

ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL EYFS HOME VISIT POLICY

This policy has the School's Motto at its heart.

**Faith in action,
Growing together,
Walking in the footsteps of Christ**

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all school staff carrying out home visits. EYFS home visits will always take place with staff in pairs.

EYFS home visits which staff undertake have huge benefits. The insights that staff have gained into each child's home and background greatly helps them to assess their level of need in school and prepare for the child's entry into the setting. Another major benefit is that the home visits are the start or the continued building of the relationship with parents which is vital if we are to be successful in providing for the needs of the child. It also shows parents that the school respects them and wants to share their knowledge, which puts the relationship on a more equal footing.

Meeting each child in his or her home environment has proved invaluable in:

- gathering information that will enable the children to settle into school;
- establishing positive links with families, especially those of vulnerable pupils.

For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the teacher and staff in a safe environment, where they feel confident and at ease.

For teachers and support staff, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact;
- see children in their own familiar settings;
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children;
- understand the problems that children might encounter at school, and also to appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home.

This all helps to get a fuller picture of the children. Professionals can gain much from observing a child where they feel settled and in control.

The structure of EYFS home visits

The class teacher and a teaching assistant should make each visit together. As well as the obvious safety implications, this allows one to talk to the child's parents and the other to focus on the child. Either the teacher or the teaching assistant will engage with the child and the other adult will talk to the parent.

This can be the beginning of the relationship between the teacher and the child, especially as staff have been invited into the child's home. It also means that the parent has focused time with the staff member. Fifteen minutes is the standard time devoted to each home visit. Visits take place at the beginning of their start term. Parents are always contacted in advance to confirm the appointment. If a visit is considered high risk then a home visit should not take place and a safe and secure area at the school should be used for the appointment. Staff should also take a mobile phone for safety reasons.

Before the visit

- Make appointments in advance and offer alternative dates/times
- Ensure that parents know when you will arrive, how long you will stay, what will happen, what kinds of questions you will be asking and what information you will bring
- Ask them to think about the information they need from you in advance of the meeting
- Accept the right of a family not to want a home visit
- Do not assume that all parents are literate.
- Make sure you consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientation
- Familiarise yourself with the route/location, parking restrictions etc
- Leave details of your visiting schedule and expected return time with another member of staff in the office, ensuring you sign out

During the visit

- Show respect for parents as equal partners.
- Remember you are a guest who has been invited into the family's home. You may ask people for information but they are under no legal obligation to give it to you. They can also ask you to leave at any time.
- Be a good listener.
- Be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home. If necessary, ask the family to put any uncaged animals in a separate room.

- Sit near an exit and if you feel uneasy at any time leave.
- Staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made.
- Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures.
- They should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc.
- Staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents.
- Consider confidentiality at all times. Do not chat about other families. Do not discuss anything in front of other family members without checking beforehand that it is ok to do so.
- Return to school when you have completed the visits and sign back in and let the office staff know you have returned.

Consider safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.

If you have child protection concerns, and providing it is safe to do so, tell the family what you are concerned about, who you will share the information with and what is likely to happen next

If you are concerned about the child's safety or wellbeing and it is not appropriate to discuss this with the family because you do not feel safe, you are concerned about domestic abuse and the perpetrator was present or you feel that raising concerns could compromise the child's safety and wellbeing you must seek advice urgently after leaving the family home. You must discuss the situation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead from your setting.

Health and Safety:

- Inform a nominated member of staff when you are leaving for a home visit.
- Leave the details of the home visit schedule with a member of the office staff. Include a list of visit addresses and times including family name, child's name, address, telephone number, and time due back at school.
- Carry with you and show the parent some form of identification.
- Demonstrate normal courtesy – wait to be invited into the home.
- If a child answers the door, ask if an adult is present in the house. Do not enter if an adult is not present.
- If the parent appears at all uncomfortable about the visit continuing, staff should offer to leave, offer to continue the contact with a telephone call and give the parent the telephone number of the school.
- During home visits, it is prudent to park your car in the direction of your exit.
- All home visits should be carried out during normal working hours (9.00am – 3:30pm)
- If you feel anxious upon arriving at a home visit location and feel

your personal safety could be jeopardised, do not take the risk of proceeding any further. Telephone the home and tell them you will be unable to attend. Then return to school and relay your concerns.

- When conducting a home visit your safety is of paramount importance. Your professional judgement should be used in deciding whether to continue with a visit. Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels dangerous or threatening – leave, saying for example that you need to get something from your car.
- Should you need to stop a visit over a threat to your personal safety you must immediately leave.
- Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential threat you should leave the home.
- Report back to the school office and sign in immediately after the visit is finished informing staff that you are back.
- The member of office staff on duty must advise the Head teacher if staff carrying out a home visit have not returned/made contact by the appointed time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance.

It was last reviewed in: autumn 2021

It will next be reviewed in: autumn 2024

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: _____9th November 2021_____

Signed:

_____Mary Hutchinson_____ (Chairperson)

_____L Weeks_____ (Head teacher)