



Home Visit Policy

Date of Approval:	October 2024
Approved by:	Executive Team
Review Date:	September 2026

Policy Information:

Date of last review	August 2024	Review period	Bi-annual
Date approved	October 2024	Approved by	Executive team
Policy Owner	Trust Safeguarding Lead	Date of next review	September 2026

Updates made since the last review:

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
August 2024	Page 2, 3, 4, 5 Appendix 2	Trust Safeguarding Lead

Statement of Intent

Forward Education Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of trust employees when making home visits. It is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard staff and pupils and their families, who can be more vulnerable in these situations. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

The Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The roles of some staff in working with families, including family support workers, learning mentors and teaching staff, are crucial to the overall performance of the Trust. With this in mind, we have established this policy for any Trust employee who is required to make home visits.

Where possible it is preferable that work with pupils' parents/carers and families is undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it may be necessary to complete regular home visits. For this reason, the Trust believes that clear procedures must be in place and followed to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies and documents including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024/25

Introduction

- A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of family in the case of an emergency or procedural visit.
- Home visiting that includes lone working is an essential part of support work. Forward Education Trust is committed to ensuring that this does not place any of its staff in a situation of unreasonable risk.
- We aim to develop and strengthen the relationship with our parents/carers/families via home visits in the best interests of our pupils by offering targeted support to them and their families.

Personal Safety

- It is the responsibility of individual Trust employees to keep themselves safe at all times. They must avoid any situations that may risk their safety.
- The Headteacher must ensure a member of staff is not exposed to unacceptable risk by making a home visit.
- Employees should usually have an appointment before making a home visit. Confirmation of the appointment must be recorded on Cpoms or Bromcom **dependant on the individual schools' procedures.**
- Unannounced visits should be avoided wherever possible. However, they should be considered where there is a concern over the safety of a child such as unexplained absence of a vulnerable child. In this event, the employee must take all reasonable steps to keep school informed of their whereabouts and consider if the visit should be conducted by two members of staff.
- Where there is a significant and immediate concern about the safety of a child the police should be contacted, and a police welfare call/visit requested.
- Employees working off site must always carry a mobile phone, which is provided to them by the Trust. The number will be recorded and held by the Headteacher.
- If an employee is working off site, they should maintain regular contact with the school office/allocated member of staff.
- An Initial Home Visit Risk Assessment form will be completed by the visiting member of staff and a member of SLT prior to all initial home visits. If a particular home visit poses new risks or there are changes in a family's circumstances, a new risk assessment will be completed before the next visit - **appendix 2**
- All Initial Home Visit Risk Assessments forms including any updated versions, to be uploaded to pupil cpoms files before the visit.
- Risk assessments should include evaluation of any known risk factors regarding the pupil, parents/carers and any others living in the household, including animals.
- Risk assessments should consider any circumstances that may render the member of staff becoming more vulnerable to an allegation being made e.g. hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances.
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to employees who make visits outside of 'school hours' or during school holidays if staff are employed all year round.
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to visits in remote or secluded locations.
- Following a risk assessment, identified control measures must be put in place before a visit is undertaken.
- Employees making a home visit must adhere to the agreed risk management strategies identified on the visit's risk assessment.
- Details of the vehicles used by trust staff, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the school office. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date business use insurance - **appendix 3**
- If another agency makes a request for a member of school staff to make a home visit on their behalf this policy must be followed. The other agency should be asked to contribute to the risk assessment if they are already working with the family as they

may have relevant information to share, particularly the reason for their agency not making the visit

- If following completion of a risk assessment there are any remaining concerns about staff safety relating to a home visit further advice should be sought from the trust safeguarding lead.

Training

- Forward Education Trust will ensure that the induction programme for staff includes this policy and discussion about lone working and home visit guidance, where their role may necessitate the undertaking of home visits.
- Training will be made available by the Trust to employees who undertake home visits. Training will recognise the relevant experience of individuals, as well as the contextual issues relevant to their school environment and needs of pupils and their families. Training will be reviewed regularly so that it remains current, relevant and informed by the law and good practice.
- Trust employees undertaking home visits should be coached in safe practices to adhere to such as keeping visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations and positioning themselves strategically in a room to give them a direct exit route, keeping professional boundaries in place.
- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that all staff completing home visits have read and understood this policy.

Before the visit

- All staff will be familiar with the Trust's policy and procedures for home visits.
- Staff will make SLT aware if there is a conflict of interest, i.e. the family are known to them outside of work. SLT will decide if it is appropriate for the member of staff to continue with the home visit.
- Staff will ensure, where possible, that the family have been made aware of the visit and are expecting you to arrive.
- When arranging a visit, ensure that no family members have or are experiencing symptoms of any contagious or infectious disease or illnesses.
- Speak to the relevant staff members at School to ensure you are aware of any necessary background information about the family or any potential risks within the family home.
- Complete an Initial Home Visit Risk Assessment form before the first visit to a property - **appendix 2**
- All staff members should ensure that their mobile phones are charged so they are able to safely contact their colleagues if required.
- Do not take valuables or large sums of money on home visits.

During the visit

- Park in a well-lit area using a space that you can easily drive out of.
- Ensure that there are no items of value visible within the car, any such items should be locked in the boot.

