

St Augustine's Academy



Home Visiting Policy

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hegarty', is written over a white rectangular background.

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'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.'

Matthew 5:16

HOME VISITING POLICY

Contents page

Introduction	3
Home Visiting Procedures	3
Guidelines for Home Visiting	5
Raising Alarm Procedures	6
Appendix 1 – Home Visit Full Risk Assessment	7
Appendix 2 – Home Visit Individual Risk Assessment/Checklist	10
Appendix 3 – Failed Visits	11
Appendix 4 – Tips for Personal Safety	12
Appendix 5 – Reasons for home visits	13

Introduction

This policy is designed to provide a framework for staff at St Augustine's Academy. It will help to raise staff awareness of personal safety whilst carrying out visits in the home or lone working in the community.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Attendance Policy

Please Note: If at any time you feel endangered or threatened, to ensure your own personal safety you must remove yourself immediately from the situation. This decision will be supported by SLT, who must be informed as soon as possible.

Home Visiting Procedures

1. The home visitor or other representative from St Augustine's Academy will attempt to initiate contact with the family via telephone. If a home visit is to be made as a safeguarding concern, this will usually be because contact cannot be made.
2. If a home visit is due to a child joining the EYFS at St Augustine's Academy, a letter will be sent to the family detailing visit arrangements including date, time and contact number.
3. All staff should refer to the completed home visiting risk assessment document before starting a home visit where entry to the home will take place. (see Appendix 1).
4. Prior to the visit, a risk assessment checklist may be completed to support preparation for the visit.
5. The home visitor must inform SLT if they know a family on a personal level, prior to arranging a home visit.
6. The home visitor must carry a photographic ID badge that will be shown on arrival.
7. Confirmation of the purpose of visit, and identification of the family member, must be approved on arrival. Staff must ensure they do not take any personal valuable belongings into homes (with the exception of a mobile phone).
8. If no one is at home, leave a visiting card with name and contact number.
9. Inform the family immediately if a visit needs to be cancelled.
10. It is the home visitor's responsibility to raise any concerns around feelings of vulnerability when visiting families or local areas perceived as being 'threatening'. On these occasions, every effort will be made for those workers to be accompanied on the home visit or alternatively meetings can be held at St Augustine's Academy.

11. Home visitors must keep the school informed of their movements:
 - Leave visiting address, family's name and the specific person you are visiting, time of visit and your car registration number at base.
 - Mobile phones must be taken on home visits; it is the responsibility of the home visitor to ensure the school is aware of the mobile telephone number being used and that the phone is fully charged
 - Inform school reception of the time you are leaving and your expected time of return
 - Please sign out/in appropriately
 - Your own personal safety is paramount, and must be taken seriously

12. On rare occasions that after-school-hours visits are made, SLT must be informed first. Contact must be made with SLT prior to, and on completion of, the home visit. This must be arranged prior to your home visit and approved by SLT. This could also include taking a child home (which would be done by two members of staff). This would only be in extreme circumstances or at the request of Children's Services or where a child is under Child Protection. Government guidelines are followed for all car journeys required and adequate insurance to be in place. (See <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>)

13. All visits must be recorded **appropriately** during or after the home visit. This could be the **Early Years introduction form or onto MyConcern later at school.** You must inform the family if you are making notes during the visit.

14. Before leaving, ensure the family has your name, school contact number and notification of any future visits.

15. Advice must be sought, if needed, on appropriate levels of support to meet each family's needs. If a referral to another service is required, the home visitor must liaise with DSL or SENDCo.

16. During the home visit, information about other appropriate services available should be promoted to the family.

Please Note: All staff must ensure that confidentiality is adhered to at all times.

