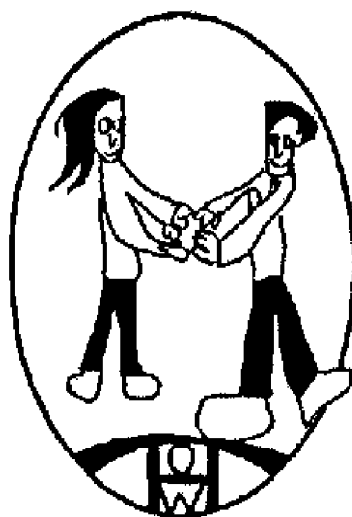


# Howbridge Infant School



## Home Visits Policy 2022

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## Introduction

As part of our induction process the Reception class teachers and teaching assistants carry out home visits.

Each child will have one visit lasting approximately 15 minutes; this will enable staff and the family to become acquainted on a one to one basis in familiar surroundings. The home visit will also give parents the opportunity to share any concerns or ask any questions they may have.

To assist with these home visits and to enable parents to book a convenient day and time for a visit, a timetable will be available for parents to complete at the parents welcome evening.

## Rationale

We believe that our first encounter with families is crucial in helping to form a positive partnership between home and school.

Parents/Carers have extensive knowledge of their child which is valuable to school staff and will help them to provide a smooth transition and valuable experiences for them at school.

Home visits provide an opportunity to share this knowledge in an informal way and in a familiar environment, they are the start of the continued relationship with parents which is vital to enable us to provide for the needs of the child. Meeting the child in their home environment establishes positive links with families, especially those of vulnerable pupils.

## Aims

- To build a positive and caring relationship between the staff and the family before their child begins school.
- To meet with the child in a familiar environment to ease the settling in period.
- To ensure the child has met the staff on familiar territory to help them with the transition from home to school.
- To allow the child to share their favourite toys, games and books with school staff if they wish to.
- To encourage families to share information about their children which can be used to help with the transition process. This includes finding out about children's interests at home and personal skills such as getting changed and using cutlery.
- To provide an opportunity for families to ask questions or share information about their child and ensure that this is private.
- To inform future planning to ensure all topics are purposeful for each cohort.

## Procedure

- At all times, the needs of the individual child are paramount.
- All parents/carers are given the opportunity to be visited at home by members of the school staff.
- Staff will attend home visits in pairs for their own security. They must leave a list of where they are going and a mobile number in the school office.
- Staff will be conscious of the fact that they are guests in the family's home and will treat all families with a high level of respect during the visit.

- The home visit is a means of talking to the family, gaining information about the child and answering any questions the family may have.
- Visits are not expected to last more than 15 minutes.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE RESPECTED AT ALL TIMES.**

#### **Before the visit**

- Show respect for Parents/Carers as equal partners.
- Be a good listener.
- Make appointments in advance and offer alternative dates/times.
- Ensure that parents know when we will arrive, how long we will stay, what will happen, what kinds of questions we will be asking and what information we will bring.
- Ask them to think about the information they need from us in advance of the meeting.
- Accept the right of a family not to want a home visit.
- Confirm Parents/Carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child.
- Do not assume that all Parents/Carers are literate.
- Make sure we consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, and religious and sexual orientation.
- Familiarise ourselves with the route/ location before you leave.
- Leave details of our visiting schedule with another member of staff.

#### **During the visit**

- Be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home.
- Sit near a door or exit and if you feel uneasy or worried at any time, make an excuse and leave.
- Staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made on their home or lifestyle.
- Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures.
- They should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc.
- Staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents.
- Return to school when you have completed visits.
- If no one is present at the address given, staff will contact the school office to arrange another time.

#### **Health and safety:**

- Inform a nominated member of staff when you are leaving for a home visit.
- Leave the details of the home visit schedule with a senior member of staff. Include a list of visit addresses and times including family name, child's name, address, telephone number, purpose of visit, and time due back at base.
- You must inform the nominated person if there is a cancellation or alteration to the time.
- Carry with you and show the parents some form of identification.
- Demonstrate normal courtesy – wait to be invited into the home.
- If staff have a safeguarding concern during the visit, they will report this to the DSL on immediate return to the school.
- If a child answers the door, ask if an adult is present in the house before entering. Do not enter if an adult is not present.

- If the Parent/Carer appears at all uncomfortable about the visit continuing, staff should offer to leave, offer to continue the contact with a telephone call and give the Parent/Carer the telephone number of the school.
- Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels dangerous or threatening – leave, saying for example that you need to get something from your car.
- All Home Visits must finish by 17.00.

### Sharing information

The staff will introduce themselves and explain who all members of Reception are and their job role. They will explain the purpose of the visit.

### Possible questions:

Any pre-school experience?

Are there any health concerns that may affect the child at school?

Are there any dietary requirements or allergies?

Has there been involvement with any outside agencies?

Can they dress and undress and use a knife and fork?

If English is not their first language what is their first language and how much English do they understand?

What does the child enjoy playing with?

What interests do they have?

How does the child respond to new situations and new people?

Is there anything that particularly worries the child?

How does the child react to new situations?

What are the best ways to comfort the child if they are upset?

How do the parents think the child will settle?

Who will be bringing the child to school and collecting them?

We will talk about how we will settle the children in and ways that parents can help them settle.