



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

Shaping Positive Futures

Home Visit Policy

The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)
An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee
Company Number 07665828

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Policy Owner	Executive Director of Education
Statutory / Recommended	Recommended
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Linked Documents and Policies	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Data Protection Policy Freedom of Information Policy ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Records Management Policy
Equality Impact Statement	Equality Impact Statement: The Trust uses Equality Impact Assessments to consider policies and processes focussing on fairness, access and inclusion and how different groups might be affected. This includes the requirement to make reasonable consideration and adjustments to account for the individual needs of employees. This is part of our duty under the Equality Act (2010).

This document can only be considered valid when viewed on The Consortium Academy Trust website. If the copy is printed or downloaded and saved elsewhere the Policy date should be cross referenced to ensure the current document is referenced. The linked policies can be viewed at www.consortiumtrust.co.uk

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POLICY STATEMENT

1 Why the Policy Is Needed

Our staff may be required to undertake home visits for a variety of reasons, such as to support learners' attendance, invigilate examinations, and to establish partnerships with parents to secure the best support for their child.

2 What the Policy is About

The Home Visits Policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for staff to conduct visits to students' homes. It includes the purpose of the visits, safety protocols, and the roles and responsibilities of the visiting staff. The policy aims to create a structured framework that ensures visits are conducted respectfully and beneficially for both the families and the school.

This policy sets out how home visits will be conducted in order to ensure:

- Visits always have a clear and legitimate purpose
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for all visits
- The health and safety of staff is prioritised
- Sufficient records are kept
- Safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times

3 What the Policy Will Achieve

We are committed to ensuring all home visits are effective and procedures are in place to minimise potential risks to staff and learners.

The implementation of the Home Visits Policy will enhance the partnership between families and schools, leading to increased parental involvement and a better understanding of students' needs. By giving clear guidelines on how home visits will be conducted it all parties involved will have shared expectations for the visit.

PROCEDURE

1 Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

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

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

2 Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for home visits
- Ensuring the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures during home visits
- Ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place to cover staff undertaking home visits

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy
- Approving all home visits and ensuring they only take place where necessary and appropriate
- Ensuring staff understand and follow the school's home visit arrangements
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits have received appropriate training, where necessary
- Ensuring risk assessments are completed for home visits
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits are provided with relevant background information and circumstances to inform the risks that may be present

Staff conducting home visits will be responsible for:

- Following this policy for all home visits

- Acting professionally and sensitively, with due regard to all relevant school policies and procedures
- Seeking authorisation for all home visits and ensuring the school has all the relevant details of the visit
- Prioritising their own health and safety during visits

3 Home Visits

Home visits will be undertaken for a number of reasons. This will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- To establish the welfare of a learner, e.g. in response to an unauthorised absence
- To work with parents to support and improve their child's attendance
- To administer or invigilate a public examination where a learner is unable to attend their school, usually for medical reasons
- To hold discussions with parents where it is in the best interests of the learner to be held at their home, or the parent cannot attend school, e.g. due to a disability
- To collect or drop off a learner in certain circumstances, or to collect or drop off work or equipment for a learner
- To maintain contact with a learner who is absent from school for a long period of time, e.g. due to an illness
- To meet with children and families prior to commencing education in early years settings.

The roles of staff conducting home visits will be relevant to the purpose of the visit. These include:

- Attendance officers
- Education welfare officers
- Pastoral and/or safeguarding team members
- Examination invigilators
- Senior leaders

Other staff (such as form tutors, subject teachers and learning support assistants) will not be asked to make or accompany home visits unless the purpose of the visit is related to their role in the school.

Home visits will be scheduled in advance with the agreement of the parents, unless the visit is due to an emergency or immediate concern, e.g. an unauthorised absence with no contact from parents or a safeguarding issue.

All home visits will require the authorisation of the Headteacher or an appropriate delegate, such as the senior attendance lead for the school for routine attendance calls, or the designated safeguarding lead for child welfare checks. Home visits will only be authorised where they are deemed necessary and in the best interests of the learner concerned. An appointment form will be completed before a home visit with necessary details, e.g. the expected time, location, people attending, which is kept and held in the school office.

Home visits will take place during school hours wherever possible. Home visits outside of school hours will only be authorised if necessary and there is no reasonable alternative – in such cases, a responsible contact will be established to check on the welfare of staff conducting the visit.

Staff will present their school identity badge upon arrival for a first visit at a home. If the learner's parents are not present at the arranged time, staff will wait no longer than 20 minutes. If the learner's parents do not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.