Guidelines for Home Visiting

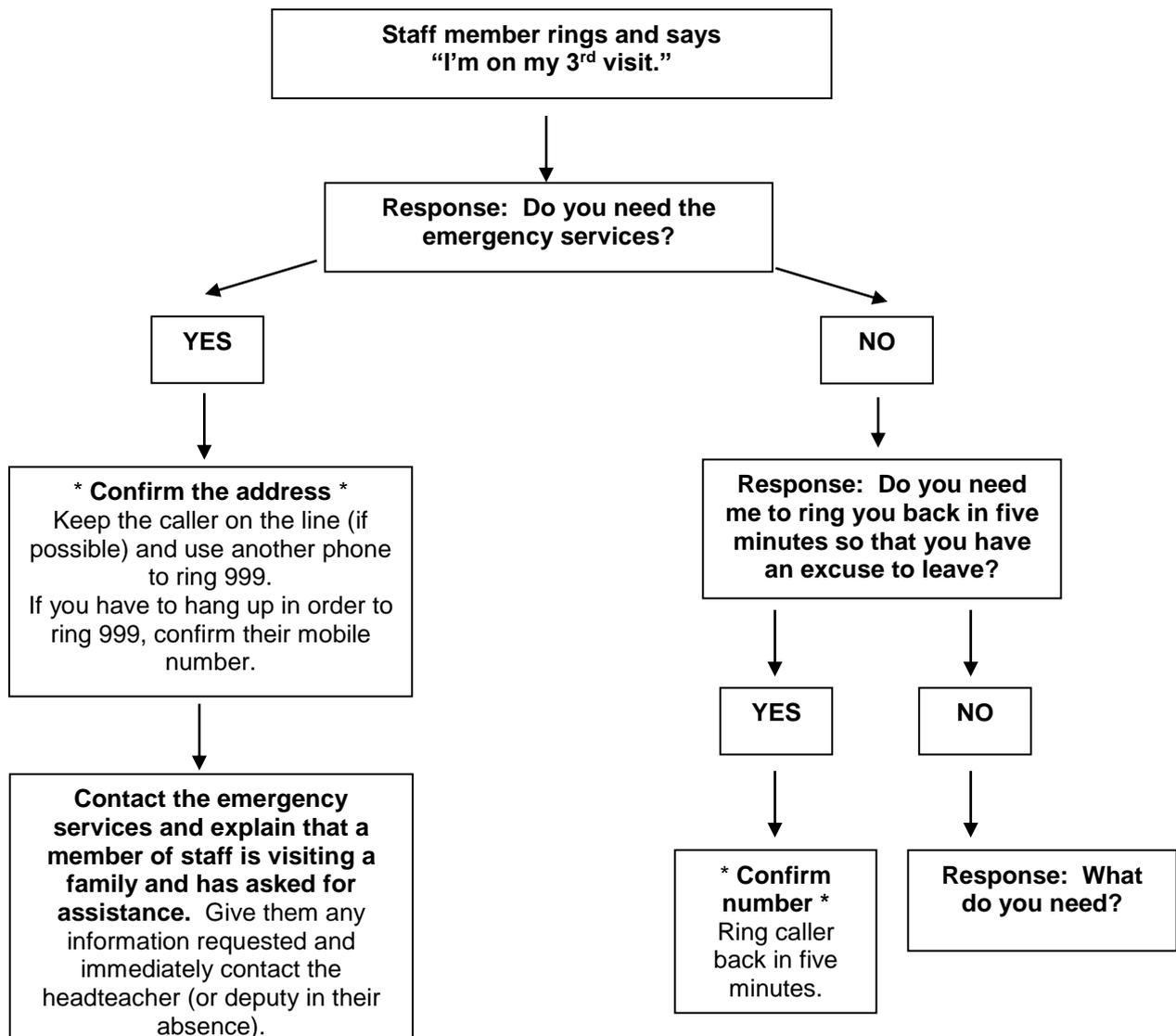
1. All families are different. Visitors must remain polite and non-judgemental at all times.
2. Avoid any situations of risk which may present as a concern, including:
 - Visiting alone at night
 - Becoming involved with people who seem to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - Presence of an animal which may cause concern
 - Visiting when a large number of unknown people are present within the house or loitering outside the property
3. Inform school reception if your expected return to base is delayed.
4. Cold calling is not recommended, unless an unannounced visit, due to non-attendance at St Augustine's Academy, is taking place. These unannounced visits should be made jointly with a colleague.
5. Parents who do not wish to be visited at home can be offered an alternative meeting place - at St Augustine's Academy, where possible.
6. Prepare yourself before a home visit. Park on main roads where possible or in an area that is open to the public. Lock valuables in the boot of your car. Do not take case notes into the house. Carry only your ID badge, mobile phone, car keys and pen and paper, if required.
7. Do not take risks in severe weather conditions.
8. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in the event of a child protection concern.

