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Home Visits

Policy and Procedure

**September 2023**

Date for Review: September 2024

**James Montgomery Academy Trust**

# Statement of intent

**The James Montgomery Academy Trust (thereafter referred to as JMAT)** is committed to safeguarding its staff and pupils at all times. No member of staff will be expected to accept exposure to violence, harassment or unnecessary risk as part of their job role.

The JMAT employs a zero-tolerance policy on violence towards members of staff; under no circumstances

is violence towards any member of staff considered acceptable.

This policy relates to the potential risks directed to staff as a result of home visits or while conducting a home

visit to a pupil or staff residence.

**Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

* Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
* Education Act 2002

This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

* HSE et al (2009) ‘Preventing workplace harassment and violence’
* DfE (2018) ‘Controlling access to school premises’
* DfE (2023) ‘Keeping children safe in education’
* Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This policy operates in conjunction with the following JMAT policies:

* Physical Intervention Policy
* Staff Code of Conduct
* Health and Safety Policy
* Lone worker Policy
* Parental Code of Conduct
* Child Protection Policy
* Attendance Policy

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy a “home visit” is a visit that requires a member of staff to enter or attend a home of a parent, carer or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or procedural visit.

Procedure

All home visits conducted by staff must be authorised by the designated safeguarding lead in school or a member of the safeguarding team prior to the visit taking place.

In addition, wherever possible parents/carers/guardians (Ps/Cs/Gs) should be informed of the home visit prior to arrival; there will be exceptions to this, for example a visit to confirm that an absent child is at home when Ps/Cs/Gs are not responding to the telephone calls/text messages or an emergency safeguarding visit.

Aims: JMAT recognises Parents, Carers and Guardians are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is:

* To establish a partnership between Ps/Cs/Gs and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
* To develop and strengthen relationships with Ps/Cs/Gs for the best interest of the child.
* To safeguard the children who are absent from school.
* In extenuating circumstances, to overcome barriers to provide families with the appropriate support at the right time.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach Ps/Cs/Gs. They are particularly useful as they enable the Ps/Cs/Gs to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

* Pupils are refusing to come into school
* When there are attendance issues/concerns
* When students are being educated at home
* When all other means of contact with a family has failed
* To meet with Ps/Cs/Gs to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school or where it would be difficult for a Ps/Cs/Gs to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to dace meeting in a timely manner.
* To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact Ps/Cs/Gs have not a response and school have welfare or safeguarding concerns for a pupil.
* To work with and support Ps/Cs/Gs in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
* To collect from or drop off a child at home where there are concerns for a child’s welfare if they travelled by other means.
* To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a fixed term suspension or medical issue.
* To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school.
* To investigate situations when there are suspicious that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time has been refused).
* To visit families prior to starting school, enabling staff to understand the needs of the children and information gather to enable the school to prepare for admission.

Procedures

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practices and to provide guideline in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.

Before the visit

* Be familiar with the school’s policy and procedure for home visits
* Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and or practical arrange for Ps/Cs/Gs to come into school)
* Record the home visit on the child’s chronology in RMY - Instructed by DSL.
* Establish partner working to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety in line with the lone working policy.
* Clarify each person’s role for the duration of the visit.
* Ensure that you are well informed about known risks relating to the family and have correct address.
* Consider who you want/need to see, e.g. Parent/Child/other
* Where possible make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send a letter.
* Refer to the Community Lone Working Risk Assessment (appendix 1) and inform the school office of your intended location before departing for a home visit.
* If more than one visit - set up an interlude call - at the approximate timeframes relating to the intended visit arrivals.
* Ensure you have a charged mobile phone on your possession with the school phone number.

During the visit

* Park in a well lit area and preferably in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
* Request that there are no uncaged animals in the room where a meeting takes place - this includes the garden area. If an uncaged animal is present, do not enter the property.
* Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification do not use a necklace lanyard.
* Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
* Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
* Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility (Ps/Cs/Gs) or other responsible adult whom a P/C/G has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
* Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their P/C/G is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
* Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe and necessary to do so.
* Do not enter a child’s/young person’s bedroom.
* If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the schools safeguarding team immediately to discuss your observations or to seek advice. If appropriate the DSL will make a referral to social care.
* If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact emergency services 999. Stay with the child, outside of the house, until the police arrive and phone school to inform them of the situation.
* Assure Ps/Cs/Gs that you will treat anything that they tell you sensitively. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the DSL.
* Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc. of the home.
* Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
* Be sympathetic, but remain neutral. Do not get personally involved.
* Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
* Do not carry money or personal belongings when making a home visit. (Except a mobile phone in case contact with others is needed.)