- Do not park directly outside of the family home.
- Keep your keys easily accessible throughout.
- Before entering the property, staff members will ensure that their mobile phones are switched on.
- Staff members should also check that the parents/family are happy for the visit to proceed.
- Ensure that your identification badge is visible throughout.
- Once at the property staff should **follow their individual school's processes** i.e. calling the school office to let them know that they have arrived or texting an allocated member of staff.
- Be respectful of people's homes and family cultures and practices, for example removing shoes when entering or avoiding days or times which clash with religious or cultural events
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless you are accompanied by an adult and then only go upstairs if you feel it is completely necessary to do so.
- Explain that you may need to take notes during the visit and ensure that the family are comfortable with this.
- Ensure that the family are aware that the home visit will be confidential but will be securely logged and if there are any safeguarding concerns identified then these will need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- It is advisable not to accept food or drinks, which should be politely declined.
- Do not give out personal details or personal mobile numbers.
- Staff should not be left alone with a child, if you are, this should be you are in a communal place where you can leave the door open and be seen and heard.
- If, at any point, you feel yourself or anyone within the household is in immediate danger contact 999.
- If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you need to leave the property swiftly then you should terminate the visit politely and apologetically. If this is not possible and you need advice and support to do so, then make telephone contact with your School who will ask you a series of questions - **appendix 4**

After the visit

- Once staff have safely exited the property, they should follow their individual school's processes i.e. calling the school office to let them know that they have left or texting an allocated member of staff to advise them of their onward location.
- Staff will log the home visit in the child's file within 24 hours.
- If aggressive or abusive behaviour takes place during a home visit do not arrange any further home visits until the concern is discussed with SLT. Ensure to update the risk assessment in preparation for your discussion with SLT.
- Remember confidentiality and do not discuss the home visit with staff back at School who are not involved with the family.
- If required, update any areas of the current risk assessment based on knowledge gathered during a visit to inform the risk assessment for future visits.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

- Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit then will need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and logged on to CPOMS.
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Holiday periods

In the absence of school staff during holiday periods, the liaison point of contact for home visits carried out by the Family Support Workers will be the Trust Safeguarding Lead. In TSLs absence, the Family Support Workers will buddy up and become points of contact for each other. Recording systems for home visits are in place on CPOMS.

Final note

Above all else the safety of a member of staff is of the utmost importance, if there are any undue concerns that cannot be mitigated, then a solo home visit should not be undertaken. Every school should have a 'Red Folder' in the front office. This folder should contain the following:

- A copy of this policy - Home visit policy
- A copy of appendix 1 - Lone Working Risk Assessment
- A copy of appendix 2 - Initial Home Visit Risk Assessment
- A copy of appendix 3 - Lone Worker Form
- A copy of appendix 4 - Immediate Danger Support Request
- Completed Lone Worker Forms for any member of staff that conduct home visits.

Office staff should be aware of this folder and their schools' procedures.

• **Appendix 1: Lone Working Risk Assessment**

Task being undertaken: Lone Working Risk Assessment - out of office

Occupations: All staff

Date of assessment: Any

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to home visit policy • Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit • 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances • Inform reception and sign out so others aware • Take mobile phone for communication
Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone	Remote Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain vehicle properly • Belong to a breakdown organisation • Carry torch, phone etc for emergency

		Fatigue			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise team or partner where you are going • Phone in if plan changes • Do not leave valuables in the car (e.g. laptop) • Avoid risky areas where possible
Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back down from confrontation/call for help • Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised • Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk • Use public transport if available • Post incident support
Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed	Illness or injury Take mobile for communications	Remote Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert Emergency services if appropriate

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert team members if able to • Ensure access to phone • Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed • Complete injury at work protocol on return
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contact with animals • Seek local advice before entering premises with animals • Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g., sudden movements

- **Appendix 2: Initial Home Visit Risk Assessment**

Always complete prior to the initial visit. A new risk assessment should be completed **if** a family's circumstances change i.e. they move home, they purchase a new dog or become subject to a child protection plan.

Initial Home Visit Risk Assessment					
Date of initial home visit:		Visit conducted by:		School:	
Time leaving school	Time of H.V	Visit details	Expected return time	Reason for HV	
?:?:? am/pm	Start: Estimated end:	Pupil name: Parent/carer name: Address: Contact n.o:	?:?:? am/pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Support <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare Check	
Risk Assessment				YES	NO
Are you aware of any contagious or infectious disease or illnesses within the household?					
Have any risks been identified by any other agency?					
Is there anyone in the household known for violent offences?					
Is there anyone in the household known to misuse drugs or alcohol?					
Are there any pets in the household?					
Are you aware of any intimidating/ threatening persons living at or are likely to visit the property?					
Do any of the household member's smoke?					
Are you confident all safety measures are in place?					
Do you think contact should remain outside of the home? (doorstep)					
Areas of concern- please provide further context to any questions you have answered yes to:					
Overall level of risks: <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> HIGH Actions agreed to eliminate/reduce risk:					
Date: ?/??/2024		Staff Member Name:		SLT Name:	
		Signed:		Signed:	

- **Appendix 3: Lone Worker Form**

This form should be completed by every member of staff that completes home visits as part of their role. It should be reviewed at the start of the school year or immediately if there is a change in a person's circumstances i.e. change of vehicle.

Lone Worker Form

Name:		Role:	
Base/School address:		Vehicle details:	Make: Model: Registration: Colour: Work insurance: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Work mobile n.o.:		Personal mobile n.o.: (optional)	
Health conditions:		Regular medication:	Medication taken on visits? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <small>(i.e. inhaler)</small>
Date completed:		Review date: (at least yearly unless there is a change of circumstance)	

- Appendix 4: Immediate Danger Support Request

As detailed above, if you feel that you are in immediate danger whilst on a home visit, please contact the School office stating, ***“please can you look in the red folder for me?”***. The staff member receiving the call should look in the red folder and ask them the following series of questions:

