St. Peter & St. Paul CE Primary School, Burgh-le-Marsh
"Striving for excellence together in a caring Christian community."
RESPECT   COMPASSION   COURAGE

HOME VISITS POLICY

Responsible: Governing Body
Agreed: March 2026
To be reviewed: Annually in line with Safeguarding and Attendance policies (or earlier if legislation changes)
Reviewed:

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out why, when and how our school undertakes home visits to support children and their families. It ensures visits are conducted safely and consistently, with children's welfare and attendance at the centre of our practice, and with due regard to safeguarding and lone-working arrangements. It applies to all staff who undertake home visits and to any volunteers or external professionals accompanying them.

2. Legal and policy context

Our approach is informed by:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children** – safeguarding duties and expectations for all staff.
- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** – expectations for early, supportive action on absence.
- **Children Missing Education** and **Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Attendance & CME procedures** – local reporting duties.
- Our **Attendance Policy** – local routines (e.g., registration times) and escalation pathways.
- General health and safety legislation and our **Lone Working** and **Risk Assessment** arrangements.

This Home Visits Policy must be read alongside our School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Recording, escalation and referrals follow the DSL-led processes set out there (including use of CPOMS for safeguarding records).

3. Definitions

A **home visit** is a planned visit by school staff to a child's home address (or alternative agreed venue) to:

- Check a child is **safe and well** where there is absence or non-contact.
- **Engage and support** families to remove barriers to regular attendance.

4. Principles

We will:

- Prioritise **children's safety and welfare** at all times.
- Work **supportively** with families and maintain professional curiosity.
- Plan and conduct visits in line with **lone-working** and **risk assessment** requirements.

- Keep **clear, factual records** and share information on a **need-to-know** basis.
- Carry out a **dynamic risk assessment** throughout every visit and withdraw if unsafe.

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5. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body
- Approves the policy and holds leaders to account for safe and effective implementation.

Headteacher
- Authorises home visits (with the DSL where safeguarding is involved), ensures staff training, oversees risk assessments and lone-working arrangements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Advises on risk and safeguarding, triages concerns, and determines referrals to children's social care/police where appropriate.

Senior Attendance Champion (designated senior leader for attendance)
- Leads attendance strategy, agrees thresholds/targets for visits, reviews patterns and outcomes.

Staff conducting visits
- Follow this policy and procedures; complete pre-visit checks, risk assessments and records; adhere to lone-working guidance.

Office/Attendance Team
- Log visit details and expected return times; act as check-in contact; record outcomes on the MIS and share with relevant staff.

Parents/carers
- Engage with the school and raise any concerns about a visit with the Headteacher.

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6. When we carry out home visits (triggers)

We seek to resolve absence swiftly through proportionate support. A home visit may be considered when:

1. **No contact** from parents/carers about an absence by Day 1 and phone/text/email attempts are unsuccessful.
2. **By Day 3 of absence** (sooner for vulnerable children), if contact remains unsuccessful or reasons are unclear, we will normally undertake a safe-and-well home visit.
3. **The maximum period without "eyes on" a child is 5 school days** (other than when the child is known to be on holiday). If, by Day 6, the child has not been seen by school staff or another verified professional, a home visit **must** take place.
4. There is **prolonged or repeated unexplained absence**, persistent or severe absence, or patterns of concern.
5. There are **safeguarding indicators** (e.g., neglect, domestic abuse, contextual risk), or a child is known to social care/is otherwise vulnerable.
6. To **engage families** where other contact routes have not secured improvement, or to support a **phased return** from long absence/illness.

Local reporting duties (Lincolnshire)

Where a child has **10 consecutive unauthorised school days** of absence, the school must notify LCC via PNAR procedures; where a child's whereabouts cannot be confirmed, consider a **Children Missing Education (CME)** referral; where immediate or significant concerns exist, consider a **safeguarding referral** and/or request a **police welfare check**.

7. Planning and risk management (before the visit)
Staff will:
- Be clear on the **purpose** and intended outcomes of the visit; confirm address/contacts and check relevant background with the DSL.
- Review attendance information and previous contact attempts recorded on our MIS.
- Complete a **Home Visit Risk Assessment**, considering known family history, environmental risks (e.g., animals), and any previous incidents. Decide whether the visit should be **paired**.
- Plan in line with our **Lone Working Policy**: leave a visit plan with the office (who, where, ETA back), agree check-in times, and carry a **charged mobile phone**.
- Arrange the visit time with parents/carers where appropriate.
- **Do not proceed** if there is any reasonable doubt about safety; escalate to SLT/DSL to agree next steps.