Staff will not enter a learner's home if they feel unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be communicated in writing to the Headteacher and a note placed on CPOMs.

If there are animals on the premises the staff will request that they are kept in a separate room in the property for the duration of the visit. If the parent refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled.

Any issues or incidents during a home visit will be reported to the Headteacher.

Where a staff member cannot be contacted or located during or after a home visit, the Headteacher will be notified as soon as possible to decide on the appropriate response. The police will be contacted where there is concern for a staff member's welfare.

Upon return to work the member of staff will log the visit on the MIS system or if there is a Child Protection concern on CPOMs.

4 Personal safety

The Headteacher will ensure staff are aware of the following before a home visit:

- Information on the learner(s) involved, e.g. medical needs, any aggressive tendencies
- Relevant background information and family circumstances, e.g. aggressive tendencies, cultural sensitivities
- The potential presence of any animals
- The need to provide details of the visit, e.g. an itinerary with expected departure and arrival times
- The need to always carry a school-issued mobile phone and keep it switched on
- To never enter a home without an appropriate adult present
- To prioritise their health and safety and leave if at any point they feel unsafe or uncomfortable

A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be conducted and approved by the Headteacher. If a particular home visit poses new or additional risks, the risk assessment will be updated before the visit.

It is the responsibility of staff conducting home visits to keep themselves safe at all times. Staff will be instructed to avoid any situations that may risk their safety. Before entering the home and once inside, staff will identify possible exit routes and ensure they always have access to escape quickly in the event of an emergency.

Staff conducting home visits will carry a school-issued mobile phone which is kept switched on at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the school office. Staff will not carry large quantities of cash or other valuable personal possessions during home visits.

Where a staff member feels uncomfortable or unsafe at any point, they will end the visit immediately and contact the police immediately.

The staff member will contact the school office upon arrival at the visit and on departure. The school office will check in by calling a staff member ten minutes after the staff member's arrival phone call. Thereafter, staff will notify the school office every 30 minutes, or otherwise as determined on the risk assessment, to confirm there are no concerns. A code word will be established to enable staff to discretely alert that help is needed if required during a phone call or text.

Wherever possible, lone working will be avoided during home visits. At least two staff members will conduct home visits together, unless the Headteacher decides it is safe and appropriate for a home visit to be conducted alone, for example routine attendance calls to addresses previously visited.

All lone visits will follow procedures outlined in the Lone Working Policy. A risk assessment for an instance of lone working will be carried out prior to the commencement of any home visit undertaken by a single staff member and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

Staff will notify the school office of any changes to the schedule of a home visit, e.g. a delay due to traffic, as soon as possible.

Details of the vehicles used by staff conducting home visits, including make, model, registration number and colour, will be held by the school. Where possible, staff will park in a safe and well-lit area with the car facing in the opposite direction of the property.

5 Training

Before performing their duties, staff conducting home visits will undergo the appropriate training in strategies for the prevention of violence, and other training deemed relevant by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher may delegate or request a member of staff undertakes a home visit – where a staff member is regularly required to undertake home visits, this will be reflected in their job description, and appropriate training will be provided.

Where possible, at least one staff member in attendance will be specifically trained in home visiting, e.g. an education welfare officer.

6 Attendance Officer visits

All attendance officers will work in partnership with the SLT, the LA's School Attendance Support Team and any other relevant partners. Home visits for the purpose of attendance support and improvement will be used in line with the Attendance and Absence Policy.

After a visit, any agreements made between an attendance officer and parents will be recorded and kept in the learner's attendance record. Reminder letters will be sent to the learner's parents if the learner fails to adhere to the agreements made during the home visit. Continued failure to adhere to the agreement will result in a follow-up visit.

7 Child protection and safeguarding

Staff conducting home visits will carry out their work in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Prior to a staff member being assigned to undertake a home visit, the school will ensure the staff member has the appropriate level of DBS check. An enhanced DBS and barred list check will be undertaken where necessary.

The Headteacher will ensure staff understand the Staff Code of Conduct continues to apply during home visits. Staff will never enter a home or stay inside without an appropriate adult present. Staff will not hold conversations with siblings or other children in the home without an appropriate adult present.

Staff will not make any physical intervention during a home visit. If they have concerns regarding the safety of a child, they will contact the police immediately.

Staff conducting home visits will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible. Serious concerns about a learner's immediate welfare will be reported to the police and any relevant agencies.

Any allegations made against staff conducting home visits will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.