

Woodlands Secondary School	Home visits Policy	
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Date	Review Date	Author	Nominated Governors
June 2026	June 2027	Lindsey Lucas	Headteacher
Website	Statutory Policy	Source	Ratification Date
Yes	No	The Key	June 2026

1. Purpose and Rationale

This policy sets out Woodlands Secondary School's approach to conducting home visits and establishes clear procedures for staff undertaking visits to students and families. At Woodlands, we recognise that strong partnerships between home and school are essential in supporting students' attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding, achievement and successful engagement with education.

Home visits provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships with families, gain a better understanding of a student's circumstances, identify barriers to learning, and ensure appropriate support is in place. Home visits form part of Woodlands Secondary School's wider commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and promoting positive outcomes for all students.

Visits will always be conducted in a professional, respectful and child-centred manner, with the safety of students, families and staff remaining paramount. Home visits may be undertaken where they are considered the most effective way to engage with a student and their family, including:

- Students educated out of school (EOOS) - monitoring welfare, assessing educational provision, and maintaining regular contact
- Safeguarding and welfare checks - 'safe and well' visits when concerns arise about a student's wellbeing
- General attendance concerns which may include supporting families where students are persistently absent
- SEND support - assessing home environment and supporting families with additional needs
- Transition visits - helping new students settle into the school/ completing transition paperwork
- Medical needs - supporting students with long-term health conditions who are learning from home
- Reintegration planning - preparing students to return to school after extended absence
- Ad hoc visits where a student's personal items are taken to the home if they have been left at school (vital equipment, medication, etc.)

2. Staffing Arrangements

Members of staff must conduct visits in pairs. This is best practice to help make sure staff are safe at all times and can look out for one another.

Staff should have different 'roles' on the visit. One can focus on talking to parents/carers, for example, while the other spends time with the child. It's also a good opportunity for child-initiated learning.

Recommended staff pairings based on visit purpose:

Visit Type	Suggested Staff Pairing	Rationale
Students educated at home	SENCO + family team	SEND expertise + educational assessment
Safeguarding/welfare checks	DSL + class teacher	Safeguarding expertise + relationship with child/family
Attendance concerns	Attendance Officer + Family Team	Attendance monitoring + pastoral support
Medical needs	Class Teacher + Family Team	Health expertise + educational continuity
Reintegration planning	Attendance Officer + Family Team	Strategic planning + student relationship
Transitions	Department Lead/ transitions Lead from Family Lead	Education – joining a new school

This pairing approach ensures:

- One staff member can focus on the primary purpose while the other observes and supports
- Both staff members can provide mutual support and act as witnesses if concerns arise
- Appropriate expertise is present for the specific situation
- Staff safety is maintained at all times

3. Planning and Preparation

3.1 Deciding Whether to Conduct a Home Visit

Staff should carefully consider:

- Why they are planning to visit
- Whether a visit is needed
- Who is the best person to visit
- When the visit should take place The Key Leaders

Alternative arrangements should be considered if:

- Parents/carers prefer to meet at school
- A phone or video call would be more appropriate
- Safety concerns make a home visit inadvisable
- The purpose can be achieved through other means

If parents/carers don't want, or don't have time for a home visit, invite them to a meeting at school instead, or offer them a video call.

3.2 Pre-Visit Briefing

Staff should be briefed ahead of time and told:

- About the area they are visiting
- If there are any aggressive pets (if known)
- To carry a mobile phone, and have it switched on and charged ahead of the visit
- To let someone know they are undertaking a visit and when they have returned safely
- Not to give lifts to students or other family members

Staff should discuss and agree:

- What they would like to achieve from the visit
- What will be discussed
- How to deliver key messages
- How they will record any outcomes

3.3 Scheduling and Logistics

Staff should confirm to parents/carers how long the visit will last. Some will have more to say than others, so staff should keep their timetable flexible in case a home visit takes longer than planned – to avoid being late (or early) for the next appointment. Staff should group the visits geographically, to reduce travelling time between appointments.

Before the visit, ensure:

- Parents/carers have been contacted and agreed to the visit
- Date, time, and purpose have been confirmed in writing
- Parents/carers know who will be visiting
- Expected return time has been communicated
- Mobile phones are fully charged
- Risk assessment has been completed

4. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be carried out whether it's a routine visit (such as EOOS) or a specific visit (such as safeguarding). The risk assessment will need to be specific to the individual situation.

Consider hazards such as:

- An aggressive or violent parent, student or family member
- Driving and car parking
- Movement through public areas (such as to or from car parks)
- No adults being present
- Use of illegal substances
- Illness or injury/accident
- Theft of devices or belongings
- Elongated visits
- Attack by a dog or other animal

Risk Assessment Process:

1. Review existing information - Check student records, previous visit notes, and any known concerns
2. Complete risk assessment form - Use the template in Appendix A

3. Identify control measures - Determine how to mitigate identified risks
4. Obtain approval - Senior leader must approve the risk assessment before the visit
5. Brief staff - Ensure both visiting staff understand the risks and control measures

A risk assessment template is attached as Appendix A.

