

Policy Updated 28/09/2022

This policy has been updated to reference up to date legislation.

Reference to Low-Level Safeguarding Policy has been included. This was a new policy, introduced in 2022.

Roles and responsibilities section added for clarity.



Policy for

Home Visits

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Prepared by: | Adopted by Board of Directors |
| LT | Autumn 2022 |

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Statement of intent

The Aspire Educational Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of trust employees when making home visits. It is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard both staff and pupils, who can be more vulnerable in these situations. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

The trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees.

The roles of some staff, including family support workers, learning mentors and child-centred support staff, are crucial to the overall performance of the trust. With this in mind, we have established this policy for any trust employee who is required to make home visits.

All work with pupils and parents should usually be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it may be necessary to make a one-off or regular home visit. For this reason, the trust believes that clear procedures must be in place and followed to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents via the school website.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for professionals working in education settings' 2022

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
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Lone Worker Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate policy and procedures are in place for staff home visits.

The principal will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff have the appropriate training to conduct home visits.
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Staff making home visits will be responsible for:

- Following this policy at all times.
- Always acting in the best interests of pupils.

3. Personal safety

It is the responsibility of trust employees to keep themselves safe at all times. They must avoid any situations that may risk their safety.

The principal must ensure a member of staff is not exposed to unacceptable risk by making a home visit.

Home visits will only be undertaken when is deemed necessary and can be justified.

Home visits should be made by at least two members of staff wherever possible.

A first home visit to a family must always be made by two members of staff. This visit should gather information to inform the risk assessment for future visits.

Home visits should be planned and arrangements agreed with all parties, including family, trust employee and their principal/line manager.

Employees should usually have an appointment before making a home visit. Confirmation of the appointment must be recorded and held in the school office.

Appointment records must include the time and location along with the name of the pupil and trust employee/s making the visit.

Unannounced visits should be avoided wherever possible. However, they should be considered where there is a concern over the safety of a child such as unexplained absence of a vulnerable child.

Where there is a significant and immediate concern about the safety of a child the police should be contacted and a police welfare call requested.

Employees working off site must carry a mobile phone at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the principal.

Employees making a home visit must have access to an emergency contact at all times. A code word/phrase should be agreed to use in the event an employee needs to seek help covertly.

Employees will 'check in' by calling their school office every two hours to update the principal/line manager of their whereabouts.

If an employee does not make contact every two hours they will be contacted by a member of the school staff to check on their safety.

The Aspire Educational Trust home visit risk assessment will be conducted by the principal and designated safeguarding lead prior to a home visit. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.

Risk assessments should include evaluation of any known risk factors regarding the pupil, parents/carers and any others living in the household, including animals.

Risk assessments should consider any circumstances that may render the member of staff becoming more vulnerable to an allegation being made e.g. hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances.

Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to employees who make visits outside of 'school hours' or during school holidays if staff work full year.

Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to visits in remote or secluded locations.

Following a risk assessment, identified control measures must be put in place before a visit is undertaken.

Employees making a home visit must adhere to the agreed risk management strategies identified on the visit's risk assessment.

If a trust employee identifies any additional risk during a visit they must end the visit immediately.

If a trust employee feels that they are in immediate danger, they must contact the police or their school emergency contact who will call the police.

Details of the vehicles used by trust staff, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the school office. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date business use insurance.

If another agency makes a request for a member of school staff to make a home visit on their behalf this policy must be followed. The other agency should be asked to contribute to the risk assessment if they are already working with the family as they may have relevant information to share, particularly the reason for their agency not making the visit.

If following completion of a risk assessment there are any remaining concerns about staff safety relating to a home visit further advice should be sought from the trust and/or the LA safeguarding team.

4. Training

Trust employees making home visits must be fully aware of all safe working practice as detailed in Safer Recruitment Consortium Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2022.

Before undertaking home visits, trust employees should have undertaken appropriate or necessary training. This may include training related to cultural awareness, diversity and racial equality, specific equipment training, manual handling training, first aid, handling difficult conversations, de-escalation techniques and training in disengagement techniques.

Trust employees undertaking home visits should be coached in safe practices to adhere to such as keeping visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations and positioning themselves strategically in a room to give them a direct exit route, keeping professional boundaries in place.

5. Home visits

All work with pupils and their families should be undertaken in the school wherever possible. There may be occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it is necessary to make a one-off or regular home visit. In these circumstances the principal must ensure staff are not going to be exposed to unacceptable risk.

Members of staff who undertake home visits must be fully aware of the trust's policy. Whenever possible trust staff should not make lone home visits.

