



Roman Road Primary School

Home Visit and Lone Worker Policy.

**January 2022
To review January 2025**

Policy Context:

Employers have a duty to do all that they reasonably can to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their staff members. The school's management has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of work and individuals have a responsibility to follow safe working practices within the community.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves, without close or direct contact with other staff members, in a wide range of situations. Lone working should be avoided wherever possible, to minimise the risks to staff members. When lone working is necessary, then both employers and lone workers have a responsibility to assess the risks and put in place strategies to safeguard staff.

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) inform this policy guidance.

This policy is also linked to the school's other policies including: Child Protection, Fire Procedure, First Aid, Medication, Health and Safety, and Risk Management, For Nursery Home Visit, please refer to Nursery Admission Policy.

Aims:

To ensure all staff who work alone on a Home Visit feel safe and that potential risks to lone workers are identified and addressed to minimise the potential for an incident to occur.

Purpose:

- ❖ To raise awareness of the potential risks brought about by lone working in order that full risk assessment can be put in place;
- ❖ To set out a framework of responsibilities for managers and staff members to minimise the risks of lone working.

Responsibilities for Lone Workers

Lone working should be avoided wherever possible. If lone working practices do need to be in place, then staff members have a responsibility to ensure they are fully aware of potential risks, follow policy guidelines set down by the school, and take action to mitigate any potential problems.

a) Home Visiting for Lone Workers

Staff are responsible for the following:

i) Before the visit:

- ❖ On the first visit, where the risks are unknown, serious consideration should be given to paired working.
- ❖ Ensuring that they have had appropriate training to conduct the visit and regularly refresh their knowledge of this Lone Working/Home Visits policy
- ❖ Obtaining information about the location of the home visit as early as possible and clearly recording this information in line with the School's procedure leaving full details of the visit, where, phone no, time, with a buddy/responsible person.
- ❖ Obtaining sufficient background information on the family (cross-checking with other agencies where possible) prior to making any home visit to check if anyone in the household is likely to be violent or aggressive. Where possible, planning visits to vulnerable areas in advance so that risk is minimised
- ❖ Requesting additional support if they feel uneasy about making a visit alone

- ❖ Making contact with the family beforehand; informing them of the reason for the visit and who will be visiting and agreeing a convenient time
- ❖ Having a working means of communication with them at all times – mobile phone etc – to ensure they can remain in contact with the school
- ❖ Signing out and back in again on the staff register when they leave the School.

ii) Travelling to the visit

- ❖ Contacting the school regularly to ensure school staff know their movements, and how they can be contacted, at all times. Staff should contact the school when they leave a home visit, so that the school staff know that they have left safely, and give details of their onward movements if they are not returning to the school. They should also advise the school if they have visited and not made contact with the family, or if there are unexpected delays.
- ❖ Being aware of their own safety whilst travelling: cars should have sufficient petrol, be well-maintained and covered by the correct insurance; enough time should be left for the journey, and expensive-looking items should not be left on display.
- ❖ Those travelling by public transport should leave extra time for the journey to avoid rushing and be aware of the last service

iii) While making a visit: (because of COVID-19 we are not carrying out full home visits)

- ❖ Wearing a name badge
- ❖ Taking care to dress appropriately: respect should be shown to the family's culture, expensive-looking jewellery should be avoided, and shoes/clothes should not impede ability to move quickly when needed
- ❖ Asking politely that any potentially aggressive animals be put in another room
- ❖ Being aware of their own safety whilst making home visits, understanding that they should leave an unsafe situation immediately and knowing in advance where the nearest place of safety is.
- ❖ Being aware of their own behaviour and the ways in which it can increase/reduce the potential for confrontation: particularly, maintaining a non-judgemental approach, being sensitive to each family's culture and circumstances, and remembering that they are a guest in the house.
- ❖ Knowing how to enable a person to have their say, and calm them down when their aggression is not aimed at them, but at the situation.
- ❖ Maintaining professional boundaries with the family
- ❖ Considering confidentiality and child protection policies
- ❖ Being considerate of the family's commitments when arranging further visits
- ❖ Ensuring that everyone is satisfied with the interaction that has taken place, and that everyone knows what should happen next, and what they have agreed is to be carried out.

iv) If violent or potentially violent incidents occur:

- ❖ Lone workers should put their own safety first and leave a situation if it feels unsafe
- ❖ If an incident occurs lone workers should call for assistance from the school or from the Police
- ❖ Lone workers should never use control and constraint techniques
- ❖ After the incident, lone workers should be debriefed, given time to recover and be given practical support from line management/colleagues following difficult home visits

- ❖ After an incident, lone workers should contact their line manager, inform them of the incident and complete an incident report form.

