



George Eliot Academy

The best in everyone

Part of United Learning

Home Visit Policy

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2026

Date of Next Review: Autumn Term 2027

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Academy's Safeguarding and Attendance Policies.

George Eliot Academy Home Visit Policy

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1. Introduction

Home visits form an important part of the Academy's safeguarding, attendance and pastoral support arrangements. Where home visits involve lone work, appropriate measures must be taken to minimise and manage risk.

George Eliot Academy is committed to ensuring that staff are not placed in situations of unreasonable risk while performing their duties.

Home visits may be undertaken either alone or with colleagues and include:

- Visits to pupils' homes.
- Appointments with pupils, families or professionals at locations away from the Academy site.

Working in these circumstances may place staff at risk from:

- Accidents or medical emergencies where assistance cannot be readily obtained.
- Aggressive or violent behaviour from individuals or animals.
- Allegations relating to professional conduct.

This policy outlines the reasons for home visits, the benefits they provide, and the procedures that must be followed to ensure the safety of both staff and families.

2. Responsibilities

George Eliot Academy will ensure that all staff involved in home visits are aware of the procedures outlined within this policy and receive appropriate induction, guidance and training before undertaking their first home visit.

The Academy has undertaken a generic risk assessment to reduce risks as far as reasonably practicable.

Home visits will not take place where the assessed level of risk is considered unacceptable. Risks will be identified through prior knowledge of the family, incident history, safeguarding information, information from external agencies, and concerns arising from previous visits. Where relevant, risks will be recorded on CPOMS and highlighted through appropriate pastoral records on Arbor.

All staff undertaking home visits are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. If at any point a member of staff feels unsafe, they must leave the situation immediately.

Before any home visit, staff must inform their line manager or nominated colleague of:

- The address being visited.
- The purpose of the visit.
- The expected duration of the visit.
- Their estimated return time.

Any significant changes to arrangements must be communicated as soon as practicable.

Following the visit, staff must record the visit on CPOMS.

3. Reasons and Benefits of Home Visits

Home visits can help establish contact with pupils and families where other methods of communication have proven unsuccessful, where safeguarding or attendance concerns exist, or where there is a need for a planned meeting away from the Academy site.

For the purposes of this policy, an extended period of absence is normally defined as three or more consecutive school days. However, home visits may be undertaken sooner where attendance, welfare or safeguarding concerns warrant earlier intervention.

Where there are no safeguarding or attendance concerns, and appropriate contact has been maintained by a parent/carer throughout the absence, a telephone call home may be considered sufficient after three days of absence.

Home visits may be undertaken:

- Where a pupil is refusing to attend school.
- Where there are attendance concerns.
- When attempts to contact the family through other means have been unsuccessful.
- To meet with families and/or professionals for a planned appointment away from the Academy site.
- To establish that a pupil is safe where contact has not been possible through other methods.
- To confirm a pupil's safety where contact has been made, but the pupil has remained absent for 3 consecutive school days.
- To visit a pupil who has been absent for an extended period due to illness or medical condition.
- To support the transport of a pupil where there are concerns regarding their welfare or wellbeing.
- To verify a pupil's whereabouts where there is reasonable evidence suggesting that the reason provided for absence may not be accurate.

Benefits of home visits include:

- Establishing positive relationships between families and key Academy staff.
- Enabling staff to check that a pupil is safe and well.
- Providing support to families.
- Identifying barriers affecting attendance, wellbeing or progress.
- Improving communication between home and school.

4. Procedures

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure safe working practices while reducing risks associated with home visits.

Identifying the Need for a Home Visit

The Attendance Manager, Safeguarding or Pastoral team identifies the need for a home visit.

Before the Visit

Staff must:

- Be familiar with this policy and associated procedures.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit and ensure that a home visit is necessary.
- Review all relevant information on CPOMS prior to the visit.
- Consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL or an appropriate safeguarding professional to determine whether it is safe to visit alone.
- Ensure that any identified risks have been considered and appropriate control measures are in place.

Where an additional member of staff is required:

- The purpose of their attendance must be agreed beforehand.
- Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined prior to the visit.

Wherever practicable:

- Arrange the visit in advance.
- Agree a suitable time with the parent/carer.
- Inform the family of the intended visit and its purpose.

However, advance notice may not be appropriate where:

- Repeated attempts to contact the parent/carer have been unsuccessful.
- No reason has been provided for a pupil's absence.
- There are safeguarding or welfare concerns that require a timely welfare check.
- The purpose of the visit is to verify a pupil's whereabouts or establish whether an absence is authorised.
- There is reasonable evidence to suggest that a pupil may be on an unauthorised leave of absence or holiday.

In such circumstances, an unannounced home visit may be undertaken where authorised by the appropriate member of staff and following consideration of any known risks.

During the Visit

Staff must:

- Park in a safe, well-lit location that allows for a quick exit if required.
- Wear appropriate clothing and display Academy identification.
- Ensure that any animals present do not pose a risk before approaching or entering the property.
- Always remain aware of their surroundings and available exit routes.

