



Tudor Grange Academies Trust

Staff Home Visits Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Home visiting that includes lone working is an essential part of support work. Tudor Grange Academies Trust (TGAT) is committed to ensuring that it does not put any of its staff in a situation of unreasonable risk.
- 1.2 Often TGAT staff will either visit homes with colleagues or work alone. This guidance covers those undertaking:
 - Home visits;
 - Appointments with professionals at parents'/carers' home/another venue, i.e. schools or offices.
- 1.3.1 Working in such a situation may place staff at risk from:
 - Having an accident and being unable to attract help;
 - Aggressive/violent behaviour of another person;
 - The subject of false allegations;
 - COVID 19.
- 1.4 This policy outlines the procedures for undertaking home visits based on best practice.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 TGAT will ensure that the induction programme for staff includes this policy and discussion about lone working and home visit guidance, where their role may necessitate the undertaking of home visits.
- 2.2 TGAT will ensure that appropriate staff receive training and updates when required on the measures in place for undertaking home visits and lone working.
- 2.3 TGAT will ensure that all staff undertaking home visits as part of their role have access to a Skyguard personal safety device.
- 2.4 TGAT has undertaken a generic risk assessment for home visits to reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable. This risk assessment can be seen in Appendix 1 and will be reviewed at least annually.
- 2.5 The school will not allow any visits which will place the worker at unacceptable risk levels.
- 2.6 All staff undertaking home visits must take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. If at any time they feel unsure of their safety, they should remove themselves from that situation as soon as possible.
- 2.7 All staff undertaking home visits must inform the school of their movements and expected time of return by completing the home visit form (see Appendix 2) prior to conducting home visits and ensure that this is left with a designated member of staff.
- 2.8 Staff will not be asked to undertake home visits outside school hours unless they are essential for safeguarding purposes.

3. BEFORE UNDERTAKING A HOME VISIT

- 3.1 Staff should be aware of any relevant background information before making a visit. This may include who lives at the address, any relevant safeguarding information and any factors that may pose a higher risk to personal safety.
- 3.2 Where possible and appropriate, arrange the first visit to an address over the telephone to establish as much information as possible, such as who will be present in the home.
- 3.3 Where it is deemed that there may be a higher personal safety risk factor, the member of staff should be accompanied by a colleague.

- 3.4 All visits should be logged on the home visits form with times and venues clearly stated.
- 3.5 For pre-arranged visits, if the visiting member of staff finds they are delayed, they should call the parent/carer and let them know they will be arriving later than originally planned.
- 3.6 Ensure appropriate vehicle insurance is in place for transporting parents/carers and their families if necessary when carrying out their day to day duties.
- 3.7 Staff should plan their route in advance and take a map if required, to avoid having to ask for direction in unfamiliar surroundings.
- 3.8 Ensure the Skyguard personal safety device and mobile phone are adequately charged.
- 3.9 Have a contingency plan if things go wrong, e.g. if the car breaks down or you get lost.

4. DURING A HOME VISIT

- 4.1 Consider where to park the car and always reverse into a space so it is easy to drive out quickly.
- 4.2 If walking, use well-lit public streets and avoid short cuts.
- 4.3 Ensure your mobile and Skyguard alarm are switched on and to hand. Your mobile should be on at all times so that you can be contacted for checks or can report issues.
- 4.4 Keep your keys easily accessible.
- 4.5 Avoid carrying valuables or large sums of money.
- 4.6 If, on arriving at a home, you consider yourself to be at risk, decline to enter or make an excuse to leave where necessary, e.g. “I’ve left the car lights on” or “I’ve left some papers in the car” and depart. Do not attempt to enter what is considered a risk situation.
- 4.7 It is advisable to not accept offers of food or drink whilst on a home visit.
- 4.8 Speak in a friendly and polite manner whilst maintaining a discrete distance. Sit close to the exit where possible.
- 4.9 Staff should not be left alone with any child in a home.
- 4.10 Where possible, conversations should be held in a communal part of the house (e.g. living room, dining room, kitchen). If a child refuses to leave their bedroom, it may be appropriate to hold a conversation through the door, but do not enter the bedroom.
- 4.11 If you are in a situation where you are alone with a child in the room, ensure the door is open and that you can easily be seen and heard.
- 4.12 Always trust your instincts – if you are in any doubt or feel unsafe, remove yourself from that situation. Act in a confident manner and terminate the visit apologetically if needed, for example by saying you have to be at another meeting which you had forgotten about.
- 4.13 If no contact is made with the parent/carer during the home visit, ensure you leave an official TGAT calling card, stating date and time of visit and a brief message. Ensure the carbon copy is filed upon return to school.
- 4.14 If at any time a member of staff experiences any aggression or verbal abuse, or other unwelcome approaches, this should be reported to their line manager and/or Principal/Head of School immediately, when safe to do so. In this instance, staff should leave at the earliest opportunity.

