WELFARE VISIT POLICY

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1. WELFARE VISIT DEFINITION

A welfare visit requires a member(s) of staff to visit a student's address and possibly enter the home of a parent, carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

2. AIM

The aim of the welfare visit is:

- To check on the wellbeing of a student, particularly if they have been absent from School for a long period of time.
- To establish a partnership between student, parents, carers, guardians and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents, carers and guardians for the best interests of the child.

Home visits are important in helping the School to contact new or hard to reach parents, carers and guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the student, parents, carers and guardians to still have contact with the School, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into School.
- When there are attendance issues/concerns.
- When students are being educated at home due to medical needs, tuition or are in the cooling off period of home education.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- To meet with parents, carers and guardians to discuss an issue regarding their child, where it is in the best interests of the child to have the discussion in their own home rather than at School, or where it would be difficult for parents, carers and guardians to attend School for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
- To establish that a child is safe if they are absent from School and attempts to contact parents, carers or guardians have not elicited a response, and there are welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parents, carers and guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend School where attendance is an issue.

- To collect from or drop a child off at home where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- To visit a child who has been off School for a period of time, for example, due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from School.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example, when a child is not at School and is reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy reflects the responsibilities laid out in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Children missing education
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

4. PROCEDURES

The aim of the policy is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.

Before the visit staff should:

- Be familiar with the School's policy and procedure.
- Ensure that a welfare visit is necessary, If possible and/or practical, arrange for the parent/carer to come into school.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Gain authorisation from the Head of School, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead when the visit has a safeguarding focus.
- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information
- Conduct a risk assessment and make sure, if required, that an appropriate member of staff is able to accompany you. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Wherever possible make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send an email or letter. This may not be appropriate in some cases. Use the contact to give the parent/carer an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit.
- Log any home visits planned with the reception team, with times and venues.

During the visit staff should::

- Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times.
- Carry a mobile phone.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification, do not use a necklace lanyard.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility or another responsible adult who a parent, guardian or carer has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given permission to speak about the student for whom the welfare visit is for.

- Do not go upstairs in a property.
- Do not enter a child's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised, contact the School's safeguarding team straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- Request that all animals in the home should be kept in a separate room/space if you enter the home. Cancel the visit if the responsible adult refuses or is unable to adhere to the request.
- Be sensitive to the culture and religion of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Take notes for ease of recording the content of the visit afterwards, and explain to the parent/carer that the notes will only be shared with the relevant staff.
- Be sympathetic, but remain neutral.
- Do not get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the School or staff.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
- Leave the property immediately if you feel uncomfortable, or at any risk. Once in a place of safety, inform appropriate staff (e.g. Head of School or the DSL) of the incident to agree appropriate next steps and obtain support.
- Consider the Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures at all times, and call 999 if they feel a child is in immediate danger.
- If no one is at the property leave a compliment slip stating the time and date of visit.

Where a visit is not practical a video call can be used:

- If there are no concerns about the student's safety and it is not a regular check.
- If it is for the expressed purpose of keeping-in-touch with students who cannot come to School and are receiving medical needs tuition.
- If a student has moved out of the local area but have not left the School roll.
- If a student is not attending due to high anxiety and a face-to-face visit would be very difficult for the student.

This can only be used where a Senior Leader has assessed the situation and deemed this appropriate.

After the visit:

- Report back to the School and record the visit on CPOMS. This will ensure that any issues or concerns raised are responded to.
- Only discuss individual home visits with other staff members where relevant and/or necessary.

Any safeguarding concerns arising from welfare visits should be reported and discussed with the Safeguarding team as per the Child Protection and Federation Safeguarding policies.

Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt wi
accordance with our allegations against staff policy.

APPENDIX 1 – WELFARE VISIT RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment completed by:

Date of risk assessment:

Name of pupil/s:

Contact details & address for visit:

Reason for visit:

HAZARD	RISK RATING	CONTROLS	ACTION: WHO?	ACTION: WHEN?	DONE

Possible hazards include:

- An aggressive or violent parent/carer, pupil or family member
- A member of the household using illegal substances
- Attack by a dog or other animal
- Car accident
- False allegations
- Infectious disease in the household