

ST MATTHEW'S BLOXAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Welfare Checks and Home Visits Policy

2026

Policy Title: Welfare Checks and Home Visits Policy

Status: Approved

Date of Approval: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

Responsible Officer: Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

1. Statement of Intent

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Regular attendance at school is a key protective factor in safeguarding children and supporting their educational, social and emotional development. Where a pupil is absent and their welfare is unknown, the school may undertake a welfare check or home visit to establish contact and ensure the child is safe and well.

This policy provides guidance for staff undertaking welfare checks and home visits and sets out the procedures to ensure visits are conducted safely, professionally and in accordance with safeguarding and attendance expectations.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Attendance Policy
 - Children Missing Education Procedures
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Lone Working Procedures
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2. Legal Framework

This policy has been written with regard to:

- Education Act 1996
 - Education Act 2002
 - Children Act 1989
 - Children Act 2004
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
 - Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)
 - Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance
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3. Purpose

The purpose of a welfare check or home visit may include:

- Establishing the welfare of a pupil whose whereabouts or wellbeing is unknown.

- Supporting attendance and engagement with education.
- Following up safeguarding concerns.
- Supporting vulnerable pupils and families.
- Delivering agreed support or resources.
- Re-engaging families following periods of unexplained absence.
- Gathering information to help determine appropriate support and intervention.

Home visits are intended to support families and safeguard children, not to replace statutory responsibilities of other agencies.

4. Safeguarding Considerations

Welfare checks and home visits form an important part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. A child's absence from school may be an indicator of unmet need, neglect, abuse, exploitation, mental health concerns or other safeguarding risks. Staff undertaking welfare checks must adopt a child-centred approach at all times and consider what is in the best interests of the child. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 makes clear that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and that attendance concerns can be an indicator that a child requires help, support or protection.

Any welfare concerns identified during a home visit must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL and recorded on CPOMS in line with school procedures.

Staff should exercise professional curiosity throughout any contact with a child or family. Information provided by adults should not be accepted uncritically where concerns remain about a child's welfare, presentation, living conditions, attendance or safety.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the DSL will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include:

- Early Help intervention
- Referral to Children's Social Care
- Contact with the Police
- Child Protection procedures
- Children Missing Education procedures
- Multi-agency working with relevant services

Information sharing will be undertaken in accordance with safeguarding legislation and guidance, recognising that data protection legislation is not a barrier to sharing information where necessary to protect children.

5. Authorisation of Home Visits

All welfare checks and home visits must be authorised by:

- The Headteacher; or
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); or
- A Deputy DSL acting on behalf of the DSL.

The purpose of the visit should be clear and proportionate.

A written risk assessment should be completed before any planned home visit.

6. Staff Conducting Visits

Home visits should normally be carried out by two members of staff.

Staff undertaking visits must have received appropriate safeguarding training and be familiar with this policy.

7. Risk Assessment

Before any planned home visit, staff should consider:

- Known safeguarding concerns.
- Previous incidents involving the family.
- Risks associated with pets.
- Risks associated with adults at the property.
- Environmental risks.
- Time of day.
- Staff safety.
- Whether police or other agency support may be required.

If staff feel unsafe at any point, they should withdraw immediately and report their concerns to a senior leader.

8. Conduct During the Visit

Staff should:

- Carry appropriate identification.
- Introduce themselves clearly and explain the purpose of the visit.
- Remain professional at all times.
- Respect the family's privacy and dignity.
- Not enter a property if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Avoid becoming involved in disputes or confrontational situations.
- Focus discussions on the child's welfare and educational needs.

Staff should not:

- Promise confidentiality.
 - Place themselves in situations where they may be vulnerable to allegations.
 - Accept gifts or hospitality.
 - Share personal contact details.
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9. Welfare Checks for Unexplained Absence

The need for a welfare check will be considered when:

- A vulnerable pupil is absent and contact cannot be established.
- A pupil subject to a Child Protection Plan is absent without explanation.
- A Child in Need is absent and welfare concerns exist.
- Persistent absence presents a safeguarding concern.
- School is unable to establish contact with parents or carers through normal procedures.

The timing and urgency of a welfare check will be determined by the DSL or Headteacher based on the level of perceived risk.

10. Professional Curiosity

Staff undertaking welfare checks should maintain professional curiosity and respectfully seek to understand the circumstances affecting the child and family.

This includes being alert to:

- Inconsistent explanations.
- Signs of neglect.

- Signs of abuse.
- Patterns of repeated absence.
- Indicators of exploitation.
- Concerns regarding mental health or wellbeing.
- Concerns involving domestic abuse.
- Any wider vulnerabilities affecting the child.

Staff should remain professionally inquisitive whilst maintaining supportive and respectful relationships with families.

11. Recording and Reporting

Following every welfare check or home visit, a record must be completed on CPOMS before the end of the working day.

The record should include:

- Date and time of visit.
- Names of staff present.
- Purpose of visit.
- Whether the child was seen.
- Details of contact with parents/carers.
- Relevant observations.
- Welfare or safeguarding concerns identified.
- Actions taken.
- Referrals made.
- Decisions reached and rationale for those decisions.

All records should be factual, professional and objective.

12. Where a Child is Not Seen

If staff are unable to establish contact with the child and family during a welfare check:

- The concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- The DSL will assess the level of risk.
- Further action may include:
 - Additional welfare checks.
 - Contact with Children's Social Care.
 - Contact with the Police.
 - Children Missing Education procedures.
 - Multi-agency safeguarding action.

Persistent unexplained absence should always be considered a potential safeguarding concern.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information obtained during welfare checks and home visits will be handled in accordance with:

- The Data Protection Act 2018.
- UK GDPR.
- The school's safeguarding procedures.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, unless safeguarding concerns require wider information sharing to protect a child from harm.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually; or
 - Earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding requirements change.
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Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____