



Home Visits Policy and Guidance

This Policy has been approved and adopted by the Stoke Hill Federation Governing Body

To be reviewed in March 2028

N.B. This policy is a supplemental policy to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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School Mission Statement:

We work together to make Stoke Hill a great place to learn, work and play.

1: Context

In accordance with the Stoke Hill Federation Health and Safety Policy, this policy and guidance is intended to ensure that all staff members undertaking home visits are safeguarded and necessary risk assessments are completed prior to undertaking visits.

All staff undertaking home visits will have had safeguarding training, signed the Stoke Hill Federation's Code of Conduct and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All home visits undertaken will be approved by the Executive Head or Heads of School and Family Support Worker prior to the visit taking place. A risk assessment will be completed before a visit takes place.

Home visits can be necessary in order to develop and strengthen relationships for the best interests of children, to identify needs, provide support and to provide advice and signposting to relevant services. Home visits will only be undertaken when it is considered necessary to do so. Home visits are not used to enforce school attendance or transport children into school.

Home visits will be pre-planned and conducted in pairs.

This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including, but not limited to, the Stoke Hill Federation Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Lone Working and Whistleblowing Policy.

2: Reasons for Home Visits

EYFS school start visits:

To help children settle into the Early Years classes more easily by providing an opportunity for the new child and their family to meet staff members from the Foundation Stage.

Safe and Well checks:

To support engagement for children who are refusing to attend school. To provide support where there are attendance concerns.

To support engagement for parents/carers when other means of communication have not been successful.

To establish that a child is safe when they have not attended school and there are concerns for their safety and well-being.

To maintain contact with a child who is unable to attend school due to a medical condition.

3: Welfare visits: 'Safe and Well Checks'

A welfare check (these can also sometimes be known as a "safe and well check") is an action taken to assess the safety and wellbeing of a person, usually a child on roll, though this could be for a parent or carer in certain circumstances, who may be at risk of harm.

Such checks commonly result due to the child not attending for a period of time and following other failed forms of contact, or where contact has been made, this has resulted in school leaders wishing to instigate a visit to the home of the child to ensure their wellbeing.

Such checks can be due to an ongoing concern, such as a child who is not attending for a period of time, or a more overt and even unannounced visit due to a single concern or following a report during the first day of absence.

At Stoke Hill we require a minimum of two priority contact numbers for parents, carers or those with PR for a child. The Federation will always contact the main number on each occasion of absence if no contact has been made to the school office. If the main contact is unreachable, the school will contact the second named person, this person does not need to be family, but they must be nominated by the parent. If this contact is also unreachable the Federation may consider a 'safe and well check' under the following criteria:

- The child has not been in school for 3 days and we have not managed to contact priority 1 or 2 contacts.
- Concerns for child safety reported from third person/s
- Persistent low level attendance with ongoing lack of engagement with school or other partnership agencies.

4: Planning for the Home Visit

Ensure you have read and understood the Home Visits Policy and Guidance.

Be clear about the purpose of the visit and confident that the visit is essential.

Risk assessments are essential for all 'Safe and Well Checks'. EYFS visits will be held on one generic Risk Assessment completed by EYFS Phase Leader.

Prior to conducting a home visit, a risk assessment must be completed. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify whether it is safe to undertake a visit and to determine if additional members of staff are required for the visit. The risk assessment will also identify any concerns about the intended visit and ensure measures are put in place to minimise any risks identified. Any concerns identified should be discussed with a member of the Leadership Team to ensure a decision to proceed is based on additional measures being put in place to ensure the safeguarding of staff undertaking the visit.

Ensure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances. Check CPOMS and wider SLT knowledge.

Wherever possible, schedule the home visit during or immediately after the school day. Do not schedule visits during the evening.

Attempts are made to contact parents/carers offering an appointment for any 'safe and well check' home visits. The purpose of the visit should be made clear to parents if possible prior to the visit.

If you have any allergies you must check with the home before the visit to ensure it is safe for you to visit.

Ensure the visit is recorded in your electronic diary or the school visits diary with the time, approximate duration and address of the planned visit.

On the day of the visit, you must ensure you sign in and out of the office and let the Office Team know the details of your visit.

Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged prior to undertaking the home visit

5: Undertaking the Home Visit

Ensure you wear your staff Identification throughout the visit.

Carry a fully charged mobile phone and check mobile reception before entering a property.

