

Home Visits Policy

Policy Code:	HS7
Policy Start Date:	September 2024
Policy Review Date:	September 2027

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR6 Data Protection Policy
- HR6A Data Breach Policy
- HR9 Positive Handling and Safe Touch Policy
- HR18 Staff Sickness Absence Policy
- HR33 Records Management Policy
- HS5 Health and Safety Policy
- HS6 Lone Working Policy
- SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SW17 Safeguarding Adults Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The policy outlines the procedures for a member of staff carrying out a home visit, whether this is to visit a pupil, a parent/carer, another member of staff or other.
- 1.2 The Trust recognises that staff are one of its most important assets in providing a high-quality service and as such wishes to maintain a consistent approach to the welfare of its staff and their safety when completing home visits.
- 1.3 The Trust has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of work and individuals have a responsibility to follow safe working practices within the Trust and the community.
- 1.4 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as the Early Years setting at the Priory Witham Academy, Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire SCITT.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 The Pay, Performance and HR Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Head of HR and the Director of Safeguarding.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

3 Aims

- 3.1 To set out the procedures for Trust staff to carry out a home visit.

4 Purpose of a home visit

- 4.1 To provide an effective, reliable service to families and pupils, e.g. to meet with a family to discuss a concern, to discuss or collect a non-attender, to deliver work to a pupil who is absent from the academy. There may be times when it

is most appropriate to visit the home to meet with parents/carers and/or the pupil.

- 4.2 To build, develop and strengthen a relationship with the family in a familiar setting for the child.
- 4.3 For hard-to-reach families, home visits provide an opportunity for parents/carers to express their opinions in an environment in which they are confident.
- 4.4 For members of staff on long-term sickness/absence, the aim of the visit is to check their welfare. These visits will be conducted by the HR Team and the PA/Admin/Line Manager of the member of staff or other appropriate nominated staff. For further information on staff home visits please see HR18 Staff Sickness Absence Policy.
- 4.5 Where a discussion may be required with a member of staff and the home environment is more appropriate to the place of work.

5 Staff Safety

- 5.1 The Trust has a duty of care to staff to maintain their safety throughout the home visit. As such, the following must be adhered to:
 - a) a member of staff should never carry out a home visit without informing anybody at their setting;
 - b) ideally, home visits should not be arranged during a setting's 'out of hours' time. If a visit has to take place out of hours, then this must be agreed with the Line Manager;
 - c) for visits within working hours, staff must inform their Line Manager/Deputy Manager of the expected time to return to site, and call and inform the office should the time of return change;
 - d) for visits out of hours, staff should notify their Line Manager either by telephone or text message that they have returned home safely after the visit;
 - e) staff should take a mobile phone with them and ensure it is switched on throughout the visit; and
 - f) staff must not go to the home to meet alone (one-to-one) with a pupil or member of staff.
- 5.2 If, due to a previous incident or known information about a house/its occupants, a home visit is identified to be high risk then staff should only carry out a home visit in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the Headteacher/Head of Setting. Staff can contact the Director of Safeguarding and/or the Head of HR if they wish to discuss this.

6 Data Protection

- 6.1 Staff may be required to carry pupil or staff data when going on a home visit, this will include names, phone numbers, addresses, any case details etc. Staff must ensure that this data is protected whilst away from the academy site/setting. It is imperative that data is not stored in a car that is unattended and staff must ensure the data remains with them throughout the visit. For more information, please refer to HR6 Data Protection Policy.
- 6.2 If you believe there may have been a data breach, please refer to HR6A Data Breach Policy.

7 Risk Assessment

- 7.1 The Trust has a risk assessment that staff can use in the event that a home visit is required.
- 7.2 Prior to a visit being undertaken, the member(s) of staff involved must read the risk assessment and make any amendments necessary to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 7.3 In the event that, following a home visit, staff become aware of a change in circumstances that impacts the risk assessment, they must ensure that the risk assessment is updated to reflect this.

