



## **THE BEMROSE SCHOOL**

### **HOME SCHOOL LIAISON POLICY**

**MANAGER: N WILKINSON**

**ADOPTED: JUNE 2020**

#### **HOME/SCHOOL LIAISON AT THE BEMROSE SCHOOL**

The principle of home school contact is one that underpins the achievement and smooth running of the school. All communication whether verbal or non-verbal with parents or carers must seek to emphasise the notion that we want “parents as partners.”

This policy complements the work of the Assessment, Recording and Reporting [ARR] Policy, Safe Guarding and the Behaviour Policy.

#### **Parental contact**

The aim of any Home visit is to establish or strengthen a partnership between the home and school to enable the child through the sharing of knowledge to meet the needs of the young person. These meeting may also strengthen relationships in the best interests of the child.

All liaison with parents and carers should be made in a positive and constructive manner. Though initially reflective, the agenda within the meeting must be solution focussed aiming to meet the needs of the student and the school. All outcomes of meetings must be documented to the Head of House and/or Learning Director if appropriate.

If at any time during a meeting a parent or carer becomes threatening or intimidating the meeting should be terminated and reconvened, if appropriate, with a member of the Leadership Team.

#### **Visiting parents/carers at home**

When visiting a home, parent or carer, the Risk assessment in appendix 1 must be considered to protect the colleague.

In addition the following guidance must be considered

1. All home or off site visits must be agreed and shared with a member of the Leadership Team in advance of any visit.
2. Visiting parents at home, or receiving parents at school, is skilled and delicate work. Parents/carers may be visited for a variety of often over-lapping reasons:-
  - a) To discuss a matter of discipline, attendance or welfare when the parents/carers are unable or unwilling to come to school.
  - b) To talk about a particular curriculum matter.
  - c) To translate and talk about something of particular importance to a child whose parents/carers do not speak and/or write English.

3. Visits can be made by a variety of staff (though no colleague will be asked to make a visit against their wishes). Colleagues from the Access Service (EAL) can be asked to make visits where it is deemed appropriate and likewise this applies to EWO and other family support services. It is important that visits to parents/carers, visits by parents/carers to school and letters to parents/carers should be co-ordinated, to avoid duplication or confusion.
4. Staff should observe the relevant protocols in the “Lone Working Code” of the City Council, viz
  - a) Carry out a risk assessment prior to making a visit.
  - b) Raise any concerns about lone working with their manager.
  - c) Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.
  - d) Only to go on visits that are pre-arranged either by letter or telephone.
  - e) Leave a written record at base with the following information: where they are going throughout the day, who they will be meeting, estimated arrival and departure times, estimated time of return to base, contact numbers throughout the day where they can be reached/message left. (Staff who are to go home after their last visit must either contact their base or, by arrangement, a colleague to inform them that they have left the appointment.) Staff should be required to ‘report in’ to base at pre-arranged times.
  - f) Report any accidents or incidents of aggression.

### **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

1. The number of parental complaints about meetings with staff
2. A record kept of all lone visits

## **Procedures**

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member of staff when undertaking home visits.

### **Before the Visit**

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for Parent's/Carer's to come into the school)
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, home visits should be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on school's policy and practice.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both Parent's/Carer's, with or without the child.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Wherever possible make an appointment to establish a time 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.
- Refer to the 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (Appendix 1), and inform student services them of your intended location before departing for a home visit.

### **During the Visit**

- Park in a well lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification do not use a necklace lanyard.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility (Parent's/Carer's) or another responsible adult whom Parent's/Carer's has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their Parent's/Carer's is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe to do so and necessary.
- Do not enter a child's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger contact the school's DSL straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised/in danger. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure Parent's/Carer's that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the head teacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to school. Remember that under the child

protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated teacher for child protection.

- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Be sympathetic, but remain neutral. Don't get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the school or staff.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.
- Document the visit for any evidence of the meeting.
- After the visit report back to the school; if possible, give written feedback to the appropriate staff in line with school policy.
  - If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with Designated Child Protection Officer on arrival back.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

**Appendix 1 Community Lone Working risk Assessment**

**Work Activity Risk Assessment**

Task being undertaken: Lone working Risk Assessment – out of office

Occupations: All Staff

Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk: Safeguarding team aware of named visit

Date of assessment: Any

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others are aware Take mobile phone for communication
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organization Carry torch, phone etc. for emergency Advise team or partner where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas
Movement through public areas e.g.to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote	Low	Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or public transport if available Post incident support
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	Low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete injury at work protocol on return
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behavior near animals – avoid alarming them e.g. sudden movements.