



Home Visit Policy

REVIEWED BY: Lucy Havard

DATE REVIEWED: Spring 2025

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Spring 2026

1. Introduction

Home visiting that includes lone working is an essential part of support work. George Eliot Academy is committed to ensuring that it does not put any of its staff in a situation of unreasonable risk.

Often, George Eliot Academy staff will either visit homes with colleagues or work alone. This guidance covers those undertaking:

- Home visits
- Appointments with professionals or families at a venue away from George Eliot Academy site

Working in such scenarios may place staff at risk from:

- Accidents where they are unable to attract help
- Aggressive and/or violent behaviour from another person or animal
- The subject of false allegations

This policy outlines the reasons, benefits and best practice procedures for home visits.

2. Responsibilities

George Eliot Academy will ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for home visits and lone working.

George Eliot Academy will ensure staff receive appropriate training and induction prior to completing their first home visit.

George Eliot Academy has undertaken a generic risk assessment to reduce risks as far as reasonably practical.

George Eliot Academy will not allow any visits which place the worker at unacceptable risk. Such unacceptable risks will be identified through prior knowledge of the domestic situation and perceived high risks identified during previous visits – these will be recorded on CPOMS and recorded as a pastoral note on the pupil's Arbor profile page.

All staff undertaking home visits must take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. If at any time they feel unsafe, they must remove themselves from the situation as soon as possible. All staff undertaking home visits must inform an appropriate colleague of their intended place of visit and their expected arrival time back at the Academy. All staff must log their home visits upon return via CPOMS.

3. Reasons and benefits for home visits

Home visits are important in helping to establish contact with pupils and their families where other forms of contact have proved unsuccessful, if a pupil has not been seen for an extended period of time, or if there is a need for an appointment to be held away from George Eliot Academy site due to extenuating circumstances.

An extended period of time is defined as 3 or more school days, although a home visit may be carried out before this threshold is met for any of the reasons outlined below. Where there are no safeguarding or attendance concerns, and contact has been made with parents/carers for each day of absence, a phone call home to address 3 days of absence will be suitable.

Home visits are used when:

- Pupils are refusing to come into school
- There are attendance issues/concerns
- When pupils are being educated at home
- When other means of contacting the family have failed
- To meet with families and/or professionals for a planned appointment away from George Eliot Academy site
- To establish that a pupil is safe if other means of contact have been unsuccessful
- To visit a pupil that has been absent for an extended period of time due to illness or a medical issue, so they do not feel isolated from school
- To collect or drop a pupil where there are concerns for the pupil's wellbeing or welfare
- To investigate situations where there are suspicions that a pupil may be on holiday contrary to reasons given for absence i.e., patterns of absence similar to those in previous years, evidence that indicates a pupil may be on holiday.

Home visits have many benefits that include:

- Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the pupil
- Enable staff to check that a pupil is safe and well
- Support families
- Identify the needs of a pupil

4. Procedures

The aim of the Home Visit Policy Procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits. The attendance coordinator will identify the need for home visits based upon the following:

- Continuous absence
- School refusal
- Absence without reason where there are safeguarding concerns
- Regular planned visits for pupils waiting to be removed from roll as a result of exclusions or Elective Home Education.

Other members of staff including welfare staff and staff responsible for attendance will identify the needs for home visits based upon:

- Serious safeguarding concerns
- Absence of vulnerable pupils. The attendance coordinator will conduct their processes daily and carry out visits as appropriate based upon 3. *Reasons and benefits for home visits* and through discussion with the safeguarding lead.

Before the visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedures for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit, making sure that a home visit is necessary.
- Check CPOMS and liaise with the safeguarding lead to check that it is appropriate for a person to visit alone or whether it is deemed necessary for an additional person to attend for safety reasons.
- If an additional person is required, clarify each person's role before attending the visit i.e. who is leading the visit?

What is the role of the additional person?

- If possible, make the home visit at an agreed time.
- Send a text notification to inform families of the intended home visit.

During the visit

- Park in a well-lit area where you are able to drive away easily if needed i.e. you don't have to reverse.
- Dress appropriately i.e. sensible shoes and have Academy ID visible.
- Ensure that there are no animals in or around the property that pose a risk to your safety.
- Where possible conduct any conversations at the front door of the property.
- If alone on a home visit do not enter the property.
- Where visiting a property where there has been reports of absence due to infectious disease or illness, do not enter the property and remain a safe distance from those present.

- If entering the property with a colleague do not be in a room alone with a pupil unless part of an agreed meeting where the parent is aware of this and there are at least two professionals present, and you can be seen and heard.
- Only speak with adults that have parental responsibility about the pupil – check the identity of the person before engaging in conversation.
- Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with anyone other than the person with parental responsibility or the pupil when adult with parental responsibility is present. If you are concerned that the pupil is home alone or their welfare is at risk, contact the safeguarding team immediately.
- If you feel a pupil is in immediate danger, contact 999.
- Remain professional and respect the culture, religion etc of the home.
- It is advisable to not accept food or drink during the visit.
- Stay no longer than the time needed.
- If you feel any level of concern or threat for your own safety, end the meeting in a calm fashion and leave the property, i.e. say that you are needed at another meeting or that you need to collect something from your car.

