

Home Visits Policy

Home visits give the opportunity to meet Parents/Carers in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with to:

- Establish a relationship with key members of the Harbour team, who will be supporting the child
- Meet family members who are important to the child
- To have a greater understanding of the child's thoughts and feelings.

We recognise the benefits of home visits; however careful consideration is given to whether the outcome of the home visit is likely to be one that cannot be achieved by meeting in a more public place.

The Harbour recognises its health and safety responsibilities towards employees who are involved in home visiting and others who may be affected by these activities.

This document outlines a sensible risk based approach towards home visiting.

Discussion with school:

Before carrying out home visits, members of the Harbour Team will carry out discussions with the child's home school. These discussions will involve:

- Ensuring the purpose of the visit is fully understood by the family/school
- Checking records/files to see if any previous incidents involving violent or threatening behaviour by the family has been recorded
- Considering the most appropriate time at which to make the visit

Preparing for home visit:

- Bear in mind that even when you think you know somebody well; vulnerable people can change swiftly when under pressure or in a different environment.
- Ensure that the parents are aware of how long the visit will be, and what will be discussed.
- Inform the rest of the Harbour team of the intended timing of the visit and when you expect to return.
- Leave details of the name, address, and telephone number of the home you intend to visit with the home school and Harbour team.
- Visits will be held during school hours.
- Make sure you have a mobile phone.
- Have a planned escalating procedure in place if you are not accounted for at the intended time of return, or any other circumstances causing concern.
- Be as prepared as possible beforehand with correct information e.g. correct names of children, any differences between parent/carer names.

- Ask if the family have any animals. Ask that dogs are kept in a separate room during the visit.

At the time of a home visit:

- Two members of the Harbour team must attend a home visit. In the event one member of staff is unable to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled.
- Ring a member of the Harbour team, when you arrive and when you leave.
- Always carry your ID and show it to the person you are visiting along with an explanation as to why you are there.
- If you feel uneasy about the situation (adults, dog, premises etc.) do not enter the house.
- On entry to the house be aware of your potential vulnerability and look for exits in case of emergency.
- Ensure that the adults present in the meeting are parents/carers or have parental responsibility. Put the parent at ease. Listen carefully. Avoid leading questions.
- Show respect for people and property. Leave premises as you found them when entering. Close gates-children or pets may get out.
- Always leave your car within view of the house. Leave your vehicle facing in the direction of the intended travel.
- If no-one is at home or the person you have arranged to meet is not home do not enter the house.
- A member of the Harbour team will try and make contact with the adults on the visit if there has been no contact on arrival or departure. If no contact is made the police will be notified.