A list of visits will be compiled on a weekly basis. This list will include the name and address of the pupil, the name and contact details of the parent/carers, along with the reason for a home visit. The list must be approved and signed by the principal before any visits occur.

If the parents/carers are not present at the arranged time, the member of staff should put a notification that they were present through the door and return to school.

If the parents/carers have given prior notice that they are running late, the officer must not enter the house until they arrive. If they are over 10 minutes late the visit will be cancelled.

Once in place, appointment arrangements must be adhered to. Notification will be given to the principal if any changes are made.

Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of clothing.

A house should not be entered if the member of staff feels unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit must be discussed with the principal at the earliest opportunity.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the house, the member of staff will request that they are kept in a separate room. If the parent/carer refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled. The reason for the cancellation will be communicated to the principal at the earliest opportunity.

Before and after the visit the member of staff will 'check in' by calling or reporting to the school office.

6. After the visit

Any concerns relating to the visit reported to the principal should be entered into the pupil's records.

Any concerns reported to the principal should be recorded on the risk assessment and the risk assessment reviewed in relation to further home visits to the location being undertaken.

7. Child protection and safeguarding

If a member of staff is transporting a pupil as part of a home visit, section 21 transporting pupils, in Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings must be followed.

Physical intervention by staff policy and procedures must be followed as detailed in each school's Positive Handling and Restraint Policy.

Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. The AET Behaviour

Toolkit has been developed to support staff in reducing the need to use any form of physical intervention.

Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

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

8. Review and monitoring

The trust safeguarding lead is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and amending it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the trust safeguarding lead in accordance with the trust's policy review schedule.

ANNEX A

The Aspire Educational Trust



Home Visit Risk Assessment

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Assessment conducted by: | Job title: | Covered by this assessment: AET staff |
| Date of assessment: | | Date of next review: |
| Name of Pupil/s: | Address to be visited and contact details for parents/carers: | Date/s of visit/s: |
| Reason for visit: | | |
| Context: The Aspire Educational Trust has a home visits policy. This policy requires home visits to be risk assessed. This is a model risk assessment for AET schools to use. Schools should consider all the potential risks identified and add additional control measures and risks as deemed necessary. After each visit the risk assessment should be reviewed and identified changes made prior to any further visits. The risk assessment should be filed as part of the pupil's safeguarding record. | | |

How to use this risk assessment

This is a generic risk assessment with the main potential risks and agreed AET control measures provided. Schools should initially undertake this risk assessment for their lowest risk home visits. Schools should highlight the control measures that are currently in place and consider any unmet control measures and, where possible, implement them as normal school practice. This risk assessment can then be used as a generic assessment for the majority of home visits. However, before undertaking a visit to a new home the school must consider whether there are any additional potential risks relating to the particular family and its home. If this is the case, additional risks and control measures should be added to the generic risk assessment that are specific to that family's home visit.

Risk assessments should always be completed before the initial visit. After the visit the risks and control measures should be reviewed and any changes made should a further home visit be planned or required. If on review the risk assessment is managing the risks to a satisfactory level the same document can be used for each subsequent visit by adding the date of each visit to this document.