8. Conduct during the visit (on arrival and inside the home)
Staff will:
- Arrive on time; introduce themselves; show **school ID**; explain the purpose and expected length of visit.
- Only enter when invited by a **responsible adult**; **do not** enter if only a child is present.
- Remain on the **ground floor** and **do not** enter bedrooms; request that **animals** are secured in another room.
- Be professional, respectful, and keep the **mobile phone on** throughout.
- Speak only with adults who have parental responsibility or delegated authority.
- Make **factual notes** to support accurate recording; leave immediately if they feel uncomfortable or at risk, and call **999** if there is immediate danger.

9. If no contact is made / visit is refused / cannot be completed
If no one answers or entry is refused, staff will:
- Leave a **"We called today"** card (see Appendix B) requesting urgent contact.
- Continue attempts via phone/text/email/letter.
- Offer **alternative face-to-face meeting options** (e.g., at school reception/Children's Centre). Online meetings are a last resort.
- Liaise with other professionals already involved to avoid duplication and consider joint visits.
- If concerns remain, discuss with the **Attendance Champion/DSL** and consider PNAR, CME referral, a safeguarding referral, and/or a police welfare check.

10. After the visit (recording and follow-up)
Staff will:
- Inform the office on **leaving and returning**; confirm they are safe.

- Record outcomes promptly and factually on the school's attendance/safeguarding system.
- Share information with relevant staff (e.g., DSL, SENCO, class teacher).
- Escalate **any safeguarding concerns immediately** to the DSL.

11. Lone working and staff safety

All visits must comply with our **Lone Working Policy**. Planning must include risk assessment, communication, supervision/check-ins and incident reporting. Where risks are known or suspected, plan a **paired visit**. All incidents/near-misses must be recorded and reviewed.

12. Data protection and records

All records of home visits will be factual, dated and stored securely on the school's systems. Attendance data and actions will be monitored regularly in line with our Attendance Policy.

13. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- The Headteacher and DSL will **monitor** compliance and impact through spot checks, case sampling and data reviews.
- The Governing Body approves this policy and reviews it **annually** (or sooner if guidance changes).

APPENDIX A – HOME VISIT ESCALATION

Home Visit Decision Flow (Attendance & Safeguarding):

Day 1 – No Contact

- Attempt phone / text / email / ParentHub contact.
- Check attendance information and siblings.
- Log attempts and any relevant information.
- Inform DSL if any safeguarding indicators are present.

Day 3 – No Successful Contact

- Safe-and-well home visit normally undertaken (sooner for vulnerable children).
- Continue multi-agency checks if appropriate (e.g., social care, other schools).
- Record all actions.

Day 6 – Maximum Period Without "Eyes On" a Child

- **Home visit must take place** if the child has still not been seen by school staff or another verified professional.
- If no response at the address: complete "We called today" card; escalate to DSL.

DSL Decision Points (Safeguarding Policy-Led):

- Consider immediate safeguarding risk.
- Determine if a **safeguarding referral** is required (Customer Services 01522 782111).
- Decide whether to request a **police welfare check** (999 if immediate risk).
- Ensure all safeguarding activity is recorded on **CPOMS**.

Local Authority Routes (LCC):

- **PNAR** – Submit if a child has **10 consecutive unauthorised school days**.
- **CME referral** – If a child's whereabouts cannot be confirmed.
- Continue attempts to contact family while ensuring welfare checks are completed.

Notes:

- All staff must follow the School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at each stage.
- All actions recorded factually on school attendance system; safeguarding concerns recorded on **CPOMS**.

Appendix B – "We called today" card

SORRY WE MISSED YOU!

We visited today as your child was absent from school. Please contact us as soon as possible to confirm they are safe, the reason for absence, and when they will return.

Child's name:

Date:

Time:

How to contact us:

School office: 01754 810241

Email: attendance@burghschool.org.uk

If we do not hear from you promptly, we may seek advice from other professionals to make sure your child is safe and well.