

St Matthew's Bloxam Church of England (VC) Primary School



Welfare Checks and Home Visit Policy

April 2024

Statement of intent

- To establish a partnership between parents / carers and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents / carers in order to work together in the best interests of the child.
- To ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines to reduce risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.

Relevant legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance

- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children 2023](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#)
- [Children missing education 2016](#)
- [Pupil registration regulations 2006](#)
- [Health and safety at work](#)

Introduction and definition

St Matthew's Bloxam C E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Whilst the expectation is that all learners attend school regularly, we recognise that there may be occasions when they may be absent or need to be supported at home and this may require a home visit. Maintaining contact between home and school is an important mechanism for ensuring that a child is able to continue accessing their education and in supporting them to return to school. The safety of our children and our staff is paramount. This policy has been developed to ensure that welfare checks home visits undertaken are both safe and effective.

A home visit is a visit that requires members of staff to visit the home address of a pupil/student to see the child (as part of absence management or in the case of the pupil being too unwell to attend school); or to speak to a parent, carer, or guardian in an emergency or as part of a plan.

Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new parents / carers or build relationships where children are finding it difficult to attend school. Home visits are also particularly useful in facilitating contact between some parents / carers and school staff in circumstances where those parents / carers are genuinely unable to come into school for health/medical or other reasons.

Home visits have many benefits. For parents / carers and children, a home visit provides an opportunity to meet a key professional from the school/setting who is able to provide support to the child and/or family in an environment that feels safe, familiar and comfortable for the child/family.

Reasons for welfare check home visits

Home visits may be undertaken for a variety of reasons. This could include;

- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- Children refusing to come into school.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school; and/or attempts to contact parents / carers have not elicited a response; and/or the school/setting has any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the child.
- To work with and support parents / carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.

Home visit procedures

The purpose of a home visit is to see the child **and** to speak to the parent/carer/guardian. All home visits conducted by staff must be authorised by the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team prior to the visit taking place.

Staff undertaking home visits should:

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Follow all health and safety procedures
- Assess risks to staff for each home visit. Points to consider include:
 - What is known about the child/family? What is unknown and how could this increase any possible risk?
 - Is this a 'doorstop' visit or will the members of staff enter the home?
 - Is there an allocated social worker or other professionals working with the family?
 - Would it be helpful/appropriate/safer to consider a joint visit with another professional working with the family?

The final decision about a member of staff undertaking a home visit alone must be made by the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team.

- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a welfare check home visit is necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents / carers to come into the school).
- Ensure adequate insurance cover is in place for any off-site visits covering any vehicles used and whether staff are covered by their insurance.
- Staff to take a charged mobile phone, always two members of staff conduct home visits, take resources such as leaflets, forms, slip to say we have conducted a welfare check home visit.

During the Visit

- Having school/setting official ID available when introducing themselves.
- Being clear about and being able to explain the purpose of the visit to the parent/carer/guardian.
Only speaking to adults with parental responsibility.
- Not entering the premises if a child is found alone unless it is necessary to do so to safeguard a child in an emergency.
- Report any concerns on CPOMS on return.
- In the event that staff find a child not supervised by an appropriate adult or otherwise at risk of harm, they are expected to contact senior leadership team immediately.
- Being sensitive to and respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the parent/carer/guardian.
- Conducting themselves in a professional manner at all times, acting in accordance with school policies with particular reference to the staff behaviour (code of conduct) and child protection policies.
- Remaining in shared areas of the household during visits, only going into a child's bedroom in exceptional circumstances such as the need to see a child who is too unwell to get out of bed and only when visiting in pairs and with the permission of the child and their parents/carers/guardians.
- Terminating the visit and leaving the household immediately if the member/s of staff consider themselves to be at risk or unsafe.

After the visit

- Report back to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- If not returning directly to school, the member/s of staff must telephone the school/setting as soon as they have left the household to confirm that the home visit has finished.
- The member/s of staff should follow up any required actions as soon as possible after the visit, e.g. updating key professionals, updating school records and CPOMs, debrief with the DSL, a deputy DSL, SLT member or line manager as appropriate.

If a visiting member of staffs does not contact the school within the agreed timeframe

If the staff members who have undertaken a home visit does not contact the school at the expected end time of the visit as per this policy, school to phone first and then if no answer on 3 separate occasions to both mobile phones then phone the police to inform.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years time (unless there is a change of policy).
Review date: April 2027