After the visit

- Log the home visit and details of the visit on CPOMS.
- Inform the safeguarding manager and attendance line manager of any incidents of aggression, violence or threat during the visit.

5. Lone visit

Before the visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedures for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit, making sure that a home visit is necessary. The rationale and agreement of the home visit to be recorded on CPOMS by lead DSL
- Check CPOMS and liaise with safeguarding lead to check that it is appropriate for a person to visit alone or whether it is deemed necessary for an additional person to attend for safety reasons.

- If an additional person is required, clarify each person's role before attending the visit i.e. who is leading the visit?
- The risk assessment has agreed that a lone visit to this family is possible.
- The visit is scheduled in with the parent/carer.
- Ensure staff member makes appropriate staff aware of the lone visit.
- Ensure that staff have access to a mobile telephone and an emergency contact.

During the visit

- Park in a well-lit area where you can drive away easily if needed i.e. you don't have to reverse.
- Dress appropriately i.e. sensible shoes and have Academy ID visible.
- Ensure that there are no animals in or around the property that pose a risk to your safety.
- Where visiting a property where there has been reports of absence due to infectious disease or illness, do not enter the property and remain a safe distance from those present.
- Only speak with adults that have parental responsibility about the pupil – check the identity of the person before engaging in conversation.
- Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with anyone other than the person with parental responsibility or the pupil when adult with parental responsibility is present. If you are concerned that the pupil is home alone or their welfare is at risk, contact the safeguarding team immediately.
- If you feel a pupil is in immediate danger, contact 999.
- Remain professional and respect the culture, religion etc of the home.
- It is advisable to not accept food or drink during the visit.
- Stay no longer than the time needed.
- If you feel any level of concern or threat for your own safety end the meeting in a calm fashion and leave the property, i.e. say that you are needed at another meeting or that you need to collect something from your car.
- That if when attending the address it is clear only the pupil is at home (no parent/carer), the visit will be cancelled at this stage and this will be reported back on CPOMS.

- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.
- Never enter a home without the parent or carer's consent or when the parent/carer is absent, except in an emergency.
- Ensure that pupil's are seen in open and observable spaces; for example, living rooms.

After the visit

- Log the home visit and details of the visit on CPOMS.
- Inform the safeguarding manager and attendance line manager of any incidents of aggression, violence or threat during the visit.
- If not returning to school, the staff member will have an agreed staff contact that they will contact when they have finished the visit to confirm that they are ok.

Risk Assessments for Home visits

Department	Safeguarding
Assessors	DSL
Date	September 2024
Signed	L.Havard

Hazards	
<p>New to home visits Violent person Slips, trips, falls Dangerous areas Pets Working in isolation</p>	
Person who might be harmed	Attendance team Welfare team

	Risk Controls
New to home visits	<p>Liaise with Attendance officer or safeguarding lead to ensure you are aware of required practice.</p> <p>Attend first home visit accompanied by experienced member of staff.</p>
<p>Violent person</p> <p>Visiting the home of anyone with a history of violence. Even if there is no history staff must be aware of risk control measures procedures.</p>	<p>Records must be kept on all dangerous people or houses that have known to hold dangerous persons – logged on CPOMS and as a pastoral note on Arbor front page of pupil.</p> <p>If there are minor concerns about a home visit, it should be carried out with two persons present.</p> <p>If there are major concerns a home visit should not be conducted.</p> <p>When making a home visit staff must make themselves familiar with all escape routes.</p> <p>Ensure have access to mobile phone with appropriate numbers stored</p>
Slips, trips, falls	Please be careful when visiting homes which can be cluttered or have uneven flooring, staff must wear appropriate footwear
<p>Dangerous areas</p> <p>Drug users where needle maybe present. House which may be unsafe for human habitation. New locations with potential unknown hazards.</p>	<p>Staff must be mindful of the environment they're about to enter, if staff don't feel comfortable then they must leave immediately.</p> <p>If staff are not comfortable visiting a new location on their own, an additional person should support the visit.</p>

Pets	<p>Please be mindful of any animals, warnings of animals or previous experience of animals the address.</p> <p>Where there are any concerns, do not enter the home or remain behind a gate.</p>
Working in isolation	<p>Do no enter the home of a pupil if on your own. Liaise with safeguarding officer and check CPOMS prior to attending to check for any current or previous concerns.</p> <p>If visiting on your own, ensure that line manager or relevant colleague is informed.</p>
Lone Visit	<p>The rationale and agreement of the home visit to be recorded on CPOMS by lead DSL</p> <p>This visit is scheduled and agreed with parent/carer Do no enter the home of a pupil if parent/carer is not in attendance.</p> <p>Liaise with safeguarding officer and check CPOMS prior to attending to check for any current or previous concerns.</p> <p>Risk assessment is agreed that the staff can visit alone.</p> <p>Ensure that line manager or relevant colleague is informed of the visit</p> <p>Always have emergency phone and contact with you</p> <p>On return check in with member of staff, if not returning to school ensure that member of staff is aware you are safe and well.</p>

Signed: L.Havard

Date: February 2025