professional Association guidance.

Staff are encouraged to contact families by phone, email or video call. It is important that staff follow the guidelines laid out in the Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of technologies Policy when making these calls. Additional guidance has also been issued.

Home visits during which staff enter a family home are **not allowed** during this period. However, if you have been unable to contact a child and have serious concerns you should follow the steps below

- Re- assess the risk. Does the lack of contact escalate your concerns?
- Try all the available numbers for the family, including all emergency contact numbers
- Try all other professionals who are involved with the family. Consider other schools where there may be siblings.
- For CP/CiN/LAC EHCP or Early Help speak to their allocated social worker or any other professional involved such as a family support worker or mental health worker.
- Consider speaking to your local social care provision such as MASH CASS or First Response.

- If the risk is deemed critical - speak to the Police, they may do a 'safe & well' check
- Do not hesitate to call 999 if you think a child has been harmed or is at serious risk of harm.
- Contact the senior education safeguarding officer for support if needed along with your headteacher and ATLP safeguarding lead.
- Record all your concerns and actions in line with school child protection procedures.

If deemed necessary and after following these steps and in consultation with your head teacher a doorstep visit may be considered. **This is the absolute last resort!**

You must follow the guidelines below. However, it is important to stress that this is a voluntary activity and if you do not feel able or willing to do this please discuss this with your headteacher

Doorstep visits

There may be occasions when staff need to visit a home but not enter. Again, these should be rare and only undertaken if there is **no alternative and you have exhausted all other methods to make contact.**

All doorstep visits must be risk assessed. If agreed that a doorstep is necessary, it should be undertaken by two members of staff. Normal procedures outlined in the full body of this policy must be followed regarding signing in and out and mobiles phones.

It is unlikely that doorstep visits will be frequent. It may be that despite repeated attempts staff are still unable to make any contact by phone with a family and have not been able to speak to child and gain assurances that they are OK. Staff have tried all the suggestions above and have not been successful. This is especially important where there may have been a previous history of physical abuse, domestic violence or mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts. After assessing the risk, it may be decided to undertake a visit. This assessment should be made in consultation with the headteacher. These are exceptional circumstances and this decision must not be taken lightly. If the decision is to visit you must undertake and follow a risk assessment based on the following guidelines:

1. Any doorstep visit must be risk assessed. ***There is a CV-19 Risk Assessment attached to this guidance that supplements the Risk Assessment form within the body of the policy.***
2. The doorstep visit should be undertaken by two members of staff. To comply with social distancing, they should always travel separately and always remain at a distance from one another. It would be expected that any member of staff who has an underlying health condition/vulnerability would be at home self- isolating. For the absence of doubt, no such staff member will therefore undertake such a visit.

3. Ideally one member of staff should be a DSL and one known to the family. Normal procedures outlined in the full body of this policy must be followed regarding signing in and out and carrying mobile phones.
4. Staff carrying out the visit must wear gloves and avoid contacting hard surfaces with their bare skin. They will knock on the door with covered hands. After knocking on the door, they will step back maintaining social distance requirements.
5. If you get a response try to establish whether any members of the household have CV-19 symptoms.
6. If this is the case, move further away and look to ending the visit as soon as is possible.
7. However it may be possible to enquire about the child from a safe distance or even see the child if not confined to bed but only through a window.
8. The DSL should inform the parents of the need to do a safe and well check and the measures already taken to establish contact. They should explain that they need to see the child through the window or at a safe distance.
9. Visiting staff will try to talk to the child keeping the conversation as positive and upbeat and as short as possible. They must ask the child directly how they are.
10. Staff must not enter the household, even if invited in, but simply check the child is well by a conversation, maintaining the two-metre distance.
11. Staff must make every effort to see the child and question their welfare from outside the home. You must record what they say and how they present.
12. If possible, future channels of communication should be established
13. If you do not make contact leave a note to say you have called and asking the family to make immediate contact with school.
14. Upon return to school, wash your hands thoroughly, sign back in and complete visit records.
15. If after a doorstep visit you have still not made contact and are still concerned revisit the list above and then seek further advice from CASS/First Response /MASH or the Police.
16. If known in advance the family is self-isolating it is not appropriate to make a visit, even a doorstep visit. Staff must try to keep in touch by the channels described above.

Our Safeguarding priorities remain the same and we will always have the best interests of the child as our first to priority, but we must keep our staff safe.

Doorstep Risk Assessment during Covid 19 outbreak

Please remember this is the last resort and should only be undertaken in extreme circumstance and after consultation.

Date:	
Worker and signatures	
Name and address of family /child	
Why is this family listed as vulnerable? Give any background information that is influencing your thinking (history of child abuse/ domestic violence/ mental health/ suicidal thoughts)	
When did you last have contact with this family? Give date and details.	
Is failure to make contact typical of this family?	
Why has the lack of contact escalated your concerns?	
Give details of all other methods you have tried to make contact. Give specific details.	

Are there any other professionals involved with this family? Please list. Have you made contact and shared your concerns?	
Have you shared your concerns with CASS/First Response/MASH and the Police? What support or advice did they offer?	
Have you consulted your Lead DSL and Head Teacher?	
Have you considered contacting other schools where there may be siblings?	
If the combined decision is that you need to make a door step visit, as this is the very last resort, you must now follow the risk assessment below.	

Interventions/actions to put in place when undertaking a door step visit during the Covid 19 outbreak

	Risk / hazards identified	Safe / Unsafe	Action / Recommendations
Family in isolation due to Covid 19	Infection	Not safe	The visit should not be undertaken. You may consider a follow up call to CASS/First Response/ MASH to share this information and ask for support and explaining the

			additional vulnerabilities you are worried about.
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No evidence/ information to suggest CV19		Safe	You must go in twos. This means to comply with social distancing recommendations you should travel separately and maintain a distance of at least six feet at all times
			You must sign and in and sig out and leave clear information as to where you are going, how you are traveling including car details. Check you have fuel.
			You must both have a mobile phone and leave the number with school.
			You should both wear gloves and if possible, take hand gel with you.
Upon arrival			Upon arrival assess the situation. If it appears safe to do so approach the front door, knock and move well away.
			If you get a response, ask if the family are in isolation. If the answer is yes finish the visit as quickly as possible but try to ascertain if the child is safe.
			If the answer is no, keep the visit to an absolute minimum . Do not enter the property. Explain why you would like to and ask to see the child through the window. Move back.
			Ask the child if they are ok. Record on paper their response and how they present. Be factual or state your opinion
			Try to establish a communication method for future use explaining that we need to know the child is safe and well.
			If you are unsuccessful and there is no response have a pre-prepared note to push through the door asking the family to contact you urgently.

<p>Upon return to school</p>			<p>Upon return to school wash your hands thoroughly. Sign back in. If no contact, then inform CASS/First Response/ MASH that you are still concerned and ask for support. You must</p> <p>record the visit details on My Concern/ CPOMS or child's file along with the response from CASS/First Response/MASH.</p> <p>Be re- assured that you have now done all that you could.</p>
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There is another Risk Assessment contained within the body of the Home Visits/ Lone Working Policy. Much of this makes reference to risk that might encountered when entering a property. During these challenging times **we are not entering** family homes so much of this becomes irrelevant. However, there are some risks that may be relevant and actions/ interventions needed to mitigate against these. See Risk Assessment in Home Visits Policy.