Park in a well-lit area which does not require you to reverse on leaving.

If undertaking the visit in pairs, ensure both staff are present before you enter the property. Agree a code word with your colleague to alert the colleague if you require assistance or should leave. The same code word could be used if you need to contact school to alert them that you are in danger.

Do not enter the property unless invited to do so by a responsible adult.

Do not enter the property if there is no adult present.

Be sensitive to the culture and religion of the family.

Only speak to an adult who has parental responsibility or who you have consent from the parents/carers to speak to.

Do not go upstairs in a property and do not enter a child's bedroom.

Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a concern arises during the visit, you feel intimidated, threatened or uncomfortable, try to remain calm and leave, making up an excuse to leave if necessary for example, that you are going back to get something from your car.

At the first sign of danger, leave the property immediately and report the incident to the Executive Head or Head of School. If you are prevented from leaving try to stay calm and diffuse the situation by saying you will contact a senior member of staff for them to discuss their concern with or to seek advice from.

Use an agreed code word to alert school that you are in danger. If this fails, call 999 if you can do so.

If you consider the child to be at immediate risk of danger call 999.

6: After the Home Visit

Return to school and sign in to ensure the school know you are safe. If you are not returning to school after the visit, telephone school to let them know you have finished the visit. As soon as reasonably possible after the visit, complete a written record of the visit and add to CPOMs or the EYFS visits record.

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead upon arrival back at the school or by telephone, after leaving the visit, if you are not returning to school.

Any accidents occurring during home visits must be recorded in writing as soon as possible, while events are still fresh in people's memories.

7: Procedure if Staff do not Check In after the visit

If the visiting member of staff fails to return to school or does not make contact within a reasonable timeframe of the end of the scheduled visit (30 minutes) then school will contact the member of staff.

If no contact can be made with the member of staff, a member of the Leadership Team/ Executive Headteacher will be informed.

If no contact can be established, the Leadership Team will contact the staff member's next of kin to check if any contact has been made.

If no contact can be made or there is a concern for the member of staff the police will be informed.

Appendix 1
Insert Name of School
Risk Assessment Template – Safe and Well Home Visit

All staff undertaking home visits will have completed safeguarding training and signed to say they have read, understood, and will adhere to the Stoke Hill Federation Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy. A written record of the visit will be completed following the visit.

Location of Visit:	Insert address	Date of Visit	Insert Date
Reason for Visit:			
Child/Children's Name	Insert Name/s of child/children		
Name of Staff Member/s Undertaking Visit	Insert name/s of staff		
Date visit Approved by Headteacher and Designated Lead for Safeguarding	Insert date	Signature of Approver	Insert signature (or name, if by email)

What are the hazards	Who might be harmed	How might they be harmed	Risk level (high/med/low)	What can be done to reduce or eliminate the risk	How will you know if the measures taken are successful
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Aggressive or violent parent/child/adult	Member of staff	Physical injury	Low (if no history of aggression or violence), <i>could be medium or high based on the history</i>	If previous history of aggression is known then the member of staff will not visit alone and will not enter the property - Use of mobile phone - Home Visit Policy is adhered to.	No injury sustained
Car Travel	Member of staff	Physical Injury if road accident	Low	Member of staff to drive with care, drive within the speed limits Car to be in a road worthy condition with valid MOT and Car Tax	No accidents or injury caused by the driver

				<p>Business use included on car insurance</p> <p>Member of staff to have no medical conditions, including taking medication) which can impair driving or exclude them from driving -Use of mobile phone prohibited whilst driving</p>	
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<p>Medical Conditions – Only include, if required. List any medical conditions known for the adult or child:</p> <p>Example – food allergy – nut intolerant – home environment may bring staff member into contact with nuts</p>	<p>Child Member of Staff</p> <p>Staff</p>	<p>List potential harm based on known medical conditions</p> <p>Harm caused by adverse reaction to products containing nuts</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>-If the child has a medical condition that requires additional support/medication, a copy of their Care Plan – awareness only</p>	<p>No adverse reaction or harm caused.</p>
<p>Attack by an animal</p>	<p>Member of staff Child</p>	<p>Major injury</p>	<p>Low (could be higher if you are aware of any previous incidents).</p>	<p>-check in advance if the family have any pets and ensure they are secure before the visit. - Avoid contact with or startling pets.</p>	<p>No injury sustained</p>