

## HOME VISIT POLICY & PROCEDURES

### 1. **General Statement:**

**ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF *MUST* BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD.**

In addition, wherever possible Parents/Carers/Guardians 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 Young Person is at home, when Parents/Carers/Guardians are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

### 2. **Home Visit Definition:**

**2.1.** A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a Parent, Carer, or Guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

### 3. **Policy**

#### 3.1. **Aims**

- 3.1.1. The aim of a home visit is to meet and pass valuable information to new Parents/Carers/Guardians wishing for their Young Person to join the Let's Play Project. The home visit is also used to meet the young person within a familiar comfortable environment.
- 3.1.2. To establish a partnership between Parents/Carers/Guardians and Staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the Young Person to enable the individual needs of the Young Person to be met.
- 3.1.3. To develop and strengthen relationships with Parents/Carers/Guardians for the best interests of the Young Person.

#### 3.2. **Reasons for home visits:**

- 3.2.1. Home visits are important in helping the Let's Play Project to make contact with new or hard to reach Parents/Carers/Guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the Parents/Carers/Guardians to still have contact

with the project, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- a. All other means of contact with a family has failed
- b. To meet with Parents/Carers/Guardians to discuss an issue regarding their Young Person where it is in the best interest of the Young Person to have that discussion in their own home rather than at the project *or* where it would be difficult for a Parents/Carers/Guardians to attend the project for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner
- c. To work with and support Parents/Carers/Guardians in developing strategies to help their Young Person attend the project where attendance is an issue
- d. To collect from or drop a Young Person off at home where there are concerns for a Young Person's welfare if they travelled by other means

### **3.3. Benefits**

- 3.3.1. Home visits have many benefits. For Parents/Carers/Guardians and Young People, a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with. Other opportunities are to:
  - a. Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the Young Person
  - b. Meet family members that are important to the Young Person
  - c. Talk about the Young Person and their needs

## **4. Procedures**

**4.1.** The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member of staff when undertaking home visits.

### **4.2. Before the Visit**

- 4.2.1. Be familiar with this policy and procedure for home visits.

- 4.2.2. Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. If possible and/or practical, arrange for Parents/Carers/Guardians to come into the Let's Play Project.
- 4.2.3. Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved.
- 4.2.4. Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, home visits should **always** be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role.
- 4.2.5. Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on the policy and practice.
- 4.2.6. Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both Parents/Carers/Guardians, with or without the Young Person.
- 4.2.7. Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- 4.2.8. Wherever 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, send a letter, or email/electronic communication.

### 4.3. During the Visit

- 4.3.1. Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- 4.3.2. Dress appropriately.
- 4.3.3. Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- 4.3.4. Introduce yourselves, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification(s), do not use a necklace lanyard.
- 4.3.5. Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- 4.3.6. Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a Young Person that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- 4.3.7. Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility (Parents/Carers/Guardians) or another responsible adult whom a Parent/

Carer/Guardian has delegated to be there in their absence, and they have given us permission to speak to about the Young Person for whom we are making the home visit.

- 4.3.8. Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their Parent/Carer/Guardian is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- 4.3.9. Do not go upstairs.
- 4.3.10. Do not enter a Young Person's bedroom.
- 4.3.11. If you are concerned that a Young Person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger contact the Activities Manager straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the Young Person is alone/unsupervised/in danger. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- 4.3.12. If you feel that a Young Person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- 4.3.13. Assure Parents/Carers/Guardians that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the Activities Manager or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to the Let's Play Project. Remember that under the Young Person protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated person(s) for Young Person protection.
- 4.3.14. Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc. of the home.
- 4.3.15. Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- 4.3.16. Be sympathetic but remain neutral. Don't get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the Let's Play Project or staff.
- 4.3.17. Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
- 4.3.18. Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.

4.3.19. Complete Home Visit Form to evidence visit and complete relevant forms for the Young People to start accessing the Let's Play Project Provision.

#### **4.4. After the visit**

- 4.4.1. If you are not returning directly to the Let's Play Project, telephone the office after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- 4.4.2. Any Young Person Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead on arrival back at the Let's Play Project.
- 4.4.3. At the Let's Play Project do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular Young People.

#### **4.5. Home Visit Form**

- 4.5.1. It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make.
- 4.5.2. If an incident does occur, the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events falls from their memory.
- 4.5.3. If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor, advice should be sought from the Activities Manager as soon as possible.

## **5. Making Safe Home Visits: A Summary**

### **5.1. Before**

- 5.1.1. Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- 5.1.2. Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you.
- 5.1.3. Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- 5.1.4. Always make sure that the Let's Play Project knows where you are going.

### **5.2. During**

- 5.2.1. Carry a mobile phone with you.

- 5.2.2. Consider who you need to see.
- 5.2.3. Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- 5.2.4. Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- 5.2.5. Do not stay too long.
- 5.2.6. Introduce yourself.
- 5.2.7. Be professional.
- 5.2.8. Don't carry large sums of money.

### **5.3. Action to take if you are threatened**

- 5.3.1. If you are 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 situation by saying you will seek advice from a senior member of staff or colleague.
- 5.3.2. Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry.
- 5.3.3. Staff must wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived. Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties.
- 5.3.4. If working as a pair agree a code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.
- 5.3.5. The same code word should be used if you contact the Let's Play Project to alert them that you are in danger and need support.
- 5.3.6. Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform the project immediately.

### **5.4. After**

- 5.4.1. Report back into the Let's Play Project.

**OR**

5.4.2. If you are not returning directly to the office, telephone them after the visit to say you have left the residence.

**5.5. If you are concerned about your safety do not visit.**

5.5.1. Where possible, home visits take place between the hours of 4-6:00pm (i.e. After School) to ensure that the Young Person is present.

**Safe word:** To be agreed and recorded on Risk Assessment

**Date of Policy – 1st May 2020**

Signed ..... Chair of Trustees

Signed ..... Operations Manager

Signed ..... Activities Manager

**Review Date – 1st May 2021**