After the visit

* Update RMY with the outcome of the visit where possible/applicable.
* If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after each visit to say that you have left and offer an ETA.
* Any child protection concern arising from the visit should be logged with the DSL
* Remain confidential.

Threats

If while on the visit you feel threatened or prevented from leaving - stay calm and try to control the situation. Try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse the situation by saying you will seek advice from other colleagues.

Keep your distance and never touch or turn your back on someone who appears to be angry. When in the property ensure that you can see the exit route at all times.

If staff have travelled separately remain in your vehicle or away from the property until all staff are present. It is preferrable for staff to travel together.

CODE WORD - establish a safe word or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.

Use this code word to alert school that you are in danger and in need of support.

Demonstrate this in the Community Lone Working Risk Assessment.

If you are concerned for your safety or that of a colleagues - DO NOT VISIT

It is strongly recommended that no one makes evening home visits.

# Monitoring, Evaluation and Policy review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the JMAT schools.

This policy will be assessed for its implementation and effectiveness **annually** by the **DSL** and the **Health and Safety Lead.**

The scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2024.**

**APPENDIX 1 Community Lone Working Risk Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | [JMAT](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CJOliver%5CJames%20Montgomery%20Academy%20Trust%5CCentral%20Team%20-%20Documents%5CJMAT%5CHEALTH%20AND%20SAFETY%5CRisk%20Assessments%5CSchools%20Risk%20Assessments%5C2023%5CReviewed%20RA%202023%5CHARTHILL%20Risk%20Assessment%20Working%20Document%20JO.xls#Index!A1) |   | **PREMISES** |  | **DATE** |  | **Ref:** |  |
|  | **RISK ASSESSMENT** for Operation / Activity**:** |   |
|  | **Lone Working - Home Visits** |
|  | Hazards Noted | Existing Controls | S | L | R | Further Controls Required | S | L | R | Diff | **Notes** |
|  | Aggressive or violent P/C/G or family member | See home visit policy - do not visit alone | 5 | 3 | 15 | Inform school office with telephone number for  | 5 | 2 | 10 | -5 |   |
|  | Reputation  | Staff informed of de-escalation techniques  | 5 | 2 | 10 | Training is made available to all staff | 5 | 1 | 5 | -5 |   |
|  | Driving/vehicle breakdown/fatigue | Appropriate car checks - business insurance and buddy system in place | 5 | 2 | 10 | Ensure phone is charged and valuables are not taken in car or in person | 5 | 1 | 5 | -5 |   |
|  | Movement through public areas | Do not carry personal valuables etc.  | 5 | 1 | 5 | Buddy system working | 5 | 1 | 5 | 0 |   |
|  | Illness/Personal Injury | Ensure mobile phones are taken on visits. | 5 | 1 | 5 | Ensure appropriate medication is available as needed | 5 | 1 | 5 | 0 |   |
|  | Attack by dog etc. | Avoid contact with animals - do not enter property or approach if danger is presented | 5 | 2 | 10 | Abort the visit if felt under threat | 5 | 1 | 5 | -5 |   |
|  | Lone Working | Home visits must be undertaken as a last resort and in pairs | 5 | 3 | 15 | Only SLT to undertake home visits - remaining visible at the front of the property at all times | 5 | 1 | 5 | -10 |   |
|  | Exit from premises | Staff to ensure exit strategy is in place - door to home or car for escape is easily accessible at all times | 5 | 3 | 15 | Establish code work (INSERT HERE) for alerting threat so colleague can alert emergency services or other | 5 | 2 | 10 | -5 |   |
|  |   |   |   |   | 0 |   | 0 |   | 0 | 0 |   |
|  | KEY: | S = Severity: **1-**First Aid **2-**Reportable **3-**Permanent Disability **4-**Fatality **5-**Multiple Fatality |
|  | L = Likelihood: **1-**Negligible **2-**Low but possible **3-**Possible but not likely **4-**Probable **5-**Highly Likely |
|  | Who is Affected (bold or underline) | Numbers Exposed (bold or undelrine) |
|  | **Employees** Contractors Suppliers Visitors Young Persons Lone workers Disabled Public New/Expectant Mothers **Children** Intruders | 1 2-5 6-20 **21-100** 100+ |
|  |
|  | Specific assessment required (bold or underline) | PPE Required (underline) |
|  | COSHH Noise Manual Handling PPE Fire Lead Vibration  **Young Persons** | Hard Hat Protective footware Hi-Vis clothing Eye Protection Hearing Protection Overalls Respitory Protection |
|  |
|  | Detailed Method Statement Required? (bold or underline) | OTHER (state): |
|  | Yes **No** |
|  | Signed :  | Name: Sarah Littlewood | Position: Head Teacher | Review Date: 15.06.24 |