



St Nicholas Catholic High School

Home Visits Policy 2023

To be read in conjunction with:

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy (2022)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)

Suzy Lamplugh Trust <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

Version Control

Current version	Previous version	Summary of changes made
March 2023	March 2022	Addition of Contents Table
March 2023	March 2022	Addition of Principles and Purpose Section (previously untitled)
March 2023	March 2022	Appendix One: addition of ' <i>and uploaded to CPOMS</i> '

Policy Impact Statement	
Policy:	
This Policy has been implemented:	
Fully	
Partially	
Occasionally	
Not at all (give reasons why)	
What revisions need to be made:	
To the Policy?	See Version Control Above
To its implementation?	

1	Principles and Purpose
2	Aims of Policy
3	Procedure prior to the visit
4	Procedure during the visit
5	Procedure after the visit
6	In case of Emergency
7	Risk Assessment
8	Guidance for Home Visits
9	Further Points

1. Principles and Purpose

St Nicholas Catholic High School is a strong, positive, and friendly Catholic community. We are fully committed to equal opportunities and believe that every member of the school community has the right to realise their potential in a safe and happy environment. We feel that home visits can be an important way to build positive relationships between home and school.

Home visits are for both home and school to share information, which is in the best interests of the student and to develop an understanding of the most appropriate support needed.

Families should feel empowered and engaged after a home visit and feel that their views have been listened to.

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy is needed:

- To ensure that home visits are well managed and safe.
- Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new and to look for different solutions to support families.
- To support parents with students refusing to come into school or who are continually ill.
- When attendance for a student becomes an issue/concern.
- When a student is off school for a sustained period due to medical issues.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.

This policy is to be read and implemented as a code of practice by all staff and governors at St. Nicholas Catholic High School conducting or governing home visits. All visits **MUST** be logged and approved by the relevant Assistant Headteacher. Members of staff likely to

conduct a home visit are: Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding and Welfare Officer; Learning Mentors; SENCO; Learning Support Assistants.

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

- Show respect for parents/carers/families as equal partners in the relationship.
- Make appointments where necessary. Always try to contact the family via phone before leaving for the appointment. (Contact from the family might be limited if the home visit is due to a safeguarding concern).
- Accept families' rights not to want a home visit.
- Confirm parents/carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child.
- Do not assume that all parents are literate. Other issues may prompt the staff to contact bilingual support services for the family.
- Consider issues of social, cultural and religious differences.

Working in Partnership with other Agencies

- Communicate with other agencies already involved with the family
- There is a need to clarify the role of other professionals involved to avoid duplication and so that staff are not working at cross-purposes with other agencies.
- Evidence of good practice is where two or more agencies liaise and support each other with a clear common aim of assisting the student/family to overcome barriers to learning.

3. Procedure prior to the visit:

- Inform the School Office where you are visiting and leave details of the address, the School mobile phone number, a code word and expected time of return. This information will be written on the whiteboard in the Office.
- Home visits can be undertaken by **two** members of staff / another professional or by a single professional. Single professional home visits should only be considered if:
 - i) The home has been visited previously by school staff and no concern has been raised
 - ii) The reason for the home visit is not likely to cause an adverse response from the family
 - iii) The home visit has been arranged in advanced and the parent / carer has confirmed they will be present
- The majority of visits should not be unannounced; however, there may be certain situations, such as poor attendance, where an unannounced visit is required.
- A brief risk assessment (Appendix 1) should be completed before the first home visit and referred to for subsequent visits.

4. Procedure during the visit:

- Before entering the home ensure you show your ID card and introduce yourself.
- Demonstrate normal courtesy - wait to be invited into the home.
- One adult should lead the visit to avoid the parent / carer feeling overwhelmed.
- Notes should be taken to inform future planning for the family.
- Staff should constantly read the mood of the visit to ensure that they do not put themselves in danger: use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels threatening then leave, saying for example, that you are going back to get something from your car.

5. Procedure after the visit:

- It is important that all contacts with children and families are recorded by completing a Post Visit Report (Appendix 2)
- A note should be made of all people present at the meeting, dates and times etc.

6. In case of emergency:

- All details of the visit, including the agreed code word, must be clearly write on the Office whiteboard.
- If the member of staff does not return at the agreed time, then the Office will ring the mobile phone.
- The Police must be called if there is no answer and there is reasonable cause for concern.
- If the Office receive a call from the member of staff and the code word is used, then the Police must be contacted immediately.

7. Risk Assessment

- Check records as to what is known and information available.
- Talk to other professionals who may have already had contact or had involvement with the family.
- Discuss with your Line Manager what strategies to adopt when working with a potentially difficult parent/carers/family.
- Where there are deemed to be potential risks, contact the family by phone/post and invite them into school.
- Meet them in another public place if appropriate, e.g. Children's Centre or Health Centre.

8. Guidance for Home Visits

- An estimated time of leaving and returning should be provided. A mobile phone should be taken on the visit. The school should be aware of the mobile phone number. The phone number of the home being visited should also be readily available.
- Staff should apprise themselves of any previous visits by other staff and acquire background information from colleagues or other agencies if this is available.

- Staff should be fully acquainted with the location of a student’s home and how to get there to avoid having to stop and ask for directions.
- Staff should have the appropriate insurance cover for their cars as such visits are regarded as ‘business’ by insurance companies.
- If staff are anxious on arriving at a location and feel their safety could be jeopardised, they should not take the risk of proceeding further. They should telephone the home and advise that they are unable to attend. Alternative arrangements should be made.
- Staff should not enter a home if the child is home alone.
- Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent problems in the future.

9. Further points:

- Travel plans should only be changed if relevant staff have been alerted.
- Staff may consider the carrying of a personal alarm.
- Public transport must not be used, unless agreed in advance by a member of SLT.
- Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential danger the person visiting should make a speedy exit from a home. Staff should never assume that violence wouldn’t happen to them. While there are hundreds of home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incident should be reported to the Line Manager immediately.

Reviewed by: Student Welfare & Progress Committee	Date: 29 March 2023
Ratified by Governing Body	Date: 29 March 2023
Review of Policy Due By	Date: March 2024

Appendix One: Risk Assessment

Staff name and contact no.	
Visiting name and contact no.	
Visiting Address	
Student name	
Date of visit	
Intended Return Time	
Transport type	
Reason for visit	
Visit authorised by:	

Before undertaking a visit, the following Risk Analysis should be completed. The purpose of the visit should be clearly identified.

	Potential Problem	Please tick	Explanation of problem (if required)
Task	Giving bad news?		
	Sensitive discussion?		
	Prevent strategy?		
	Safeguarding / welfare concerns?		
	Attendance concern / investigation / support?		
Self	Stress?		
	Lack of information?		
	Recent incidents or history?		

Environmental	Unknown person present?		
	Unfamiliar area?		
	Animals?		
	Paths / stairwells / balconies?		
Family	Alcohol / drug misuse?		
	Mental Health issues?		
	Likely anger / history of violence?		

Should the visit take place?	
Action Plan	
Safe word	

On completing this form, it should be handed to the Office and uploaded to CPOMS.

Appendix Two: Post Visit Report

This form should be completed after all home visits and uploaded to CPOMS

Staff names:			
Visiting names:			
Student name:			
Date:			
Short report on visit			
The objective of the visit was achieved? Yes / No If no, what further action needs to be taken?			

Is a follow up to the visit required? Yes / No
 If yes, what needs to be done?

	Post Visit	Yes / No	Action Taken
Potential concerns arising from visit	Child Protection / Safeguarding concern		
	Student missing from home		
	Other		