

The Grange School

Home Visits Policy

April 2017
To review April 2020

The first step of a quality and sustainable partnership is a home visit for every family before a child starts at school. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet members of staff in a place where they feel most at ease, providing our practitioners with an opportunity to build a quality partnership and to information gather/share.

Organising Visits

Parents will sign up for a visit at the 'New Parent's Meeting' so that a convenient time can be arranged. These visits will take place in the summer term before they start school and are optional. The purpose of the visits will be communicated clearly to parents as that of building a partnership, getting to know the family and information gathering/sharing.

Carrying Out the Visit

- Staff are required to carry out home visits in pairs. At least one of the pair should be a member of Reception/Nursery staff (as far as possible).
- Each visit should last approximately 20-30 minutes.
- Staff should take storybooks, a game and a jigsaw.
- One member of staff should talk to the parent, whilst the other talks and plays with the child.
- If the parent doesn't mind, staff should ask that the TV is turned off so that talk can be uninterrupted.
- Parents should be encouraged to ask any questions and discuss any concerns that they might have.
- Staff should gather information about the child's family, health, specific needs that school need to be aware of, ethnic and cultural background and any special dietary requirements. A list of questions that staff may ask are provided in Appendix 1.
- Staff should collect in the 'All About Me' form if it hasn't already been handed in.

Safeguarding Children

Usual safeguarding procedures apply when off-site, visiting children who are, at the point of a visit enrolled at The Grange School. For advice or to report a safeguarding concern which requires immediate attention contact the headteacher on 01327 705785.

Keeping Staff Safe

Being off-site and visiting private dwellings presents a number of potential hazards which need managing: Risk of harm to staff from persons living in or near the home being visited; from animals in the home; or from illness from contact with surfaces, food and drink, or people harbouring harmful bacteria.

It is recommended that the following steps to manage these risks are adhered to by staff to ensure their safety whilst out on visits:

- When the school staff arrive, they should assess if it is appropriate for them to be there. For example: Do you feel welcome? Do you feel safe? Have you turned up in the middle of another appointment?
- Two members of staff will carry out the visits.

- A timetable of visits with specific times will be left in the school office (such that it can be identified at what time staff should be expected to return to site.)
- Staff will wear their ID badges when on visits.
- Staff will take their personal mobile phones with them, the numbers for which will be left in the School office.
- If free roaming pets, such as dogs, are present in the home being visited, it is requested that staff ask the owner/s to shut the animals away during the visit.
- It is requested that staff do not accept food or drink while on visits.
- Staff should ask that family members do not smoke during the visit.

Staff also need to protect themselves from allegations of a safeguarding nature by adopting the our –in-school practices, as outlined in the safeguarding policy: Not being unduly alone with children, ensuring appropriate and safe contact with children, ensuring appropriate clothing and conduct is applied at all times etc.

Lastly, if the visit could at all be considered to be to a dwelling which is potentially uncommon (e.g. visiting a caravan site or a working farm) or if the visits is conducted under special circumstances (e.g. at a friend's house instead of home) then this must be discussed with the headteacher before attending the visit to complete any potential additional risk assessments which might need consideration.

APPENDIX 1

Home Visit Questions

1. Child's names and pronunciation of them?
2. What languages are spoken and understood by your child and close family members?
3. What are your child's main interests / special toys at the moment?
4. What opportunities does your child have for outside play? What do they like to do outside?
5. What experience does your child have of being cared for away from the family?
6. What experience has your child had of playing with other children?
a. How is your child in these situations?
7. Does your child have any friendships with any other children that will be attending our Reception?
8. How does your child usually react to new situations and with new people?

9. How do you think your child will settle into the Reception class?

a. What do you think they will particularly enjoy?

b. Is there anything you think they will find difficult?

10. Is there anything we need to know to make the settling process as easy as possible?

11. Do you have any concerns about your child's development? (SEND)

12. Are there any religious observances that we need to be aware of?

13. How is your child's language developing? Do you always understand what they say (in all languages) to you? Can they ask for things clearly?

14. Will your child need any support in using the toilet, eating independently, putting on and taking off clothes?

15. Does your child have any allergies/medical conditions that we need to be aware of?

16. Is there anything your child should not eat/drink?

17. Is there anything that your child is scared of?

18. Are there any other professionals/agencies involved with your child?

19. Is there anything else you would like to ask or tell us?