Home Visits Policy

2026/2027

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Purpose

Orion Academy recognise that strong relationships with families are central to pupil safety, engagement and attendance. Home visits are one way we support families proactively, particularly where communication has reduced, attendance is declining, or safeguarding concerns arise.

This policy sets out:

- When and why home visits are conducted
- How visits are conducted safely and professionally
- The procedures before, during and after a visit
- Safeguarding and risk management arrangements

If any concerns about a pupil's welfare arise during a visit, staff will act in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legislative and Guidance Context

This policy reflects:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education guidance
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
- General Health and Safety legislation

Home visits form part of Orion Academy's safeguarding and attendance procedures.

Definition

A home visit is any visit where a member of staff enters the home of a pupil's parent or carer.

At Orion Academy, home visits (during term time and school hours) may include:

- Attendance support visits
- Welfare checks
- Safeguarding-focused visits
- Procedural visits (e.g. delivery of learning materials)
- Relationship-building visits

Due to the needs of our cohort, home visits may take place:

- Outside standard school hours
- During school holidays
- During term time

This flexibility reflects our commitment to supporting families at times that are most effective and accessible.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Rapid Improvement Board

The Rapid Improvement Board is responsible for approving this policy and receiving appropriate oversight information.

The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher (with delegated responsibility to the Attendance and Safeguarding Lead, where appropriate) is responsible for:

- Authorising home visits
- Ensuring safeguarding oversight where required
- Responding to any concerns raised by families
- Ensuring staff safety procedures are followed

Where a visit has a safeguarding focus, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed and involved in decision-making.

Senior Leaders and DSL

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff are trained in procedures
- Overseeing risk assessments
- Determining which staff members attend visits
- Ensuring visits do not place staff at unreasonable risk

Staff

Staff must:

- Follow this policy
- Complete risk assessments
- Inform school of departure and return
- Record visits appropriately
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers may raise any concerns about a home visit with the Co-Headteachers.

Reasons for Home Visits at Orion Academy

Home visits are conducted where they are intended to support pupil safety, engagement or attendance.

These may include:

- Building or restoring engagement with families
- Supporting improvements in attendance
- Ensuring the safety of students
- Delivering curriculum-focused learning tools or tasks
- Conducting a welfare check where contact has reduced
- Investigating unexplained absence
- Supporting reintegration following suspension or extended absence
- Supporting pupils who have not attended due to medical or emotional health needs

Attendance Trigger

At Orion Academy, if a pupil has been absent for three consecutive school days and contact has not been successfully established, a home visit may be conducted.

If no one is present at the address during a visit:

- Staff will not enter the property.
- A note will be left requesting that the parent/carer contacts the school urgently.
- The note will clearly request that the family ring the school to discuss next steps and arrange a further visit if necessary.
- The attempted visit will be recorded.

Further action will be determined in line with safeguarding and attendance procedures.

Procedures

1.1 Before the Visit

Staff must ensure:

- The visit is necessary and proportionate.
- A risk assessment is completed.
- Relevant safeguarding information is checked.
- The purpose of the visit is clear.
- The visit is logged with the school office, including departure time, address and expected return time.

Where appropriate, visits will be arranged in advance via telephone. However, unannounced visits may occur where safeguarding or attendance concerns require it.

Where possible, two members of staff will attend.

1.2 During the Visit

Staff must:

- Present identification.
- Explain the purpose of the visit.
- Only enter when invited by a responsible adult.
- Avoid entering bedrooms or private areas unnecessarily.
- Remain professional at all times.
- Keep mobile phones accessible.
- Leave immediately if they feel unsafe

If no responsible adult is present, the visit must not proceed.

If animals pose a risk and cannot be secured, the visit will be terminated.

If staff believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, emergency services will be contacted.

1.3 If an Incident Occurs

If staff feel at risk:

- They must leave immediately.
- Contact emergency services if necessary.
- Inform SLT and DSL once safe.
- Record the incident as soon as possible.

1.4 After the Visit

Staff must:

- Inform the school immediately upon leaving the property.
- Record the visit, including purpose, outcome and any safeguarding observations.
- Log any attendance or welfare concerns.
- Share safeguarding concerns directly with the DSL.

Only relevant staff will be informed of visit outcomes.

Safeguarding

Any safeguarding concern identified during a home visit will be reported immediately to the DSL in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where a pupil is believed to be at immediate risk, appropriate external agencies will be contacted.

Allegations against staff arising from a home visit will be managed under the Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Monitoring and Review

Home visits are monitored by SLT to ensure:

- They are proportionate and appropriate
- Staff safety procedures are followed
- Attendance and safeguarding procedures are consistent
- This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required

Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children Missing Education Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Policy