

Home Visits Policy & Procedure

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1 Thrive Charter

Thrive Mission Statement

Inspiring pupils to thrive in life

Thrive Values¹

Thrive Co-operative Learning Trust **understands thriving to mean learning**, and *learning* to mean **growing in knowledge, self-reliance and in responsibility towards others**. Achieving this will allow pupils and staff to **develop a sense of agency and co-agency**, which is the awareness that we are powerful and can affect change, that life is something to be grasped rather than something that happens, and that we have maximum impact when **we work together for the common good**. This sense of agency plays out at three scales as it affects the future of **the individual, their community (local and national), and their planet**.

To thrive, pupils and staff need **environments that are safe**, for **equality to be promoted and diversity to be celebrated**, and for **wellbeing to be valued, nurtured and supported**.

- Because the service we provide is crucial to each pupil's future life chances, we ensure that **we give all pupils the opportunity to thrive**, whatever their background or perceived abilities.
- Because our task is challenging **we all strive to grow and develop**, and we support each other in this and in developing a good work-life balance.
- Because thriving happens best where adults provide pupils with a consistency of approach, **we need people who will play their part for the greater good of the team**.
- Because we serve our local communities **we act as partners in the process of assisting our children to thrive** and will work cooperatively to see this happen.
- Because leadership is a privilege **we exercise leadership in an ethical manner** and commit ourselves to upholding [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- Because we are facing a climate crisis **we will work towards being an environmentally sustainable organisation** and will develop pupil and staff participation in achieving this.
- Because we are funded with public money we will ensure that **we focus our resources on pupils and enable them to thrive**.

¹ Thrive's values are directly descended from the [Co-operative Values](#)

2 Introduction

The Trust is committed to ensuring equality of treatment and fairness in its day to day operation in line with the Equality Act 2010. To this end, the CEO and school managers will share this policy with staff at induction and from time to time during their time at the school to ensure that staff know what is expected of them.

3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard staff when undertaking home visits and to offer advice and guidance on how to do this in a way that meets the needs of the school and supports parents.

4 Definition

A home visit is one that requires member(s) of staff to visit or enter the home of a parent/carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

5 Reasons for a Home Visit

- 5.1 Stepney Primary School recognises that parents/carers are the first and most enduring educators, as such we value the contribution they make. The aim of a home visit is to:
- develop a working partnership between parents/carers and staff so that all parties share their knowledge to enable the individual needs of the pupils to be met;
 - to continually strengthen relationships in the best interests of the pupil.
- 5.2 Home visits are vital in helping Stepney Primary School contact those parents/carers who may be harder to reach by other methods. They are useful as they enable contact with the school, examples of when visits are necessary include:
- pupils are refusing to attend or there are attendance issues/concerns;
 - pupils are being educated at home as part of an agreed arrangement;
 - all other means of contact have failed;
 - meeting to discuss an issue regarding the pupil where it is better to have that discussion in the home *or* where it would be difficult for parents/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared face to face and in a timely manner;
 - trying to establish that a child is safe if absent from school and attempts to contact the family have not elicited a response and/or there are welfare or safeguarding concerns;
 - working with and supporting parents/carers in developing strategies to solve any issue as relevant;
 - delivering or collecting work for a pupil;
 - visiting a pupil who has been absent for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school;
 - investigating situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday, 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 during term-time had been refused.

6 Benefits of Home Visits

Home visits have many benefits - for parents/carers and Pupils, a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with. Other opportunities are to:

- establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the child;
- meet family members that are important to the child;
- talk about the child and their needs away from the school.

7 Procedures

7.1 Authorisation

The Headteacher / Head of School will authorise staff who routinely undertake home visits. Wherever any other member of staff undertaking a home visit, e.g. in an emergency situation should firstly gain permission from their headteacher / head of school where this is possible.

7.2 Before The Visit Staff should:

- seek authorisation where necessary;
- be familiar with this policy and procedure for home visits;
- be clear re: the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is needed;
- ensure that you have a mobile phone with you and that it is charged;
- arrange for a colleague to accompany you as home visits must be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role;
- make sure you are well informed re: the subject of the visit and collect any necessary documentation needed;
- consider who you need to see, with or without the child;
- make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances;
- where appropriate make an appointment to establish a time that is 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 if the call is unsuccessful;
- if you are concerned about your safety, do not visit and seek advice;
- it is strongly recommended not to visit after dark;
- agree on a **safe word** to be used between colleagues as agreed. When used this word acts as a cue to immediately leave the premises.

7.3 During the Visit:

- be dressed in a professional manner;
- introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit;
- request that there are no animals in the room where the meeting takes place;
- do not enter until invited in by a responsible adult;

- only speak with an adult with parental responsibility, or direct relatives;
- do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the home;
- do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then only if you deem it completely safe and necessary;
- do not enter a young person's bedroom;
- if you are concerned that a young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised, contact the school's Safeguarding Lead to highlight your observation;
- if you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact 999;
- make assurances that you will treat anything that arises with sensitivity and only share with relevant colleagues for the right reasons - do not promise not to relay information. Remember that under Safeguarding procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the DSL;
- be sensitive to the culture and/or, religion in the home;
- give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions;
- be sympathetic, yet remain neutral. Be discreet but assertive in steering the direction of the conversation, do not gossip about the school or staff, do not stay too long and keep to the points.

7.4 After the visit:

- make an appropriate record after each visit, this could be in CPOMS or any other school system;
- if you are not returning directly to school, telephone school after the visit to say you have left the home visit;
- do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved

7.5 Home Visit Records

- It is essential that staff keep a record of every visit made. This may be in any of a number of places (e.g. attendance records, CPOMS) and the staff member concerned should decide on this, but a record must always be kept as an evidence trail should this be requested.
- If an incident occurs, the visitor should record this as soon as possible afterwards in the relevant place.
- As staff will not be visiting alone it is highly unlikely that an allegation will be made against them. If an allegation is made against the visitor, advice must be sought from the Headteacher / Head of School as soon as possible.

7.6 Actions If Threatened

- In the exceptionally rare circumstance of being threatened or prevented from leaving, stay calm and try to control the situation. Try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and do not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse the situation by saying you will seek further

advice to help from a senior member of staff.

- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry.
- Staff must leave the property if concerned about personal safety.
- Staff will be offered full support and appropriate, professional counselling.

8 Risks and Controls

Hazards	People	Severity of Harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent / pupil/ family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer to Home Visit Policy - risk reduced by informing school staff when leaving the building(making sure you sign out) and giving intended return time ● x2 person visit ● Inform Reception and sign out ● Take mobile phone ● Phone in if plan changes ● Back down from confrontation ● Call for help
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid contact with animals ● Seek local advice before entering premises with animals ● Appropriate behaviour with animals - avoid alarming them e.g. sudden movements

9 Review and monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years and, in accordance with the following, on an 'as-and-when-required' basis:

- legislative changes;
- good practice guidance;
- significant incidents reported

10 Legislation

This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to the:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Education Act 1996