



# Hampton Infant School and Nursery Home Visit Policy

| Version | Date           | Review date    | Comments  |
|---------|----------------|----------------|---|
| 1       | September 2018 |                | New policy – shared with all staff  |
| 2       | July 2018      | July 2020      | Amendments in line with new structure   |
| 3       | September 2022 | September 2022 | Amendments in line with the new transition programme. Policy shared with staff. |
| 4       | September 2023 | September 2023 |   |
| 5       | March 2026     | March 2027     | Amended Home Visit guidelines   |
|         |                |                |   |

Home visits provide valuable opportunities to build relationships and an understanding of the specific needs and issues facing individuals and families in the community.

### **Aims of a Home Visit**

- To develop meaningful attachment between the class teacher/teaching assistant and the new family.
- To recognise parents as the first educators of the child and use the information they provide to support the child emotionally during the period of initial separation.
- To establish an understanding of the child's interests at home.

### **Planning the Home Visit**

Recognising that every family matters, every family is offered the opportunity to have a home visit. It remains the parental choice whether they would like one.

Whilst undertaking home visits, staff must take necessary steps to ensure their own personal safety.

Each home visit should be purposeful, efficient and effective.

When on home visits, staff are representatives of the school and must behave in a professional manner in order to develop and sustain positive and successful working relationships.

Staff are not permitted to undertake home visits on their own.

The school will not carry out visits to a home if it is identified that there is an unacceptable level of risk.

Please note that home visits are restricted to the **TW12** area surrounding the school to ensure efficient scheduling. For those residing outside this catchment, we will arrange a face-to-face meeting on the school premises. We also respect the choice of our Nursery families, who may elect to opt out of the home visit process.

### **Prior to the Home Visit**

An induction evening for Nursery parents/carers takes place in June/July where the induction programme is shared with parents/carers. Home visits are carried out in July. The class teacher and learning support assistant attend each home visit together. All families will be informed of the home visit in writing in advance, with efforts being made to ensure the purpose of the visit is clear. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to access existing information, such as the family file and to contact other professionals involved, to make an informed decision as to any potential risks. Once home visits have taken place the families are invited to attend a stay and play session in the Nursery in September before the child starts Nursery.

An induction evening for all Reception parents/carers takes place in June/July where the induction programme is shared with parents/carers. The children and their family are invited to attend a play afternoon in the Reception playground, where they can experience playing at school with the security of their adult. Once the stay and play sessions have been completed classes are organised and parents/carers are informed of the class and teacher. The class teacher and learning support assistant attend each home visit together. All families will be informed of the home visit/face to face meeting at school in writing in advance, with efforts being made to ensure the purpose of the visit is clear. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to access existing information, such as the family file and to contact other professionals involved, to make an informed decision as to any potential risks.

All home visits should be undertaken in pairs to promote safe visiting.

Should an appointment need to be cancelled, staff and families will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Only necessary items of equipment or belongings should be taken on home visits to reduce risk of theft or loss.

If undertaking the home visit on foot, areas of increased risk such as alleys should be avoided.

All home visits should be recorded detailing the person's name, the date of the visit, the visit address, a contact number, the time of departure from the office, the time of expected return and confirmation of return. A named contact person should also be identified (The Office). A copy of this should be given to the office and the HoS.

On the day of each visit staff return to work at lunchtime and at the end of each day. The office will make contact with the members of staff if they have not returned within half an hour of the schedule return time.

Staff will carry with them a phone.

Staff will make an assessment on arrival and if they have any doubts to their personal safety they will leave the property and return/make contact with school where the HoS will discuss the perceived dangers with the Executive Headteacher and develop a strategy as to what to do next. The visit may be cancelled or rearranged for another time.

### **During the visit**

- The child has the opportunity to share any interest of theirs.
- The member of staff introduces a range of items linked to number and a story with props.
- A brief amount of information is gained to support the child on their first session when they leave their parents, e.g. favourite story, favourite toy, identify any known children, identify interests, identify any anxiety the child may demonstrate or identify strategies to overcome upset.
- Ask the parent if they have any questions or concerns.

### **Safety**

Staff should be aware of body language, appearance and social presentation whilst on home visits and behave in a professional manner at all times.

Staff should continually reassess risk during the home visit.

If no one is at home, a 'sorry you weren't in' slip should be left detailing the time of visit, name and contact number.

If an unfamiliar person opens the door, staff should make sure the parent/carer is at home and that staff feel safe before entering. It may be necessary to abandon the visit if there are any concerns.

All staff should have identification badges on show at all times.

Staff should be aware of the house layout and any exit routes. Efforts should be made to be positioned closer to exit routes.

Home visits on the way to work or on the way home from work should not occur without prior approval of the HoS.

Staff should discuss any concerns about safety or well-being of themselves or families with the HoS and log these concerns using CPOMS.

Should staff on a home visit not be able to return within 15 minutes of the specified time, they must contact the Office to advise of their expected return time.

## **In Case of Concern**

Should staff be in a situation in which they feel unsafe, they should ensure that they put their own safety first. It is better to leave an unsafe situation and find alternative ways of providing support than to risk personal safety.

Should a violent incident occur, staff should call for assistance from the Police and where possible, contact the school.

Should concerns arise regarding safeguarding, staff should return to their setting and inform the DSL of their concerns. Any concerns should be recorded using CPoms. In incidents of immediate safeguarding concern, staff should telephone the school for further instructions.

Should a member of staff not return at the specified time, attempts should be made to contact them. The member of staff responsible for tracking visits should take the following steps in order:

- Attempt to contact the worker
- Attempt to contact the location of the visit
- Contact school for further instructions.

If all attempts to contact the staff have failed, the school should contact the police.

## **When Not to Visit**

Staff should not visit a home if:

- The assessed risk of aggression, violence or harm is believed to be high.
- Violence is known to have recently occurred and the perpetrator (service user or other person) is at the address or is likely to return or arrive during the visit.
- The parents or other people present are exhibiting signs of aggression and/or intoxication by alcohol and/or drugs.

## **Personal Safety Checklist**

Below is a list of questions that may support staff to minimise risk and ensure their own safety when home visiting.

- Have I gathered all possible information that may alert me to risk?
- Do they know I'm coming?
- Did I record where I'm going?
- Did I record how to contact me?
- Did I record when I should be back?
- Is my journey as safe as it could be?
- Have I prepared only necessary belongings, paperwork and equipment?
- Is the physical environment safe?
- Is the family responding to me appropriately?
- Do I feel safe?
- Do I know my exit strategy?

## **Identified responsibility**

The school governors provide a strategic viewpoint recognising that every family matters. They will annually review the aims and procedures relating to the home visiting policy.

The HoS ensures that safety procedures are in place and devises the timetable.

The Early Years staff work as a team to support each other.

## **Family support worker**

If deemed necessary the family support worker will plan and carry out a home visit to a family they are supporting. This will be planned along with the head of school as safeguard lead. The family support worker

will ensure the visit is in the school calendar and the office staff and head of school have been informed about the home visit date and time. The family support worker will alert the office staff when they are going on the home visit and also when they have returned to school. A Google chat is set up with a member of the ELT to communicate confidentiality if needs be. Any safeguarding concerns will be logged on CPOMS and shared with the head of school.