Responsibilities for Management

Management are responsible for the following:

- ❖ Providing safe systems of working for all staff
- ❖ Conducting health and safety risk assessments for lone working staff, ensuring that the risks of lone working are reviewed and addressed as far as is reasonably practical.
- ❖ Providing monthly field workers meetings for any staff that work directly with Families (meeting with Deputy Head) and would like to discuss issues/dilemmas this causes for them - to offload, to get ideas, to check moving on the right track with other staff in similar situations. One to one discussions of work-related dilemmas is available to field workers in addition to group support
- ❖ Ensuring that all staff are aware of the Lone Worker/Home Visit Policy and that it is part of induction for new staff
- ❖ Ensuring checks are in place to ascertain whether staff are satisfied with the safety measures in place
- ❖ That a clear system is in place to record information regarding home visits, and for lone-working staff to report their location regularly. This is particularly important at the end of the day.
- ❖ That clear systems for raising the alarm are in place, and that the response is practised.
- ❖ That vulnerable staff who cannot raise the alarm are not left alone.
- ❖ That a lone worker can request additional support for a home visit if they feel it is necessary
- ❖ That checks are in place to ensure that all staff regularly consider this policy, including within team meetings.
- ❖ Debriefing lone workers who have encountered an aggressive or **violent incident**, giving them time to recover and providing practical support.
- ❖ Monitoring all incidents and feeding them into a risk assessments

Policy Implementation

- ❖ All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.
- ❖ Lone-working staff receive appropriate training.

Arrangements for complaint

These are defined in the Roman Road's Complaints Policy.

Rationale

We feel that home visits are an important way to build positive relationships between home and school. Home visits mainly occur when a new family start with us and have no proof of address, they also take place for Foundation Stage (because of COVID-19 these are not taking place), however our Learning Mentor may carry out visits for other children throughout the school. Home visits are for both sides to share information, which is in the best interests of the child and for support to be offered, if needed. Visits also allow parents/carers to share sensitive information without fear of being interrupted or overheard and for the child to feel relaxed in their home setting.

Families should feel empowered after a home visit and feel that their views have been listened to.

Procedure Prior to Visit

- ❖ Staff should attend home visits in pairs for their own security. This could be a member of school staff or an outside agency.
- ❖ They must take the school's mobile phone and inform the office of where they are going and at which time. Details should also be entered on the school diary.
- ❖ The majority of visits should not be unannounced, however there may be certain situations, such as poor attendance, where an unannounced visit is required.
- ❖ The home visit should only go ahead if the parent/carer is present.
- ❖ A brief risk assessment should be carried out before the first home visit takes place and referred to for subsequent visits.
- ❖ A code word should be set up between the member of staff and the school office in case of emergencies.

Procedure During Visit

- ❖ Members of staff should introduce themselves and the purpose of the visit should be explained.
- ❖ One adult should lead the visit to avoid the parent/carer feeling overwhelmed.
- ❖ Notes should be taken to inform future planning for the family.
- ❖ Staff should constantly read the mood of the visit to ensure that they do not put themselves in danger, including animals.
- ❖ Confidentiality should be respected at all times, unless there is a CP concern.

Procedure After Visit

- ❖ All notes should be written up and shared appropriately.
- ❖ Referrals to be made if necessary.
- ❖ Dates for a further home visit could be set.

In Case of Emergencies

- ❖ The school office should be aware of who is making a home visit and to which family.
- ❖ The school's mobile phone number to be easily accessible.
- ❖ If the member of staff does not return at the agreed time, then the school office will ring the mobile phone.
- ❖ The Police must be called if there is no answer and there is reasonable cause for concern.
- ❖ If the school office receive a call from the member of staff and the code word is used, then the police are to be called immediately.

Home visits should always be discussed with a member of SLT and always be carried out in the best interests of the child

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Ratified by Governors