

# NORTHFIELD SCHOOL HOME VISITING POLICY

<b>Date adopted</b>	<b>Feb 2017</b>
<b>Signed by chair of Teaching and Learning committee</b>	
<b>Member of staff responsible for monitoring</b>	<b>Deputy Headteacher</b>
<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Biennial</b>



# HOME VISITING – Assessing risks

## LEGISLATION

The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)

### Purpose

For some employees, home visiting is part of their job e.g. those involved in home tuition of young or adult learners, home-school liaison officers, care managers and care assistants. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees whilst visiting clients in their own homes during the course of their work, and home visits present some potential risks because of the unpredictability of the situations in which employees find themselves.

### Scope

This procedure applies to managers and employees where visits to people's homes are necessary, for example, to meet children and families or to provide services to the elderly or people discharged from hospital.

### Precautions

Home visits should only take place if it is not practical to meet in offices or other appropriate locations. Such visits must be kept to a minimum and all preparatory steps followed in full. Whether home visits take place on a regular basis or occasionally, employees need to feel confident that they are not placed at risk of violence or the allegation of abuse.

### Managers' Responsibilities

Line managers must assess the risks to the individual employee and ensure that appropriate control measures have been implemented before authorising visits.

### What are the risks?

The main safety risks associated with home visits include violence or verbal abuse, dog attacks, contagious and infectious diseases, and care workers may be at risk from use of electrical items in a client's home and manual handling injuries from moving patients. Risks or work overload may also arise through stress brought about by the isolation of peripatetic working.

The health and safety of employees must always take precedence when the need to make home visits is being considered, however the health and safety of the service users should not be ignored.

When it is necessary to visit clients or members of the public in their homes, employees must check any existing information systems such as SWIFT, which record known hazards. Where a hazard is identified concerning a client employees must report this to their manager for recording and appropriate action to minimise risk must be taken, for example, ***employees should not do a home visit on their own if there is a record of a client being violent or dangerous.***

### What needs to be checked before home visiting?

In order to fulfil statutory responsibilities all line managers are required to ensure that employees:

- are fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence
- are fully briefed about the areas in which they will be working
- are provided with all the relevant information and risk assessment on pupils or particular adult clients and their families; specific information is required about clients with aggressive tendencies, aggressive pets or those who come from families with a history of violence
- understand that they must provide an itinerary with expected departures/arrival times, an agreed method of reporting back such as a mobile phone, and a responsible contact, i.e. a "buddy", who knows how to act if the employee has not returned when expected and be able to inform colleagues about possible changes of plan

- have a pre-arranged appointment with the client/customer/parent(s) they are going to meet
- are aware of the importance of leaving the home immediately if they feel in anyway uncomfortable
- are aware of the online procedures for reporting accidents, incidents and physical/verbal abuse
- carry an official County Council identity card, which should **not** be worn around the neck: Ensure it is shown on the first home visit
- do not carry large quantities of cash when making home visits
- take all the necessary approved equipment, e.g. an RCD, with them and, wherever practicable, avoid using the person's own equipment, especially electrical appliances.

Careful planning and organisation of visits is essential and all available information on a particular case should be obtained before the visit. Knowledge of the family and home environment will help as part of the risk assessment and it is vitally important to record and share information amongst colleagues across the agencies/partnerships and directorates before considering home visiting. Risk reduction measures such as ensuring that another responsible adult will be present at all times, to avoid being alone with a pupil, is a sensible measure and will form part of a safe system of working.

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If an incident does occur, employees should:

- record all the details as soon as possible after the incident before the precise recollection of events fade
- report all incidents to management at the first available opportunity who will need to review the risk assessment as a part of this reporting process.

Visits should be discontinued where a threat of violence or other unacceptable behaviour is manifested. Regular monitoring of home visiting risk assessments is necessary given the nature of the activity and a formal review of home visiting should be undertaken on a regular basis by managers.

### **Employees' Responsibilities**

Employees need to:

- Adhere to any procedures put in place for their own safety
- Inform their manager if they are concerned about any of the arrangements
- Inform their manager of any defects in equipment
- Take care for their own health and safety
- Not do anything to endanger the clients they are visiting

### **Are home visiting employees covered by the Council's insurance?**

All home visits approved by heads of establishments/settings or service managers will be deemed part of the person's employment and will be covered by the County Council's insurance arrangements.

**For further information and advice:  
email and web addresses**

**Specialist:**

**Staff Care**

**Services**

[staffsupport@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:staffsupport@oxfordshire.gov.uk) **01865**

**854416**

**Occupational  
Health**

[occupational.health@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:occupational.health@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**01865**

**815421**

**Human  
Resources  
Advice**

Email: [employmentadvisoryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:employmentadvisoryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**01865**

**797300**

**General:**

**Health, Safety &  
Wellbeing Team**

[healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

<http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety>

**01865**

**797222**