WELFARE VISIT POLICY

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1. WELFARE VISIT DEFINITION

A welfare visit requires a member(s) of staff to visit a pupil'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 pupil, particularly if they have been absent from school for a long period of time.
- To establish a partnership between pupil, 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.

Reasons for home visits:

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

- Pupils are refusing to come into school.
- When there are attendance issues/concerns.
- When pupils 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 that discussion in their own home rather than at school or where it would be difficult for parents, carers and guardians to

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attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.

- To try and 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 pupil.
- 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 reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

3. 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:

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Discuss with the school senior leadership team (SLT) whether it is deemed appropriate for the visit to be made alone or whether an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety.
- If required, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; home visits should be conducted in pairs. 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 a letter. This may not be appropriate in some purposes.

During the visit:

- Dress appropriately.
- 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 pupil 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 from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- 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.
- 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 Facetime video call can be used:

- If there are no concerns about the pupil's safety and it is not a regular check.
- If it is for the expressed purpose of keeping-in-touch with pupils who cannot come to school and are receiving medical needs tuition.
- If a pupil has moved out of the local area but have not left the school roll.
- If a pupil is not attending due to high anxiety and a face-to-face visit would be very difficult for that pupil.
- Only where the school senior leadership team has assessed the situation and deemed this appropriate.

After the visit:

- Report back to the school and record the visit on CPOMS.
- Any child protection concerns arising from welfare visits should be discussed with the safeguarding team on arrival back to school.