Where possible:

- Conversations should take place at the front door or outside the property.

Lone Working

Staff conducting a home visit alone must not enter the property under any circumstances.

Discussions should take place at the doorstep or at another appropriate location outside the home.

When visiting a property where absence has been linked to infectious illness, staff should avoid entering the property and maintain a safe distance from occupants.

Professional Conduct

Staff must:

- Only discuss confidential pupil information with a parent/carers or adult known to have parental responsibility, unless there is a safeguarding reason that necessitates otherwise.
- Verify the identity of the adult before discussing confidential information.
- Not disclose the purpose of the visit to neighbours or other third parties.
- Always maintain professional boundaries.
- Respect the culture, beliefs and values of the household.
- Avoid accepting food or drink wherever possible.
- Remain only for the time necessary to achieve the purpose of the visit.

Where staff enter a property accompanied by a colleague:

- Staff should not be alone in a room with a pupil unless this forms part of an agreed professional meeting, the parent/carers is aware, and at least two professionals are present.
- Interactions should take place where staff can be seen and heard by others.

Safeguarding Concerns

If a staff member becomes concerned that a pupil is home alone, at risk of harm, or that their welfare is compromised, they must contact the safeguarding team immediately.

If a pupil appears to be at immediate risk of significant harm or danger, staff must contact emergency services by dialing 999 and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Personal Safety

If at any point a member of staff feels threatened, unsafe or uncomfortable, they must end the visit and leave immediately. Where appropriate, staff may use a professional reason to leave, such as an urgent appointment or need to return to school.

After the Visit

As soon as possible following the visit, staff must:

- Record a full account of the visit on CPOMS.
- Record the purpose of the visit, outcomes, actions agreed, concerns identified and any required follow-up actions.
- Inform the safeguarding and/or attendance teams of any concerns arising from the visit.
- Report any incidents involving threats, aggression, violence or unsafe conditions.

In the rare instance that a home visit takes place at the end of the school day and a member of staff is travelling directly home rather than returning to school, the following procedure must be followed:

- The member of staff must inform their line manager or designated contact that they will be travelling directly home following the visit.

- The member of staff must send a text message, email, or make a telephone call to their designated contact upon arrival home to confirm they have arrived safely.
- If confirmation is not received within the agreed timeframe, the designated contact will make reasonable attempts to contact the member of staff.
- Where contact cannot be established and there are concerns for the member of staff's welfare, this must be escalated to a senior leader if they remain uncontactable.

5. Emergency Procedures

Where a member of staff undertaking a home visit fails to make contact or return within the expected timeframe:

- The nominated colleague will attempt to contact the member of staff.
- If contact cannot be established, reasonable attempts should be made to determine their whereabouts.
- The matter should be escalated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Where there is concern regarding the safety or welfare of the member of staff, the police should be contacted.

Annex A: Home Visit Risk Assessment

Hazards • Inexperience or lack of familiarity with home visit procedures • Aggressive, abusive or violent behaviour • Slips, trips and falls • Unsafe or hazardous environments • Animals and pets • Lone working / working in isolation	
Persons at Risk • Attendance Staff • Safeguarding Staff • Pastoral Staff • Welfare Staff • Any other member of staff conducting an authorised home visit	
Hazard	Control Measures
Inexperience of staff undertaking home visits	• Staff must familiarise themselves with the Home Visit Policy and associated procedures. • Staff must seek guidance from the Attendance Team, DSL or experienced colleagues where required. • New staff should be accompanied by an experienced colleague on their first home visit where appropriate. • Staff must receive appropriate induction and training prior to undertaking home visits independently.
Aggressive, Abusive or Violent Individuals	• Review CPOMS and relevant records before undertaking any visit. • Ensure known risks relating to individuals or addresses are recorded and shared appropriately. • Visits identified as higher risk should be completed by two members of staff. • Do not undertake visits where the level of risk is assessed as unacceptable. • Carry a fully charged mobile phone at all times. • Remain aware of exit routes and maintain the ability to leave quickly if necessary. • Leave immediately if threatened, intimidated or made to feel unsafe. • Report incidents of aggression, threats or violence to line managers and the safeguarding team.

Slips, Trips and Falls	• Wear appropriate footwear and clothing. • Take care when approaching or entering properties. • Be mindful of uneven surfaces, poor lighting and cluttered environments. • Avoid entering areas that present a significant risk to personal safety. • Terminate the visit if environmental hazards pose an unacceptable risk.
Animals and Pets	• Remain alert to the presence of animals at the property. • Do not enter the property until any potentially dangerous animals have been secured. • Conduct discussions outside the property where concerns exist. • Leave immediately if an animal presents a threat to personal safety.
Lone Working	• Staff conducting visits alone must not enter a pupil's home. • Inform a line manager or nominated colleague of the address, purpose of visit and expected return time. • Carry a fully charged mobile phone. • Maintain contact with the Academy where possible. • Follow the Academy's lone-working procedures. • Record the outcome of the visit on CPOMS. • Report any concerns immediately upon return.