



Holyhead

Teach What Matters

Home Visit Policy

Version	Date	Details
1.0	September 2024	

Date policy last reviewed:

Autumn 2024

Policy Lead:

D Reddy

Signed by:

Principal

Date 5th December 2024

Chair of Governors

Date 5th December 2024



Details of the Changes

[illegible]



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Home Visit Policy

Statement of intent

At Holyhead School, staff may be required to undertake home visits for a variety of reasons, such as to support students' attendance, provide tuition, and to establish partnerships with parent/carers to secure the best support for their child. The school is committed to ensuring all home visits are effective and procedures are in place to minimise potential risks to staff and students.

This policy sets out how home visits will be conducted in order to ensure:

- Visits always have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for all visits.
- The health and safety of staff is prioritised.
- Sufficient records are kept.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies such as the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Lone Worker Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Minibus Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Local Academy Governing Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for home visits.
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits have received appropriate training, where necessary.

- Ensuring the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures during home visits.
- Ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place to cover staff undertaking home visits.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Approving all home visits and ensuring they only take place where necessary and appropriate.
- Ensuring staff understand and follow the school's home visit arrangements.
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Ensuring risk assessments are completed for home visits.
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits are provided with relevant background information and circumstances to inform the risks that may be present.

Staff conducting home visits will be responsible for:

- Following this policy for all home visits.
- Acting professionally and sensitively, with due regard to all relevant school policies and procedures.
- Seeking authorisation for all home visits and ensuring the school has all the relevant details of the visit.
- Prioritising their own health and safety during visits.

3. Home visits

Home visits will be undertaken for a number of reasons. This will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- To establish the welfare of a student, e.g. in response to an unauthorised absence.
- To work with parent/carers to support and improve their child's attendance.
- To deliver tutoring.
- To hold discussions with parent/carers where it is in the best interests of the student to be held at their home, or the parent/carer cannot attend school, e.g. due to a disability.
- To collect or drop off a student in certain circumstances, or to collect or drop off work or equipment for a student.
- To maintain contact with a student who is absent from school for a long period of time, e.g. due to an illness.

Home visits will be scheduled in advance with the agreement of the parent/carer/carers, unless the visit is due to an emergency or immediate concern, e.g. an unauthorised absence with no contact from parent/carer/carers or a safeguarding issue.

All home visits will require the authorisation of the Principal. Home visits will only be authorised where they are deemed necessary and in the best interests of the student concerned. An appointment form will be completed before a home visit with necessary details, e.g. the expected time, location, people attending, which is kept and held in the school office.

Home visits will take place during school hours wherever possible. Home visits outside of school hours will only be authorised if absolutely necessary and there is no reasonable alternative – in such cases, a responsible contact will be established to check on the welfare of staff conducting the visit.

Staff will carry an identity card which is shown upon arrival for a first visit at a home – the card will not be worn around the neck. If the student's parent/carer/carers are not present at the arranged time, staff will wait no longer than 20 minutes. If the student's parent/carer/carers do not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.

Staff will not enter a student's home if they feel unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be communicated in writing to the Principal.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the residence, the school will request that they are kept in a separate room or placed outside for the duration of the visit. If the parent/carer/carer refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled.

Any issues or incidents during a home visit will be reported to the Principal.

Where a staff member cannot be contacted or located during or after a home visit, the Principal will be notified as soon as possible to decide on the appropriate response. The police will be contacted where there is concern for a staff member's welfare.

4. Personal safety

The Principal will ensure staff are aware of the following before a home visit:

- The findings of the relevant risk assessment, i.e. the risks and how to minimise them
- The area they will be visiting and any relevant information
- Information on the student(s) involved, e.g. medical needs, any aggressive tendencies
- Relevant background information and family circumstances, e.g. aggressive tendencies, cultural sensitivities
- The potential presence of any aggressive pets
- The need to provide details of the visit, e.g. an itinerary with expected departure and arrival times
- The need to always carry a mobile phone and keep it switched on
- To never enter a home without an appropriate adult present
- To prioritise their health and safety and leave if at any point they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

A Home Visit Risk Assessment (Appendix) will be conducted by the Principal. If a particular home visit poses new or additional risks, the risk assessment will be updated before the visit.

It is the responsibility of staff conducting home visits to keep themselves safe at all times. Staff will be instructed to avoid any situations that may risk their safety. Before

entering the home and once inside, staff will identify possible exit routes and ensure they always have access to escape quickly in the event of an emergency.

Staff conducting home visits will carry a mobile phone which is kept switched on at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the school office. Staff will not carry large quantities of cash or other valuable personal possessions during home visits.

