

HOME VISITS POLICY

Accepted by: Local Governing Body, March 2022

Approving Body : Local Governing Body

Committee : Local Governing Body

Review Cycle: 3 years

Last reviewed: December 2021

Date for next review: March 2025

Statement of intent: Swift Academies firmly believes that regular contact with parents and carers is essential to the successful academic and social and emotional development of pupils. At Swift Academies we aim to maintain high standards of effective communication, safeguarding and attendance. With this in mind, Swift Academies has established this policy for any staff members who make home visits. Home visits are a useful way to support parents/carers and develop home/school relationships. A copy of this policy will be made available on the school website.

Home Visit Definition: A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to visit or enter the home of a parent, carer.

Possible reasons for home visits:

- Welfare checks/safeguarding concerns
- To make contact with new or hard to reach parent/carers
- To visit pupils who are refusing/reluctant to attend school
- Where there are attendance issues/concerns
- Children Missing from Education (CME)
- When students are being educated at home due to exceptional circumstances.
- To hold multi agency meetings
- In exceptional circumstances staff may collect/drop off pupils at home/school.
- Drop off and pick up by bus staff.
- Family support

Before the Visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Take a work mobile which is fully charged
- Ensure the 'What3Words' app is downloaded on the work phone if possible so you can tell someone a precise location in case of emergency. First responders use this app and it is far more precise than map apps.
- Ensure the school number is in your contacts on the work phone.
- Ensure transport has plenty of petrol and is good working condition.
- Ensure the office have the vehicle registration, make, model, colour and up to date insurance certificates.
- If possible and practical arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, where possible home visits should be conducted in pairs.
- Collect any necessary documentation.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. parent/carers, with or without the child.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Inform staff in the school office of your intended location/s before departing for any home visit. Give as much detail as possible including estimated times, addresses and names of residence. Add these details to your works diary and share with relevant staff where appropriate.
- Take identification and paper and pen to record any necessary details from visit or to leave a notice of visit if there is no answer at the property.



During the Visit

- On arrival, if possible, park in a well-lit area and facing in the direction you need to leave in.
- Leave laptops, valuables etc in boot of car or somewhere not visible.
- Do not approach the property if you feel uncomfortable for any reason or unsafe.
- Be aware of dogs in the house which may turn aggressive during a visit.
- Dress appropriately (Professionally and in shoes that will enable you to make a quick exit if necessary).
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult and you feel safe.
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- On entering the property look for exits and sit as close to the door as you can if possible.
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then **ONLY** if you deem it completely safe to do so and **necessary**.
- Assure parent/carers that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the police on 101 and remain outside the property, keeping the child in sight if possible until police arrive.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999 and remain outside the property, keeping the child in sight if possible until police arrive.
- If you feel **unsafe** at any point during the meeting, look for an exit and explain you need to return to school for another appointment.

Actions to take if you are feeling threatened

- If you are threatened or prevented from leaving then stay calm and try to control the situation. Speak confidently, slowly and clearly so as not to be enticed into an argument – de-escalation is key.
- Try to diffuse the situation by saying ‘ I will ring school and get some advice.’
- Ring school - use the codeword **Fred** try to use the following mantra: ‘I just need to speak to **FRED** as I’m at ***** with ***** if they are not available can you let them know I’ve called.’ and end the call. – The person in the office needs to ring the police. **The word FRED indicates it is an emergency situation. If possible, leave the property.**

After the visit

- Immediately leave the street out of site of the property to make the call to the office to confirm you are safe. Any notes or calls should be made away and out of site. At the end of each home visit contact the school office to let them know you are safe before visiting another property.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy as soon as possible.
- Record visit on CPOMS -factual account with dates and times.
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from their memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the head teacher as soon as possible.