



## St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School

### Home-Visit Policy

Jesus Christ is our family role model

Opening our hearts and minds to dream the impossible and achieve beyond our wildest imagination

Everybody is valued and respected

Young and old will journey together to build God's Kingdom.

Striving for academic excellence and celebrating success in all we do

**Approved by Governors:**

**Date for Review:** Autumn 2019

- Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parents/carers.
- To support parents with pupils refusing to come into school or who are continually ill.
- When attendance for a pupil becomes an issue/concern.
- When a pupil is off school for a sustained period of time due to medical issues.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- To fulfil requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018' if concerns are generated around a child's welfare and care.

## **St Joseph's Home Visit Policy 2018-19**

This policy is to be read and implemented as a code of practice by all staff and governors at St Joseph's School conducting or governing home visits. All visits MUST be logged and approved by the Home Visit Co-ordinator (Mr M Singleton). Members of staff likely to conduct a home visit are: Members of the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Year, Pastoral Support Managers and members of the office team.

### **Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers**

- Show respect for parents/carers/families as equal partners in the relationship.
- Make appointments where necessary. Always try to contact the family via phone before leaving for the appointment. (Contact from the family might be limited if the home visit is due to a safeguarding concern).
- Accept families' rights not to want a home visit.
- Confirm parents/carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child.
- Do not assume that all parents are literate. Other issues may prompt the Learning Mentor/teacher/Head of Year to contact bilingual support services for the family.
- Consider issues of Social, Cultural and Religious differences.

### **Working in Partnership with other Agencies**

- Communicate with other agencies already involved with the family e.g. Early Intervention Team.
- There is a need to clarify the role of other professionals involved to avoid duplication and so that mentor/teacher/Head of Year is not working at cross-purposes with other agencies.
- Evidence of good practice is where two or more services liaise and support each other with a clear common aim of assisting the student/family to overcome barriers to learning.

### **Health and Safety**

- Let your Line Manager and the main reception know where you are visiting and leave details of the address, your mobile phone number and expected time of return with them. Agree a time that you will ring one them to inform them you have concluded the visit.
- The first visit to any home MUST be undertaken with a minimum of two members of staff/another professional that school work alongside.
- There MUST be two members of staff/other professional for a visit due to safeguarding concerns regarding non-attendance and no parental contact to explain why.
- Before entering the home ensure you show your ID card and introduce yourself.
- Demonstrate normal courtesy - wait to be invited into the home.
- It is important that all contacts with children and families are recorded.

- A note should be made of all people present at the meeting, dates and times etc.
- Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels threatening - leave, saying for example, that you are going back to get something from your car.

### **Risk Assessment**

- Where necessary it may be pertinent to ensure a risk assessment is taken into account. This will identify any concern about potential violence or risk and appropriate measures to be taken.
- Check records as to what is known and information available.
- Talk to other professionals who may have already had contact or involvement with the family.
- Discuss with the Line Manager what strategies to adopt when working with a potentially difficult parent/carer/family.
- Where there are deemed to be potential risks - Contact by phone/post and invite them into school.
- Meet them in another public place if appropriate, ie Children's Centre or Health Centre.
- Do a joint visit with the Head of Year/Pastoral Support Manager/Attendance TLR.

### **Guidance for Home Visits**

- Staff should make two people aware of any home visit, preferably the Line Manager and the main reception.
- As far as possible, the member of staff should if possible be accompanied by another member of staff/other professional when making home visits.
- An estimated time of leaving and returning should be provided. A mobile phone should be taken on the visit. The school should be aware of the mobile phone number. The phone number of the home being visited should also be readily available should difficulties be encountered.
- Staff should apprise themselves of any previous visits by other staff and acquire background information from social services, Early Intervention Team, Educational Psychologists if this is available.
- Staff should be fully acquainted with the location of a student's home and how to get there to avoid having to stop and ask for directions.
- Staff should have the appropriate insurance cover for their cars as such visits are regarded as 'business' by insurance companies.
- If staff are anxious on arriving at a location and feel their safety could be jeopardised, they should not take the risk of proceeding further. They should telephone the home and advise that they are unable to attend. Alternative arrangements should be made.
- Staff should not enter a home if the child is home alone.
- All home visits should be recorded with the reason for the visit, points discussed, agreements reached and any concerns that the mentor/Head of Year may have from the meeting, however trivial these may appear at the time.
- ***Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent problems in the future.***

Travel plans should only be changed if relevant staff have been alerted.

Staff may consider the carrying of a personal alarm.

Public transport must not be used, unless agreed in advance by a member of SLT.

Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential danger the person visiting should make a speedy exit from a home. Staff should never assume that violence wouldn't happen to them. While there are hundreds of home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incident should be reported to the Line Manager immediately.