| Risk rating | | Likelihood of occurrence | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------|----------|------------|
| | | Probable | Possible | Remote |
| Likely impact | Major Is likely to contribute to radicalisation | High (H) | H | Medium (M) |
| | Severe Has potential to contribute to radicalisation | H | M | Low (L) |
| | Minor Is unlikely to contribute to radicalisation | M | L | L |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Staff | | | | | | |
| Member of staff lone working and at greater personal risk to safety | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred location for all meetings with families is on school site Home visit only being undertaken when deemed to be necessary 2 members of staff for all first home visits 2 members of staff for all higher risk home visits 2 members of staff on all home visits where possible Members of staff undertaking home visits have read and confirmed as read AET Lone Working and Home Visits policies. Audit trail that this has been completed – Compliance Manager preferred system. Members of staff have read the home visit risk assessment. | | | | |
| Member/s of staff off site and location of visit unknown to line manager/principal | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visit authorised by senior member of staff before leaving site Record of visit being made is held in a key location including details of members of staff visiting, time of appointment, address being visited, time left and estimated time for return to site Member of staff on site allocated to be responsible for monitoring time off site and alerting a senior member of staff if return to site is delayed and no contact has been made to explain the delay Local system set up to effectively monitor staff who are off site on home visit | | | | |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of staff on a home visit to contact school every hour when off site to confirm whereabouts – member of staff with responsibility for monitoring time off site to be kept informed | | | | |
| No communication between school and staff off site | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visiting staff to carry phones at all times Contact details for staff phones to be left on site with member of staff responsible for monitoring time spent off site Details of the vehicle used by staff, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the school. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date business use insurance. Staff to put at least two school contact numbers into phone before leaving site Agreed code word/phrase to be confirmed locally and to be used if there is a need to covertly request help during a home visit If a member of staff does not contact school after an hour when on a home visit then the person with responsibility for monitoring their time off site will call them directly If school are unable to make contact the principal will be alerted and a decision made, based on risk analysis, to go to the address or to ring the police. | | | | |
| Member/s of staff entering a property where risks are unknown | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On arrival member of staff are told to be professionally curious about who or what may be in the house If a dog/s are loose then the member of staff will politely ask that they are shut in another room for the duration of | | | | |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | <p>the meeting. If the parent does not agree to this, the member of staff will rearrange the meeting if they have any concerns for their safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown person observed to be in the house. Staff should politely ask to be introduced and establish their reason for being present. This should be done at the earliest opportunity and ideally before entering the house. If member of staff feels uncomfortable holding the meeting with unexpected people in the house the meeting should be rearranged If unknown persons are in the house and the family are unwilling to disclose who they are then the visit should not go ahead at that time. Staff member to politely inform the family they will return at a more convenient time as they have visitors. | | | | |
| Family not welcoming of a home visit from staff and presenting aggressively or in a threatening manner | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff end the visit if any aggressive or threatening behaviours observed Unannounced home visits only made when necessary such as when contact can not be made by phone and there is a concern for the whereabouts or safety of a pupil Appointment to visit agreed with family Appointment time chosen to take into consideration the needs of the family Family informed who will be visiting. Identity badges to be worn and visible at all times during the visit | | | | |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of staff visiting fully informed of circumstances and any previous difficulties in the relationship between school and family All information from previous visits and other agencies considered when risk assessing a home visit Careful consideration given to which members of staff attend a visit Member of staff attending knowledgeable and experienced in de-escalation, managing difficult people and conversations and have good cultural awareness. | | | | |
| Member of staff finds them self in a vulnerable position when in the property | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to undertaking home visits members of staff are coached in safe practices to follow including ensuring they keep visual access and/or an open door in any one to one situation, they always position themselves strategically in a room to give direct exit route Leave the property as quickly as possible Lock themselves in their vehicle and drive away immediately Make discrete contact with school if possible who should then alert the police to the situation If possible ring for help immediately dialling 999. | | | | |
| Home visit requested by another agency on their behalf | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other agency asked to contribute to the risk assessment and to share any relevant risk and safety information Other agency required to give reason for not making the visit Principal to use the AET home visit risk assessment to decide whether to authorise the visit. Reasons for | | | | |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | decision taken will be recorded on the risk assessment. Principal to notify other agencies if visit will not proceed. | | | | |
| At risk of contracting an infectious disease | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If visit purpose is to maintain contact and check that a pupil is safe at home, a door step only visit will be made • On day of visit prior to attending the home enquire whether all house occupants are fit and well • If not, ask for details of symptoms • Establish what illness/disease the occupants are believed to be suffering from • Consult Public Health England Guidance on infectious diseases • If a family states that they have any presenting symptoms of an infectious disease, a home visit should be replaced by a safe alternative • Make an alternative contact plan if a visit is necessary for safeguarding or child protection reasons such as phone contact as a first option, video contact with safeguarding measures in place if visual contact is required. • If making video or phone contact the following minimum safeguarding measures should be in place <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact is authorised by senior leader 2. Make contact using school official channels 3. Use a school device to make contact wherever possible. If a personal device has to be used, then block the number so caller unknown is displayed 4. Make contact through the parent/carer's device 5. Make sure somebody else in school is aware the school contact is being made 6. Maintain professional standards | | | | |

| Potential risks | Risk rating prior to action H/M/L | AET Controls | In place? Yes/No | By whom? | Deadline | Risk rating following action H/M/L |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | 7. Contact is always made with consent of parents and carers 8. Make contact within regular school hours 9. Time of contact is agreed with family 10. Ensure parent is present throughout call and have phone on speaker at both ends of the call. 11. Have another member of staff present during the contact who can hear/see the conversation. 12. If this is not possible seek consent from the parent to record the call. Explain you're recording for school records only. Store recording securely and ensure GDPR compliance. 13. Make a record of the call on the pupil's safeguarding file. | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Decision

After implementing the highlighted control measures the overall risk is assessed as:

High Risk

Medium Risk

Low Risk

Home visit authorised to proceed?

Yes

No

Reason for decision and/or any further actions required:

Principal's (Signature)

Date