

Every Child Matters Academy Trust

Home Visiting Policy

This guidance is for members of staff who undertake unaccompanied home visits. Staff are expected to follow these guidelines at all times.

Staff Working Alone

It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure that they notify their line manager, when their work involves working alone or undertaking a home visit. This will enable the school to put in place the following monitoring procedures to ensure their safety. These include:-

Basics

- Providing staff with an official Identity Card (with photograph).
- Ensuring staff are given the opportunity to attend appropriate training for lone workers.
- Every member of staff who travels away from the school should maintain the office diary as well as their personal diary as a means of logging visits.
- Reception staff should be informed of the name and address of the family the member of staff is visiting and where possible a landline telephone number should be left.
- Staff going on home visits will not carry large amounts of money or valuables.
- New staff should have familiarisation sessions for home visits with an experienced member of staff during their induction period. They should only then complete a home visit on their own when they, and their more experienced colleague, agree they are ready. A formal risk assessment should be undertaken prior to new staff undertaking lone home visits.
- If a member of staff feels uneasy about conducting a home visit on their own, an appropriate colleague should accompany them.
- Information must be obtained about where the member of staff is visiting prior to the visit. Questions like *how many people will be at the home?* should be asked before home visits are arranged. The referring agency should give a detailed history of the family.
- The referring agency should give a detailed history of the family circumstances and any other relevant information.
- A risk assessment must be completed to ensure that there is an opportunity to feedback all relevant information from a lone home visit e.g. if they felt at risk or if there was an incident. This information needs to be formally recorded and reviewed with their Line Manager and any other members of the team to ensure any appropriate follow up action is taken to minimise any risk in subsequent visits.

Use of Private Cars

- Drivers should travel with their doors locked. If windows are open, handbags and briefcases should be kept out of sight.
- Cars should be parked in a well-lit and busy place. Multi-storey car parks, or car parks where the car and driver will not be easily visible, should be avoided.
- If a driver thinks they are being followed, they should attempt to alert other drivers by the use of lights and sounding the horn. The member of staff should keep driving until they reach a busy area, the police station or a garage, etc.

Pre Visits

- Members of staff should keep pre-arranged appointments, and notify the participant if they cannot keep them.
- Home visits should be arranged for a time during daylight hours whenever possible including during the winter months.
- Consideration should be given about the purpose of the visit. Does it pose a higher than usual threat, will it bring about a violent response e.g. an interview in connection with emotional matters. If so, it would be appropriate to ask a colleague to accompany the member of staff or an alternative visit arranged at the centre. Ensure that an appropriate room is available
- Reception staff / Line Manager should be adequately informed of the following before a member of staff leaves to attend a home visit:-
 - That the visiting member of staff is leaving the school and when they plan to return.
 - The contact details including the families name, address and telephone number has been left in the office. (Take care about confidentiality)
 - When the member of staff is entering the family home they must telephone the centre and state what time they expect the visit to be completed.
 - Details about the car a member of staff is using should be left at the centre including the make, model, colour and registration as well as the expected route they will be taking.

Staff **MUST** leave their mobile telephone switched on during the entire home visit.

Staff need to prepare themselves for difficult meetings by finding out everything they need to know before arriving and planning in their mind how they are going to deal with the situation.

A codeword or statement needs to be decided and agreed on with colleagues so the visiting member of staff can speak to them when in a home if they need back up urgently e.g. **'I can't attend the meeting'**. This will be an added safety measure if they cannot get out of the home or are feeling threatened.

Staff need to think carefully about the following procedures for ensuring their safety during home visits. They need to use their professional and personal judgement when deciding whether they are in a threatening / difficult situation. If in doubt they should adhere to the following guidelines:

During a Visit

- **Do not** enter someone's home, if they don't feel comfortable or safe.
- **Do not** enter a house if the person they have arranged to see is not there. Be aware of, and maintain, their personal safety at all times during visits.
- Always explain their role clearly and the conditions of confidentiality.
- If the participant is anxious, staff should consider encouraging them to have a carer or friend with them.
- Staff should not meet aggression with aggression.
- The member of staff's safety is of primary concern, and should be placed above completion of any planned pieces of work.

Home Visits

- When visiting a person's home, members of staff should avoid being the first to go into any room. They need to be extra careful when alone with participants e.g. fetching something from a handbag, comforting participants. They should always make sure that the exit from the room is clear and easily accessible.
- Animals in the home: if a member of staff is in any doubt about the behaviour of animals in the home, they should ask for the animal to be locked away during a home visit.
- Staff members must NEVER undertake a home visit or assessment in the bedroom.
- Personal details such as a member of staff's telephone number and address must never be given to clients.
- Staff members should not visit anyone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- If a member of staff feels uncomfortable while in a person's home, they should take steps to leave immediately.
- A professional and friendly attitude should always be adopted but over familiarity must be avoided at all times.
- Remember that the client may feel anxious about the visit. Staff should bear this in mind whilst also ensuring their own safety.

Be Alert for Signs of Danger

- A raised voice, rapid speech and babbling indicates rising tension.
- Changes in the tone and pitch as a conversation progresses may suggest anger, frustration or impending violent behaviour.
- Keep a safe distance. Everyone has a personal space, which we defend when we feel it is being invaded.
- Staff must be alert and aware of body language that may indicate developing anger e.g. flushed face, fidgeting, pointing, folded arms.

Awkward or Potentially Threatening Situations

- If an awkward or potentially threatening situation arises, this should be reported to a colleague as soon as possible.
- Formal arrangements should be in place for staff to be accompanied by a colleague for subsequent visits if there have been any incidents giving cause for concern on the first occasion.
- If, for any reason, staff are concerned for their personal safety when they arrive at the venue, then they should cancel the appointment. On returning to the office alternative arrangements should be made when another experienced member of staff can also attend a future appointment.

After a Visit

- The school must be telephoned as the member of staff leaves the home to confirm that they are safe and the visit has been completed.
- If the home visit lasts longer than expected the member of staff must contact the school to inform them.
- If the deadline passes and the member of staff has not contacted the school, the nominated colleague (usually Line Manager) should telephone the member of staff. If they cannot get a reply they should contact the police and ask for assistance.

Emotional well-being

- Staff making home visits must be given the opportunity to discuss any issues that have arisen from a visit with their Line Manager and escalate as appropriate.

This policy was approved by the Trust's Resources Committee on 8th December 2025 and is to be next reviewed in the Autumn term 2028.



Signed: _____

Designation: CEO



Signed: _____

Designation: Chair