Where a staff member feels uncomfortable or unsafe at any point, they will end the visit immediately. The police will be contacted where there is a threat or use of violence.

The school office will check in by calling a staff member ten minutes into a visit's scheduled start time. Thereafter, staff will notify the school office every two hours to confirm there are no concerns. A code word will be established to enable staff to discreetly alert that help is needed if required during a phone call or text.

Wherever possible, lone working will be avoided during home visits. At least two staff members will conduct home visits together, unless the Principal decides it is safe and appropriate for a home visit to be conducted alone. All lone visits will follow procedures outlined in the Lone Working Policy.

A risk assessment for an instance of lone working will be carried out prior to the commencement of any home visit undertaken by a single staff member and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

Staff will notify the school office of any changes to the schedule of a home visit, e.g. a delay due to traffic, as soon as possible.

Details of the vehicles used by staff conducting home visits, including make, model, registration number and colour, will be held by the school. Staff driving to and from the home will follow the school's Driving at Work Policy. Where possible, staff will park in a safe and well-lit area with the car facing in the opposite direction of the property.

5. Training

Before performing their duties, staff conducting home visits will undergo the appropriate training in strategies for the prevention of violence, and other training deemed relevant by the Principal, e.g. cultural awareness.

The Principal may delegate or request a member of staff undertake a home visit – where a staff member is regularly required to undertake home visits, this will be reflected in their job description, and appropriate training will be provided.

Where possible, at least one staff member in attendance will be specifically trained in home visiting, e.g. an education welfare officer.

6. Tutoring

The Principal will ensure staff have all necessary information available on students receiving tutoring, including any SEND, additional medical needs, and known behavioural issues.

Tutoring will be delivered in an appropriate working environment and with an appropriate adult present in the home. Tutoring will not be delivered in a student's bedroom, unless no alternative suitable space is available. The door of a room where tutoring is delivered will always be kept open.

Parent/carers will be made aware of what is expected of them to ensure their child can effectively participate in tutoring, such as providing an appropriate working environment and equipment, and supporting staff where appropriate.

Staff will notify parent/carers where there is any change to the schedule of a tutoring session, e.g. a delay or ending it early.

Incidents of misbehaviour will be managed in line with the Behaviour Policy. Sanctions to be issued in the student's home will be agreed with parent/carers in advance, where appropriate. All incidents of misbehaviour will be recorded and reported to the school.

7. Attendance Officer visits

All Attendance Officers will work in partnership with the SLT, the LA's School Attendance Support Team and any other relevant partners. Home visits for the purpose of attendance support and improvement will be used in line with the Attendance Policy.

After a visit, any agreements made between an Attendance Manager and parent/carers will be recorded and kept in the student's attendance record. Reminder letters will be sent to the student's parent/carer/carers if the student fails to adhere to the agreements made during the home visit. Continued failure to adhere to the agreement will result in a follow-up visit.

If the student's attendance falls below 90 percent over the course of three months, the appropriate authorities will be notified in order for legal proceedings to be considered.

8. Child protection and safeguarding

Staff conducting home visits will carry out their work in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Prior to a staff member being assigned to undertake a home visit, the school will ensure the staff member has the appropriate level of DBS check. An enhanced DBS and barred list check will be undertaken where necessary.

The Principal will ensure staff understand the Staff Code of Conduct continues to apply during home visits. Staff will never enter a home or stay inside without an appropriate

adult present. Staff will not hold conversations with siblings or other children in the home without an appropriate adult present.

Where possible, staff will leave physical intervention for parent/carers to avoid allegations of misconduct. Where staff intervention is required, staff will act in accordance with the Positive Handling (Physical Intervention) Policy. Staff will only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it will be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff will make a record of the incident as soon as reasonably possible and share it with the Principal.

Staff conducting home visits will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible. Serious concerns about a student's immediate welfare will be reported to the police and any relevant agencies.

Any allegations made against staff conducting home visits will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and the Local Academy Governing Board.

The Principal will be responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and will amend it accordingly following any incidents or concerns. Feedback from staff who have conducted home visits will be used to inform the review process.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn term 2025.

Home visit risk assessment

Holyhead School

Assessment conducted by:	Job title:	Covered by this assessment:
Date of assessment:	Review interval:	Date of next review:

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major: Causes major physical injury, harm or ill health.	High (H)	H	Medium (M)
	Severe: Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	H	M	Low (L)
	Minor: Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	M	L	L

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
Insufficient awareness of school procedures	Staff, parents and pupils	<u>M</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has clear procedures for the undertaking of home visits which staff follow as outlined in the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance and Absence Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Lone Worker Policy Staff are clear about the purpose of a home visit and only undertake it where necessary and with the <u>Principal's</u> authorisation. Where a staff member is regularly expected to undertake home visits, this is reflected in their job description. Staff undertaking a home visit complete a form and report for each visit. School procedures for home visits are reviewed <u>annually</u> or sooner if an incident occurs during a home visit. 		<u>Site manager</u>	<u>Signature</u> <u>Date</u>

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
Inability to contact or locate staff	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff undertaking a visit ensure the <u>school office</u> is aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheduled visit and its purpose. The home address. The departure time. The transport taken and the route. Their contact number. The time the visit should be completed. Staff carry a mobile phone with them at all times and keep it switched on. Staff contact the <u>school office</u> as soon as possible to inform them of any changes to the schedule. A member of the <u>school office staff</u> calls or texts <u>15 minutes</u> in to the scheduled visit to check everything is ok. A code word is established between staff and the <u>school office</u> to make it 			

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
			<p>clear help is needed if required during a phone call or text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where staff are not scheduled to return directly to school after a visit, they notify the <u>school office</u> once they have left the home. Visits do not take place outside of school hours unless absolutely necessary – where this happens, a responsible contact is established to check on staff member's welfare. The <u>Principal</u> is notified as soon as possible if a staff member cannot be contacted or located and they decide on the appropriate response. 			
Lone working	Lone workers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two members of staff conduct a visit together, apart from circumstances where the <u>Principal</u> considers it appropriate to be conducted alone. If a member of staff has to leave for any reason, the visit is rearranged unless all present are comfortable 			

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
			<p>continuing with only one member of staff present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, a staff member trained in home visiting, e.g. an education welfare officer, accompanies other staff on visits. 			
No adult present	Staff, children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visits are scheduled well in advance at a time agreeable to all parties. A reminder is sent via text to the parent in the morning on the date of the visit. The parent is informed that they need to rearrange the scheduled visit if they may not be present at the agreed time. Staff do not enter a home or stay inside without an appropriate adult present. Staff raise any concerns with the DSL – if staff have serious concerns about a pupil's immediate welfare, they contact the police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
Aggressive pets	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff enquire about the presence of pets in the home ahead of a visit. • Parents are asked to place pets in a separate room or outside for the duration of the visit, where appropriate. • Staff do not enter a home if they have concerns about the presence of pets. 	•		
Allegations of misconduct	Staff, parents, children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand the <u>Staff Code of Conduct</u> applies during home visits. • Staff carry identification and ensure the purpose of the visit is clear upon arrival. • Staff are respectful of house rules and avoid conflict. • Staff do not hold conversations with siblings or other children in the home if a responsible adult is not present. • Only professional advice is offered during visits, rather than personal opinions. 	•		

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff only go upstairs if accompanied by a responsible adult and if it is deemed necessary and safe. • Staff never enter a child's bedroom. • Doors are left open when meeting with a pupil or delivering tutoring. • Where appropriate, notes are taken during home visits. • Staff report any issues or incidents following a home visit to their <u>line manager</u>. • The school follows procedures in its <u>Allegations of Abuse of Against Staff Policy</u> or <u>Complaints Procedures Policy</u> as appropriate. 			
Violent incident	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff receive training on violence prevention strategies. • Staff are provided with background information and personal circumstances to inform the risks that may be present during the visit and any sensitivities. 			

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is evidence or reason to believe there is a risk of aggression, at least two staff members are present at all times for the visit. A separate risk assessment is undertaken where staff are visiting a home that has been identified as higher risk, e.g. there is a history of aggression from a family member. The visit only goes ahead if absolutely necessary. Staff identify exit routes at the home and ensure they always have access. If a parent or pupil becomes uncomfortable at any point or indicates they no longer wish to continue the meeting, staff leave and reschedule the visit. Staff avoid arguments and leave the premises immediately if they ever feel threatened or unsafe. The police are contacted if there is an immediate threat or use of violence – staff exit to a safe place if possible, 			

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk rating L/M/H	Existing controls	Further action required	Assigned to	Completed
			<p>e.g. their car, and await the police's arrival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents of misbehaviour by a pupil at their home are reported to the SLT and dealt with in line with the <u>Behaviour Policy</u> once the pupil is in school. 			
Road accident	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff driving to and from the home refer to the section within the <u>Minibus Policy</u>. Staff take a first aid kit in the car. Staff park in a safe and well-lit area away from the property with the car facing in the opposite direction. 			