



Hart Hill Nursery School

Home Visit Policy

Updated Summer Term 2024

Ratified by SLT on 13/5/24

Signed 

To be updated Summer Term 2027



Rationale

Hart Hill Nursery School prides itself on making good partnerships with parents and families, which can be retained and trusted throughout the time that they are part of the school. Home visits are used for a variety of reasons including to meet children before they start school, in an environment they are familiar with, to support families with attendance, to support children who are vulnerable or undergoing medical treatment that prevents them from attending school, to name a few. Home visits allow for families to feel supported and give the opportunity to discuss things that they may not wish to discuss in the school environment.

Aims

Hart Hill Nursery School aims to use home visits to inform of key information. We will ensure:

- Parents are notified of a home visit in advance, unless they are welfare checks organised in agreement with health visitors or social care
- Parents are aware that home visits are advisable, however it is optional and not an inspection
- Parents are fully aware of the purpose for the home visits and the outcomes the school are looking for
- Two practitioners will always carry out a home visit (this could include one member of staff and a health practitioner) and will carry ID to identify themselves with the family
- A timetable of home visits will be left at reception prior to attending home visits, with contactable mobile number of the lead person on the visit
- A debrief from a home visit will take place with the line manager of the practitioner carry out the home visit
- Any concerns or support discussed are followed up immediately, discussing the outcomes of any recommendations with parents clearly, including where a home visit has been arranged and not been able to be carried out
- The list of prohibited addresses are checked prior to arranging a home visit to ensure the LA deem the staff safe
- Staff will complete safer working practices training to highlight how to keep themselves safe when taking part in home visits

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. They should ensure that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds and must handle complaints regarding this policy in accordance with our Complaints Procedure. The governor responsible for Parental Partnerships should ensure that effective partnerships for working with parents and other practitioners are established and that the impact of these partnerships is monitored. They will also monitor how parents are kept up-to-date with the agreed outcomes for home visits. The safeguarding governor is responsible for challenging the school on their response to safeguarding concerns that become apparent both before and prior to a home visit, as well as how these concerns are communicated to other agencies.

The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the policy, in partnership with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will review the policy, in liaison with the Family worker/DSL and members of the senior leadership team. The designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure all houses have been checked on the prohibited addresses list prior to home visits being carried out and will ensure all staff receive training on how to keep themselves safe whilst conduct a home visit. Both the DSL and the Headteacher are responsible for ensure that all staff receive a debrief of a home visit, when carried out, and ensure time is set aside for this accordingly.

Where the home visit is for new starters, the Class teachers, room leads or the School Business Manager are responsible for ensuring that all home visits are planned and organised and then any feedback is given on a need to know basis to support families in all their needs. Any actions from home visits, by themselves or other practitioners must be monitored and updated on the Cpoms system.

Where the home visit in a visit due to lack of attendance or a safeguarding concern, and therefore may not planned – or announced to the parents, the most senior member of staff conducting the home visit must inform the Headteacher of the purpose for the visit, the address that is being visited and the approximate time due back at school.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they take their own safety seriously when completing a home visit. They will debrief the home visit with the lead practitioner for the home visit and ensure they carry out any actions agreed as soon as practically possible. All notes from home visits will be inputted into the Cpoms system at the earliest convenience, so that the school as an honest and up to date log of the home visit.

Purpose of a Home Visit

By opening up dialogue with parents about topics that may initially be uncomfortable, allows the school to help and support the family. Home visits may take place for a number reasons, including, but not restricted to:

- Transitional Home Visits take place prior to a child joining the school – this visits allows key staff member in the classroom (normally class teacher and keyworker) to meet a new child in an environment, which is supportive and familiar. It allows the staff to discuss any concerns the parents have about their child’s first school place and to find out very important information to support a smooth and productive settling in period into the classroom. During this time, staff will discuss the timetables, school expectations and find out about any allergies, medical condition or requirements that may need the school to adjust practices.
- Attendance Home Visits take place with the Family Worker and the child’s keyworker or class teacher, when the school is concerned about a child’s attendance. This procedure follows the school’s attendance policy and is a way to listen to and support families to improve the attendance of their child in school. The home visit will discuss struggles the family are having and ways that the school can help, including the reasons why regular attendance at school is so important, even for young children.
- SEND Support Home Visits take place with the SENDCO and a member of the class team, to support parents to put strategies into place that the school are working on. This is so support a consistent approach can take place and help the parents to see how they can alter the school interventions to help with every day life. These home visits may also support

families who are struggling with a particular issue, such as eating, behaviour, sleeping and may also involve the family worker, so that we can seek additional support from external agencies across Luton; this may then involve the family worker, rather than the class team.

- Family Support Home Visits take place to support families who may be struggling with housing, filling in paperwork, family/adult mental health. These home visits are to support the family, often the parents to make targets and look at ways to improve the environment for themselves and their child.
- Unannounced Safeguarding or Welfare Home Visits take place when there is a concern about a child. These visits often take place if parents have not been in contact for a period of time despite an absence from the child, or if an external agencies notes a concern, which the school can support the family with. The external agencies who could request support with an unannounced home visit include Children's or Adult Social Care, the Health Visiting Team or the Police.

Conducting a Home Visit

Where home visits are planned, parents should be notified in advance and the school should try to arrange a time and day that works for both the school and parents. A member of SLT, preferably the Designated Safeguarding Lead, should be noted of the home visit, including the purpose of the visit and the outcome that the school would like from the visit; these points should be made clear to the parents prior to the visit, where possible.

Visits should be conducted by two members of staff, including at least one who works with the child or family on a regular basis; this allows one to discuss the points of the visits and one to either make notes or to play/interact with the child, depending on the purpose of the visit. Where staff travel in separate cars, both staff should be present before knocking.

Although most home visits are a positive experience for families, all staff planning to attend should ensure that they have received safer working practices training to ensure they know how to remain safe at all times. Where staff do not feel safe, they should explain this to the parents and leave the premises immediately; Staff must contact the police, if they feel they are in immediate danger. If there are potentially dangerous animals in the house, staff members must request that they remain in a separate room. If this is refused, the visit will be cancelled and relevant outside agencies will be informed appropriately.

The lead practitioner carrying out the home visit is responsible for ensuring that the main office have a copy of the address and time planned for the home visit, as well as an emergency contact number and details of the vehicle they are using to attend the home visit. Members of staff should take a compliment slip to the home visit, in case they need to write any information down for parents to retain, or need to post a message through the door, if parents are not available. Both members of staff must carry their school ID and be prepared to show this if asked.

Staff should not call the family from personal mobile telephones if no one answers the door; staff should call the school and the school will call the parents to explain that staff are at their house awaiting a meeting. Where a parent expresses that they are running late, the staff can be expected to wait for a maximum of 10 minutes before returning to school, in agreement with the Headteacher.

The visit will normally take around 15 minutes, however, should not take longer than 30 minutes, unless a planned intervention is taking place, which has been agreed by the Headteacher prior to booking the visit. After the visit all relevant information should be transferred to the Cpoms system to record the visit, including amount of time spent, purpose of visit and outcomes from visit, including any further actions to be completed and by whom.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the three year policy cycle. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff by the Headteacher. The governing body will agree this policy and challenge the school effectively to ensure that measures are taken to ensure its implementation.

All members of staff directly involved with carry out home visits of any nature are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined as part of this policy, including Working Together to Safeguard Children and should ensure they have received safer working practices training linked to home visits from the DSL prior to carrying out a home visit.