

BEDFONT PRIMARY SCHOOL



Home Visits Policy

Agreed by governors:
Revised:

March 2011
February 2016

INTRODUCTION

Home visiting is widely accepted as good practice and is a valuable way of establishing and maintaining good home/school links.

Home visits are arranged for all children before they enter the Nursery and at the beginning of the Reception year for children who have not attended the Nursery. Children joining Reception classes throughout the year are not normally visited at home if they have previously attended school. A family visit to school is arranged prior to entry for these children.

AIMS

Home visits help to:

- establish a good relationship between the school, the parents/carers and the child
- show the family that the school values the child's home background
- share the parent's/carer's knowledge and understanding of their child
- develop a two-way dialogue between home and school
- ease the child's transition from home to school
- enable parents/carers to begin to understand the school's ethos
- offer support and build confidence in parents/carers who have difficulty in relating to the school comfortably
- give parents/carers the opportunity to discuss any concerns about their child in the privacy of their own home
- break down barriers between home and school
- give staff the opportunity to meet the family in the home environment.

PARTICIPATION

Parents/carers must be in agreement to a home visit taking place before any appointment is arranged. The Headteacher should be informed if any parent refuses a visit so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Staff should also agree to taking part in home visits. No member of staff should feel pressurised into visiting if they have reservations about doing so. No member of staff will be expected to carry out a home visit alone.

Staff conducting home visits should always carry a form of identity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff visiting homes are in a position of trust. Confidences shared with visiting staff should be respected and should only be referred to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff. This is essential in building a trusting relationship between home and school. Staff should respond positively to any confidential information and offer appropriate advice if necessary. Any child protection issues must be discussed immediately with the Headteacher (see Child Protection Policy).

ATTITUDE

Staff carrying out home visits should respect the privilege of entering a family's home. They should accept that all families have different lifestyles and must not judge families according to their own standards. As far as possible all visits should follow a similar pattern.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Information gathered during a home visit helps staff to gain a fuller picture of the child and build up stronger links with the family. The information should be gained professionally and openly. Such information should be recorded on the child's official record sheet and on the child's individual profile. It must be remembered that this information may be seen by parents/carers if requested.

SAFETY

- staff must not visit alone
- staff must ensure that the office staff have a copy of their timetable of visits and their mobile phone number
- staff must report to the office staff before leaving the premises and on their return
- staff must take a mobile phone on all visits
- staff who do not feel comfortable with the situation during a visit should terminate the visit immediately and report the incident to the Headteacher
- any threats or intimidation should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Any exceptional circumstances should always be discussed first with the Headteacher or a senior member of staff.

Some parts of the local area may appear to be threatening. As an alternative, staff may wish to meet the family at school. This should be discussed with the Headteacher first.

ARRANGING VISITS

Parents/carers are informed of the purpose of a home visit by a member of the office staff when they return their child's admission form. They are also asked if they would like letters to be translated for them and if they would like an interpreter to accompany staff on the home visit (see Equalities Policy).

A letter is sent to parents explaining the format and purpose of the visit with a suggested time and date. Letters arranging home visits are sent at the end of the Summer Term.

Nursery children are not admitted until all of the children have been visited at home. Nursery staff should be reasonably expected to carry out four home visits during a morning session and three home visits during an afternoon session. Children new to Reception receive a home visit during the first week of the Autumn term.

Maps of the local area are available in school to enable homes to be easily found.

STAFFING

Home visits are normally carried out by the teacher and the Early Years Practitioner whose group the child will be in. It may be necessary for a member of staff who speaks the home language to accompany staff on certain visits.

Arrangements are made for new members of staff to accompany an experienced member of staff on a home visit before undertaking their own visits.

STRUCTURING VISITS

Visits should normally last for about half an hour. Although both members of staff will obviously want to establish a relationship with the child, it has been found to be more effective if one (usually the EYP) plays with the child whilst the other talks to the parents/carers. It is usual to take a toy and book to share with the child. At the beginning of the visit however, after both staff have introduced themselves, it is important that the teacher as well as the EYP spends time talking to the child.

The member of staff talking to the parents/carers has a great deal of information both to gather/check and to pass on:

- check the details on the data sheet sent previously to parents/carers
- discuss family circumstances
- discuss any medical problems/dietary requirements

- clarify which languages are spoken at home including English and how much is spoken/understood by the child
- discuss how long and how often the child has been attending pre-school groups
- discuss the sort of clothes the child should wear
- inform parents/carers that jewellery must not be worn to school (see Health and Safety policy) except for religious reasons
- collect from or give the parent/carer:-

a milk/lunch order form

a holiday list

a copy of our home school agreement

a uniform order form

a photograph permission form

- ask parents/carers to complete the “About Me” sheet with their child (to bring when they visit school)
- find out who will bring the child to school and collect him/her. Remind parents/carers to notify us if someone different will be collecting the child
- clarify the date and time of the child’s visit to the nursery/school and their admission date, as well as school/nursery hours
- reassure parents/carers that they are welcome in school and to inform us if they are concerned about anything
- inform parents/carers about the Friends of Bedfont and that they are welcome to help in school once their child has settled.

Parents/carers may have a number of questions they want to ask and should be given time to do so. However, some questions relating to the school environment, the curriculum or the daily routine may be better answered when the family visit the school. This must be explained carefully to parents/carers so that they do not feel that their questions are not being answered.

At the end of the visit, the child should be personally invited to visit the nursery/school with his/her parents/carers. It may be appropriate for both members of staff to talk further with the child about the sort of activities he/she might like to do at school.

After the visit the teacher and EYP should discuss and complete the appropriate paperwork. The data checking sheet and other documentation should be returned to the office staff.

CONCLUSION

Home visiting plays a vital part in establishing a partnership between home and school. It benefits the child, the family and the staff. Most children remember their home visit for a long time afterwards and often refer to it. Parents/carers appreciate the fact that staff have taken the trouble to visit them in their own homes, and staff have a greater understanding of the child and the family as a result of the home visit.