Raising the Alarm During A Home Visit

As detailed in policy:

1. All members of staff going on a home visit should leave full details of the address and family visited with the school office.
2. Staff should take a mobile phone with them on all visits. The phone should be fully charged and the number should be available to all members of the team. Home visitors are responsible for charging mobile phones after each use;
3. Home visitors should give an estimated return time from their visits so that SLT can get in touch if they are later than expected; a member of SLT will contact the home visitor if they do not return at their 'due back' time – if there is no answer after the initial call to them, a member of SLT will attend the property. If there are any issues raised on arrival at the visiting address, i.e., no access/no contact, the police will be called on 999;
4. **Should you feel threatened in any way, before or during your visit, you should attempt to remove yourself immediately from the situation;**
5. If you are unable to remove yourself and need to raise the alarm, you should ring the office and inform the person at the other end of the telephone by saying the words, **"I'm on my 3rd visit."**

What to do if someone contacts the office and says "I'm on my 3rd visit."





Appendix 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT – HOME VISITS

St Augustine's Academy		Date of risk assessment:	Date of review:
Name of Assessor	Position of Assessor		Signature

TASK - Home Visits						
Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating (H/M/L)	Further Action Required	Residual Risk (H/M/L)
Within the Home 1. Floor surfaces – slips, trips, falls	Outreach staff member	Fracture, cut, bruise	Assess condition of floor spaces, eg, paths, carpeted areas, when entering, moving within, or leaving the property	Low/medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visits during hours of darkness Ensure appropriate footwear is worn, e.g., flat-heeled shoes 	Low
2. Household furniture	Outreach staff member	Fracture, cut, bruise, wound, disease	Assess condition and suitability of furniture before sitting or using it as a worktop	Low/medium	Visual inspection of furniture	Low
3. Body Solids	Outreach staff member	Disease: Hepatitis A, general ill-health	Avoid contact with excrement If inadvertent contact is made, use appropriate disposable personal protective equipment and dispose with after use Ensure good personal hygiene practice, eg, washing hands frequently and after every home visit Vaccination will protect against viral infection Hepatitis A	Low-medium	A supply of anti-bacterial hand gel will need to be purchased and latex-free gloves if required	Low
4. Body fluids – hypodermic needles, spitting, infected sharps	Outreach staff member	Hepatitis B virus, puncture wound, cut, abrasion	Assess environment for presence of needles and other sharp objects If inadvertent contact with body fluid or cut with needle or sharp object, wash area of contact immediately and seek medical attention	Low	Arrange alternative meeting venue if possible A supply of anti-bacterial hand gel will need to be purchased and latex-free gloves if required	Minimal Low

TASK - Home Visits						
Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating (H/M/L)	Further Action Required	Residual Risk (H/M/L)
			Inform supervisor as soon as possible		Vaccination will protect against viral infection Hepatitis B if appropriate	
5. Lice or flea infestation	Outreach staff member	Skin surface irritation	Assess for visible signs of infestation, e.g., on carpets, furniture, that may be seen as moving specks on a white background or moving specks on lower walls If there is a suspected infestation, inform line manager on return to school	Medium	Contact Environmental Health team if infestation is evident. May need to attend GP appointment Arrange alternative meeting venue if possible	Medium
6. Agressive Animals	Staff	Bites, cuts, bruising	Ask owner to move animal to another room. If animal remains in the room, avoid any sudden movement and avoid physical contact with the owner or the animal! If bitten, wash well with soap & water and seek medical attention	Medium	During your initial telephone contact with the family find out if there are animals in the home. Request that during your visit the animal/s are moved to another room Arrange alternative meeting venue if possible	Medium
7. Unhygienic surfaces	Staff	General ill-health	Avoid contact with unhygienic surfaces. Avoid drinks or food from the area Wash hands as soon as possible	Medium	A supply of anti-bacterial hand gel will need to be purchased and latex-free gloves if required	Medium
8. Unhygienic conditions, e.g., odours, refuse, poor sanitary conditions, vermin	Staff	General ill-health	Minimise exposure to conditions Avoid eating and/or drinking in the area Wash hands as soon as possible Inform line manager and consider a referral to Environmental Health Services	Medium	Supply of anti-bacterial hand gel available for staff	Medium
9. Electricity	Staff	Shock, burns	Visual assessment of the area on entry to property Staff must not operate, connect, disconnect or repair any electrical apparatus without training or prior authorisation from supervisor	Low	Contact emergency services/GP/A&E if needed	Low

