

School Staff Making Home Visits Policy – SO–0323

Date reviewed	June 2024
Date of next review	June 2026
Version number	V3.2
Policy lead	Education Directorate
Distribution	Schools
Date ratified by board	June 21 st 2021

EQUALITY STATEMENT

We will regularly review our policies to ensure that we are

- promoting equality of opportunity
- eliminating discrimination and harassment
- valuing diversity and promoting positive relationships
- providing an inclusive education which enables all pupils to develop their full potential
- meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics therein.

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

All NAS schools and Children's services follow our Quality of life (QoL) Framework. In implementing this framework, we listen to pupils, parents and the child's keyworker to understand what is important to them in relation to their quality of life. We then work as a transdisciplinary team to ensure we plan each child's education carefully and cohesively, shaping each pupil's provision around their EHCP and agreed developmental goals in order to develop pupils' knowledge and skills now and for the future.

1. Purpose of this document

Our experience tells us that it is only with our families' and pupils' involvement in their development and education that our pupils do exceptionally well. All NAS schools and Children's services follow our Quality of life (QoL) Framework. This framework places the family and the pupil at the centre.

The purpose of this policy is to promote working in partnership with parents/carers whilst maintaining best interests. And to ensure any visit is regulated, accompanied and vetted as appropriate for the protection of pupils/students, parents and staff

2. Legal Framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies such as the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy

3. Personal safety

- It is always the responsibility of staff performing home visits to keep themselves safe. They will avoid any situations that may risk their safety.
- It is advised that CPOMS be checked before a home visit to ensure no identified risks to staff are recorded. If family is supported by other services due to safeguarding concerns, staff are to contact this service to check if there are any concerns for staff regarding home visits
- Staff making home visits will carry a mobile phone at all times. The number of the mobile taken will be recorded and held by the Principal or nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Staff undertaking home visits will 'check in' by calling the school office every two hours to update the school of their whereabouts. Best practice would be for two members of staff to be present during any home visits, however this may not be applicable if the visit is about gathering information for support. E.g. Early Help Assessment.
- Staff making home visits will not enter the home of a pupil unless an appointment has been made and the parent is present.
- All vehicles used for home visits must have the required up-to-date insurance which covers business use if they are transporting a student in their vehicle.

4. Home visits

It is not the general practice of National Autistic Society schools to make home visits. In the event that a visit is necessary the Principal must sanction the visit and any external agencies involved with the family must be notified. Home visits may be made for the following reasons:

- To observe a child as part of the referral procedure in the event that the pupil/student does not attend a current school.
- To support parents/carers in setting up and establishing a behaviour management or communication programme.
- To establish positive self-occupancy/independent skills, routines and schedules.
- In extreme circumstances it may be necessary for Senior Staff to make a home visit in order to support families in managing highly sensitive situations.
- To support a pupil in returning to school after a period of absence / refusal
- To check on a pupils' welfare who has not attended school for a period of five or more days and gives the Principal cause for concern for the pupils' welfare.

Guidelines for home visits:

- Any visit must have the prior approval of the Principal, including the staff making the visit
- Provisional arrangement should be made with the parent/carer. The Local Authority/Social Services and any other relevant party should be advised of the visit by telephone, with an email / letter sent confirming the nature of the visit. In some circumstances it may not be possible or appropriate to confirm a home visit with parents/carers. For example, where a visit is being made to establish a pupils' welfare during a period of prolonged absence,
- Staff must always be accompanied on the home visit and no more than two staff members should go at any one time (e.g. Teacher, Senior Practitioner, Psychologist, SALT).
- If the pupil's parents are not present at the arranged time, the attendance team will wait no longer than 20 minutes. If the pupil's parent does not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.
- If the pupil's parents have given prior notice that they are running late, the attendance team will not enter the house until they arrive. If they are over 30 minutes late the visit will be cancelled.
- If pupils have an identified attendance or safeguarding concerns the school may perform unannounced visits.
- Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of clothing worn by staff.
- Staff will not enter a pupil's home should they feel unsafe e.g. (not exhaustive) unexpected adults at the home, the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs, if an adult or child appear intoxicated. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be communicated in writing to the Principal.

- If there are potentially dangerous animals in the house, the attendance team will request that they are kept in a separate room. If the parent refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled.
- During the visit minutes will be recorded in writing which will detail an action plan and any follow up procedures required.
- The minutes of the visit will be placed on the pupil/students file and copies sent to parents, Local Authority/Social Services if appropriate
- Once a visit has ended, any agreements made between the attendance team and parents will be recorded on our MIS and/or CPOMS.

Child protection and safeguarding:

- Staff visiting pupil's homes will carry out their work in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.
- Staff visiting a pupil at home will not be put in a situation where they are alone with a pupil during a home visit – a parent must always be present.
- If staff are threatened in any way they should call 999 followed by 55 'silent call'.
- Staff will report any safeguarding concerns to a DSL or deputy as soon as possible.
- Any allegations made against staff during home visits will be dealt with in accordance with the NAS Employee Code of Conduct Policy.
- During the visit minutes will be recorded in writing which will detail an action plan and any follow up procedures required.
- The minutes of the visit will be placed on the pupil/students file and copies sent to parents, Local Authority/Social Services if appropriate

5. Evaluation of policy

Principals will monitor the implementation of this policy and provide feedback to the policy lead. This policy will be reviewed on a bi- annual basis.

6. References and resources

Suzy Lamplugh Trust - www.suzylamplugh.org

7. Related policies

Lone Working Policy (HS-0420)