- 4.15 When transporting parents/carers and/or their children, wherever possible ensure they are seated in the rear of the car and wearing appropriate restraints e.g. seatbelt, child car seat.
- 4.15 Do not give out personal details, including personal phone numbers.

5. AFTER A HOME VISIT

- 5.1 Complete the home visits form on return to school.
- 5.2 Report any trips, falls and accidents and report any abusive or threatening behaviours.
- 5.3 Clear notes of the meeting must be made and filed.
- 5.4 Staff must not arrange another appointment with any abusive or aggressive person until the case has been reviewed.

6. HOME VISITS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- 6.1 Staff should not enter the home, but knock on the door and speak to the parent/carer and/or child from a safe distance, ideally a minimum of 2 metres away.
- 6.2 If a family is self-isolating, view the child through a window and ascertain as best you can that the child is safe and well, e.g. through gestures, thumbs up, waving, lip reading, etc. It is important to physically **see** the child, even if only through a window.
- 6.3 For schools in a local lockdown situation, where possible, home visits should be undertaken in pairs, ideally in separate cars and masks should be worn.
- 6.4 If it is not possible for the two members of staff to travel separately, the passenger must sit in the rear of the car, diagonally opposite the driver.
- 6.5 For each home visit undertaken, the second member of staff **must be the same person**.
- 6.6 Where it is not possible for a second member of staff to attend the home visit, the Principal/Head of School or designated senior leader must be informed prior to the visit taking place and give approval.

APPENDIX 1

RISK ASSESSMENT

School: Tudor Grange Academy

Work activity: Home visits

Assessor(s): Clare Waterhouse, Caroline Jennings

Date: September 2020

Review date: September 2021

What could go wrong?	Who might be harmed?	Control measures at present	Further action required (if any)
<p>Break down</p> <p>Road traffic accident</p> <p>Road rage</p> <p>Dangerous dogs / other animals</p> <p>Threatening behaviour</p> <p>Verbal aggression</p> <p>Physical assault</p> <p>Accidents on premises e.g. slips, trips or falls</p> <p>Subject of false allegations</p> <p>COVID 19 infection</p>	<p>Staff members undertaking a home visit</p>	<p>Procedures outlined in TGAT Staff Home Visits Policy</p> <p>Means of communication and raising an alarm e.g. personal / work mobile phone for emergencies and Skyguard personal safety device</p> <p>Consider two members of staff visiting, particularly on a first visit and where there are known risks</p> <p>Signing in and out procedures including details of visit and return time logged on home visit form</p> <p>Appropriate training where necessary</p> <p>Car parking in a safe well lit area, where possible</p> <p>COVID-19 awareness and adherence to current government guidance, including maintaining social distance and personal hygiene protocols</p> <p>Additional measures for schools in a local lockdown situation, as detailed in TGAT Staff Home Visits Policy.</p>	

Vulnerable Employees that may be at a higher risk from home visiting/lone working

Group	Additional Considerations for home visiting/lone workers
New and Expectant Mothers	<p>TGAT duty of care extends to the unborn child as well as risks to the mother herself. Therefore the risk assessment must be reviewed by the employee's line manager to include the risk to any unborn child or child who is still breast-feeding.</p> <p>Consideration must also be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Impaired mobility may make the mother more prone to slips, trips and falls (especially in the later stages of pregnancy). · Impaired ability to carry out physically strenuous work · Increased likelihood of back injuries. · Entitlement to more rest breaks. · Risk of early labour or miscarriage. · Risk of COVID 19
Disabled People	<p>For disabled employees, the risk assessment must be reviewed by their line manager to include any additional risks as outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mobility problems and visual impairment may make unassisted evacuation difficult. · Potential difficulties in raising the alarm when assistance is required. · Unable to hear alarms. · Risk of COVID 19
Staff more vulnerable to COVID-19	<p>Any member of staff with a pre-existing condition that may increase the risk to their health if exposed to COVID-19 should have an individual risk assessment completed by their Principal/Head of School or line manager. The home visits risk assessment should be reviewed in line with this and additional risks included.</p>