5. During the Visit

5.1 Approach and Conduct

Staff should use a conversational tone, rather than focusing on taking notes. It's important to remind staff to be respectful of families' cultural norms too, e.g. you might be expected to remove your shoes before entering the house.

Professional conduct expectations:

- Be punctual and respectful
- Dress professionally but appropriately for the context
- Wear school lanyard with photo and name on it
- Introduce staff clearly and explain the purpose of the visit
- Be warm, friendly, and non-judgmental
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Respect the family's home and belongings
- Follow the family's house rules (e.g., covering shoes)
- Be culturally sensitive and aware

5.2 Key Focus Areas by Visit Type

For students educated at home:

- Review the student's learning activities and progress
- Discuss curriculum coverage and resources
- Assess whether the education provided is suitable
- Observe the student's wellbeing and presentation
- Provide guidance and support to parents/carers
- Review implementation of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Consider suitability of the package – should it continue, extend or reduce.
- Is the student ready for reintegration to school?

For safeguarding/welfare checks:

- Observe the student's physical appearance and general wellbeing
- Assess the home environment for safety and suitability
- Discuss any concerns with parents/carers sensitively
- Identify any support needs for the family

For attendance concerns:

- Understand barriers to attendance from the family's perspective
- Discuss the impact of absence on the student's education
- Explore practical solutions and support available
- Agree clear expectations and next steps
- Build positive relationships to encourage engagement

For general support:

- Observe how the student manages in their home environment
- Discuss strategies that work well at home
- Share school-based approaches and resources
- Plan coordinated support between home and school

5.3 Safeguarding Vigilance

Any safeguarding concerns identified during the home visit must be reported to the safeguarding leads and recorded into CPOMS in line with your school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

All staff conducting home visits must be alert to potential indicators of:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Substance misuse
- Mental health concerns
- Unsuitable or unsafe living conditions
- Child exploitation or radicalisation
- Financial difficulties impacting on the child's welfare

If safeguarding concerns arise during the visit:

1. Do not challenge parents/carers during the visit, if this would put the child or staff at risk
2. Make brief, discreet notes if safe to do so
3. Leave the property if you feel unsafe
4. Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately upon return
5. Complete a safeguarding concern form the same day
6. Follow the school's child protection procedures

5.4 Managing Difficult Situations**If a parent/carer becomes aggressive or threatening:**

- Remain calm and professional
- Do not argue or escalate the situation
- Both staff should leave together immediately
- Contact the school office or senior leader
- Do not return to the property
- Complete an incident report

If no adult is present:

- Do not enter the property
- Do not remain alone with the student
- Contact the school immediately
- Follow safeguarding procedures

If you suspect illegal activity:

- Do not investigate or confront
- Leave the property calmly
- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Consider whether police involvement is necessary

6. Post-Visit Procedures

Post-visit procedures should include:

- Notifying a member of SLT or the family team that they have completed the visit
- Reviewing and annotating the risk assessment with any relevant additional information
- Recording the outcome of the visit on CPOMS.
- Passing on information to any other relevant members of staff. This could include logging any safeguarding concerns
- Drawing up an action plan with meaningful steps to support both the family and student
- Recording anything that can be learnt for future visits (for example, you might want to record notes about access or parking)

6.1 Immediate Actions

Within 1 hour of completing the visit:

- Notify a member of SLT or the family team that you have returned
- Alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any safeguarding concerns
- Brief senior leaders on any urgent issues requiring immediate action

6.2 Record Keeping

Within 24 hours of the visit a record of the visit will be put onto CPOMS.

Storage and confidentiality:

- Records must be put onto CPOMS and only accessible to relevant staff
- Safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSL and then added to CPOMS.
- Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis

6.4 Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, share information with:

- Local authority children's social care
- Educational psychology services
- School nursing team
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Early Help services
- Educational Psychologist (EP)
- Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Other relevant agencies

Ensure information sharing complies with GDPR and safeguarding requirements.

7. Frequency of Visits

The frequency of home visits will depend on the purpose and individual circumstances:

Visit Type	Typical Frequency
Students educated at home EOOS	Minimum three times per half-term

Visit Type	Typical Frequency
Safeguarding/welfare checks	As required based on concern level; may be one-off or regular
Attendance concerns	Initially weekly/fortnightly, reducing as attendance improves
Medical needs	As agreed with family and medical professionals

Frequency may be increased or decreased based on

- Level of concern or risk
- Student and family needs
- Progress towards agreed outcomes
- Parental preference and engagement
- Professional judgment

8. Safeguarding and Staff Safety

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Lone working policy

Staff conducting home visits must:

- Have completed safeguarding training
- Understand their role in identifying and reporting concerns
- Know how to access support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Follow the school's lone working procedures (even when in pairs)
- Prioritise their own safety and that of their colleague

9. Parental Rights and Consent

Parents/carers have the right to:

- Be informed of the purpose of the visit
- Decline a home visit (alternative arrangements will be made)
- Request a different date, time, or location
- Ask questions about the process
- Have another adult present during the visit
- Request specific staff members (where possible)
- Receive written confirmation of discussions and agreed actions

The school reserves the right to:

- Insist on a home visit where there are safeguarding concerns
- Involve other agencies if parents refuse reasonable contact
- Take appropriate action if a child's welfare is at risk

10. Staff Training and Support

All staff who conduct home visits must receive:

- Induction training on this policy and procedures
- Safeguarding training (updated annually)
- Risk assessment training

Ongoing support includes:

- Debriefing after difficult or concerning visits
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme
- Refresher training as needed

New staff conducting home visits should:

- Shadow experienced staff on at least 2 visits before conducting their own
- Be paired with experienced staff for their next 3 visits
- Receive mentoring and feedback

11. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of home visits through:

- Regular review of home visit records
- Analysis of outcomes and impact
- Staff feedback and supervision discussions
- Parental feedback
- Safeguarding audits
- Annual policy review

Key performance indicators:

- Number and type of home visits conducted
- Safeguarding concerns identified and acted upon
- Improvements in attendance, engagement, or outcomes
- Parental satisfaction
- Staff confidence and safety
- Compliance with procedures

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by:

- Changes in legislation or statutory guidance
- Learning from serious case reviews or safeguarding incidents
- Significant changes in school circumstances
- Staff or parental feedback
- Local authority guidance updates

Appendices

Appendix A: Home Visit Risk Assessment Template

Appendix A – Risk Assessment template

Woodlands Secondary School Home Visit Risk Assessment				
Student name	Year group	Date of visit	Time	Address

Purpose of Visit:

- ☐ Student educated at home
- ☐ Safeguarding/welfare check
- ☐ Attendance concern
- ☐ Medical needs
- ☐ Reintegration planning
- ☐ Transition planning
- ☐ Other: please specify -

Pre-visit information		
Area	Details	Risk Level (L/M/H)
Previous visit history		
Known safeguarding concerns		
Known health & safety issues		
Aggressive behaviour history		
Pets at property		
Access/parking issues		
Other residents at property		
Language barriers		
Cultural considerations		
Additional information:		

Hazard identification and control measures			
Risk Levels: L = Low M = Medium H = High			
Hazard	Risk Level L / M / H	Control Measures	Level of risk
Aggressive or violent parent/family member		- Two staff members attending - Pre-visit briefing complete - Mobile phones charged and accessible - Agreed code word for leaving - Visit conducted during daylight hours	
Aggressive pets		- Ask parent to secure pets before visit - Do not enter if pets unsecured - Remain near exit	
Driving and parking		- Staff must have insurance (work) - Park in well-lit, public area - Note parking location - Vehicle checked and fuelled - Route planned in advance	
Movement through public areas		- Staff remain together at all times - Avoid isolated areas - Maintain awareness of surroundings	
No adults present		- Confirm adult will be present before visit - Do not enter if no adult present - Contact school immediately	
Use of illegal substances		- Leave immediately if suspected - Report to DSL - Consider police involvement	
Illness/injury/accident		- First aid kit in vehicle - Staff know emergency procedures - Emergency contact details available -01582 572880	
Theft of devices/belongings		- Minimal valuables taken - Devices password protected - Keep belongings with you	
Extended/elongated visits		- Confirm expected duration with parent - Set time limit: - School contact knows expected return time	
Unsafe property conditions		- Assess on arrival - Do not enter if unsafe - Report concerns to DSL	
Infectious disease		- Confirm no one at property is unwell - Hand sanitizer available - Maintain appropriate distance	

School emergency contact		
Name:	Role	Phone
Lindsey Lucas	Assistant Head	01582 572880 (option 2)
Janet Kay	Family Team	01582 572880 (option 2)
Adeline Hopkins	Family Team	01582 572880 (option 2)
School office	School office	01582 572880

Name	Role	Phone Number	Expected Return Time	Emergency Code Word (to indicate need to leave)
1.				
2.				
3.				

What to do if staff feel unsafe:

1. Use code word to alert colleague
2. Both staff leave together immediately
3. Do not re-enter property
4. Call emergency contact at school
5. If immediate danger, call 999

What to do if no adult is present:

1. Do not enter property
2. Do not remain alone with student
3. Contact school immediately
4. Follow safeguarding procedures

What to do if safeguarding concerns arise:

1. Do not challenge parents if unsafe to do so
2. Make discreet notes if safe
3. Report to DSL immediately upon return
4. Complete safeguarding concern form same day

During the visit:

- Check-in call to school at: _____ (if required for high-risk visits)

After the visit:

- Notify school contact of safe return
- Complete home visit report on CPOMS within 24 hours
- Report any concerns to DSL immediately

Both staff members have:

- ☐ Read this risk assessment
- ☐ Completed safeguarding training
- ☐ Fully charged mobile phones
- ☐ Emergency contact details
- ☐ School ID badges
- ☐ Relevant student information
- ☐ Discussed roles for the visit
- ☐ Agreed code word for emergency
- ☐ Planned route and parking

Risk Assessment Completed By

Name	Date	Signature

Approved By (Senior Leader/DSL):

Name	Date	Signature

After your home visit has been completed

- Please add notes onto CPOMS
- Adjust risk assessment if necessary so any additional risks are highlighted