TASK - Home Visits						
Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating (H/M/L)	Further Action Required	Residual Risk (H/M/L)
10. Physical attack	Staff	Fracture, head injury, cut, bruise	<p>Pre-visit risk checks</p> <p>Assess environment for potential weapons</p> <p>Appropriate training and support from SLT</p> <p>Ensure exit route is available at all times</p> <p>Use office procedures, e.g., Home Visiting Policy. Also ensure a contact number and your car details are left back at school</p>	Low	<p>Accompanied visit if appropriate with colleague or alternative setting visit</p> <p>All staff to use and be trained in the office procedure</p> <p>Ensure that the person visited knows that colleagues are aware of your whereabouts and leave your mobile telephone switched on. All staff to be aware of Home Visiting Policy</p>	Low
11. Verbal abuse	Staff	Psychological /emotional distress	<p>Always have mobile phone available for two-way contact</p> <p>Pre-visit risk checks</p> <p>Appropriate training, e.g., safeguarding, etc</p> <p>Regular supervision with SLT</p>	Medium	Offer to meet with colleague at St Augustine's Academy	Medium



Appendix 2 – INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT to be used prior to any initial home visit*
*** Not Mandatory**

Risk Assessment Checklist for home visits: before each home visit check the following:

Action	Notes
Have you contacted the family by telephone to arrange a suitable appointment date and time?	
Have you checked there are animals in the home? If so, have you requested all animals are moved to another room?	
Have you sent a letter out to confirm the visit appointment?	
Have you read any relevant paperwork about the family/child?	
Have you informed SLT of visit and provided information to office staff?	
Have you got your ID badge, mobile phone and pen and paper?	
Is a joint visit required?	
Is a setting visit required?	
Is there any information from your visit that you need to share with SLT? Have you completed an incident form (if needed)?	

This form should be kept with home visit documentation.

Signed **Date**



Appendix 3 – FAILED VISITS

- Staff must make a knock on the door at least twice
- St Augustine's Academy calling card must be left before leaving the family home, detailing that you called and will arrange another visit (for EYFS only)
- For visits that are made regarding non-attendance at school, a safeguarding calling card will be left.
- Staff must make every effort to re-visit the family at home or make contact through school at a later date (EYFS visits only)
- Contact the family, either by telephone or letter, with a new date of visit and also state that parents have the option to meet at St Augustine's Academy if more convenient (EYFS visits only)
- Staff must not visit families perceived to be living in a threatening area unless made as a joint visit and with prior consultation with SLT
- Staff must always work in accordance with this policy



Appendix 4

Tips for personal safety when visiting families at home or at other premises

- Consider if the meeting could take place at a safer venue
- Ensure you are aware of and able to follow your school's safe systems of work/risk assessments
- Review any sources of information that may be available regarding the family and the premises, i.e. previous information, police, etc.
- Assess if family information justifies taking extra precautions, i.e. taking a colleague to accompany you on the visit
- Ensure a responsible person at your base knows where you are visiting or working, who you are visiting, when you are visiting or working and when you expect to finish
- Agree communication procedures and methods, e.g. mobile phone, two-way system, etc.
- Agree an emergency response in the event of danger or no communication
- Consider if a personal attack alarm is required
- Always make appointments for home visits
- Arrange visits during daylight and working hours
- Plan travel arrangements and parking if needed, avoid parking or walking in poorly lit areas
- Visit the bathroom prior to the visit
- If someone attempts to take something from you, let them have it but throw it onto the floor to distract them, allowing you to escape
- Be on time for appointments; contact the client if you are going to be late
- Do not peer through letterboxes
- State clearly who you are, where you are from and provide ID
- Clarify who you are talking to
- Do not enter premises unless invited by a responsible adult
- Ensure that any family dogs are safe or under control before entering
- If you feel uneasy do not enter the premises or a particular room
- Only sit if the client intends to do so and choose a seat near an exit
- Ensure your mobile phone, two-way system or panic alarm is accessible
- If you start to feel threatened or an incident occurs, collect your belongings, stand slowly and move towards the exit. Briefly explain why you are leaving and how the meeting can be re-arranged
- If someone attempts to prevent you leaving, stay calm, be assertive, talk and ask questions, this may deter or distract the person enough to allow you to escape
- If you have a personal attack alarm, use it or shout to draw attention and distract the assailant
- After the visit, report back to SLT at the earliest opportunity



Appendix 5

Reasons for home visits.

There are a number of reasons why home visits may be carried out. These may include:

- New pupils to EYFS – home visits are always offered to parents/carers as part of the transition procedures.
- Following the school's attendance policy – if contact cannot be made with parents/carers on the first day of absence a home visit will be carried out to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child (and their family members)
- If a child has been absent for more than 5 school days and no medical evidence has been provided, contact with parents/carers will be made and a home visit may be carried out in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and to offer support, as necessary.
- As part of the Early Help process, Child in Need or Child Protection plans in order to assess/support parenting needs
- For children who are Missing in Education