8 Procedures for a home visit to parents/carers and families

- 8.1 Pre-Visit
- a) Identify the purpose for the visit and what the visit aims to achieve.
 - b) Where appropriate, consent must be sought from the parent/carer prior to any visit being undertaken.
 - c) Where a visit is pre-arranged, agree a date and time for the home visit. If necessary, confirm the arrangement of the home visit via letter. If appropriate, remind the family on the day of the visit by telephone.
 - d) Appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed (in line with the risk assessment).
 - e) Home visits to families who have been referred from other services are to be coordinated with the external service involved where necessary.
 - f) Ensure all information on the family is obtained prior to the visit, including if a home visit has taken place before and any services the family have used. It may be appropriate to speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the safeguarding team about the family.

- g) Agree upon a suitable plan of action with the Line Manager/appropriate member of staff in the event that you do not return to site at the expected time and you have not rung to inform them of a delay.
- h) Plan your route – taking into account how you will travel to the home, how long the journey will take and any safety precautions you might need to take (which should be included in the risk-assessment).

8.2 The Visit

- a) For data protection purposes, take only documentation that is needed for the visit.
- b) When attending a home visit stand clear of the door and ask for the person you have arranged to visit and show your identification badge to the person who has answered the door.
- c) Staff must always follow occupants into the room.
- d) Staff must not enter a home if there are any doubts concerning safety, e.g. if residents appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, if the person with whom the visit has been arranged is not in. Staff should remove themselves from danger (real or perceived) as quickly as possible.
- e) Information and action points from the home visit, where appropriate and necessary, should be documented and agreed by all parties.
- f) Any issues raised by parents/carers at the meeting outside of the scope of the initial reason should be noted and forwarded to the relevant member of staff on return to the setting.

9 Procedures for a home visit to members of staff

9.1 Pre-Visit

- a) Consent must be sought from the member of staff prior to any visit being undertaken. Ensure the member of staff knows why the visit is being undertaken. The exception to this is where a home visit is carried out as a welfare check following limited or no contact from a member of staff and there is a concern for safety, where it is not possible to obtain consent.
- b) Ensure a date and time for the home visit are agreed. If necessary, confirm the arrangement of the home visit via letter. If appropriate, remind the member of staff on the day of the visit by telephone.
- c) The member of staff must be informed who is undertaking the visit.
- d) The member of staff has the right to invite an appropriate individual of their choosing to attend the meeting as a supportive measure.
- e) Appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed (in line with the risk assessment).
- f) Agree upon a suitable plan of action with the Line Manager/appropriate member of staff in the event that you do not return to site at the expected time and you have not rung to inform them of a delay.

- g) Plan your route – taking into account how you will travel to the home, how long the journey will take and any safety precautions you might need to take (which should be included in the risk-assessment).

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- e) Information and action points from the home visit should be documented and agreed by all parties.
- f) Any issues raised by the member of staff at the meeting outside of the scope of the initial reason should be noted and forwarded to the relevant member of staff on return to the setting.

10 Safeguarding

- 10.1 If, during the course of a home visit, a member of staff has any safeguarding concerns (about a child or an adult), they must report this immediately, in line with their setting's safeguarding procedures.
- 10.2 If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. The setting's DSL should be notified of this as soon as possible, if they are not involved in the initial report.
- 10.3 If an adult is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to the police immediately. The Trust DSL should be notified of this as soon as possible, if they are not involved in the initial report.

11 Reporting and Recording Incidents

- 11.1 All staff must report every incident of violence or abuse, including verbal abuse, when it occurs or as soon as possible after the incident to their Line Manager or Headteacher/Head of Setting.
- 11.2 If, during the course of the visit, a member of staff uses positive handling techniques on a pupil, this should be reported and the Positive Handling Form

should be completed. Please see HR9 Positive Handling and Safe Touch Policy for more information.

- 11.3 Any accident, incident or near miss should be reported on the Trust's Health and Safety Portal.
- 11.4 All incidents should be investigated and, if necessary, relevant agencies notified.
- 11.5 Following an incident, safety measures will be reviewed and amended if appropriate and, if necessary, further training will be available for staff.

12 Policy Change

- 12.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.



The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Home Visits Policy

This Policy has been approved by the Pay, Performance and HR committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.