

Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

Annex to Child Protection policy

Home Visits

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Aim

To provide support to families where it has been difficult to make contact with families, where student engagement in work has been poor for a sustained period of time or where concerns around student welfare has been acknowledged.

Identification

If a student is failing to engage with their work over a sustained period of time, there is a safeguarding concern or where contact cannot be made with a student and their family the head of the key stage (RYO, ATY or KMO) should be informed. The head of the key stage will include the indication that a home visit has been suggested and will share this with their SLT line manager and in the wider pastoral meeting.

Recording

The need for a home visit must be recorded in the weekly report from the head of the key stage and logged onto the vulnerable student tracker onto the home visit tab (details below). The date that the home visit has been flagged will be recorded, along with the reason why, a proposed time to conduct the visit and who should do the visit. Staff should also record how the journey will be completed for example walk or taxi. Following the visit observation notes should be recorded, along with the date and time that the visit was conducted, the length of time and the agreed actions. Actions must be agreed with the student and a parent. One week after the visit and two weeks after the visit a review should be recorded onto the tracker.

| Before visit | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Student Name | Year Group | Reason | Date identified for home visit | Staff for home visit | Journey | Proposed date and time for home visit | Communication to family (Y/N) | Response from family (Y/N and comment) |
| | | | | | | | | |

| Day of visit | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Date of visit | Time of visit | Length of visit | Staff present | Observations | Agreed action plan |
| | | | | | |

| One week after home visit | Two weeks after home visit |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Review | Review |

Process

Prior to the visit the SAM should email, telephone or send a letter via the post to the family. This should indicate the concern and that as a result a home visit will be conducted.

Where there are major concerns around safeguarding the usual processes should be followed. If the decision is made to conduct a home visit, it might be that prior notice is not given, but this should be decided following a discussion with the DSL or headteacher.

Two members of staff should complete the home visit. Where members of staff want to complete the home visit alone they should only do this following a conversation with the DSL or the headteacher. Where possible staff should walk to the homes. If the home address is not within walking distance the members of staff can use their own car or a taxi booked by Hammersmith Academy to complete the journey. The mini bus could be used where an appropriate member of staff is available to drive it

Social distancing must be maintained during the visit and staff members should not enter the home. Staff members should speak to parent(s) and the student and record their observations on the tracker on return to the Academy.

Visits should be for approximately 20 minutes. Members of staff should assess visually the welfare of the student and the family. Staff should ask open questions and give parent(s) and student time to answer freely, supplementary questions should be posed to gather additional information and thus insight. Staff should look to understand the barriers faced by the student and family leading to the point of concern that has triggered the visit. They should outline the Academy expectations and with student and parent agree the next steps to move forward and aim to reduce/remove the barriers faced. The action steps should be recorded onto the tracker on return to the Academy. Where there have been problems with communication, staff should ensure that contact details are up to date and make corrections where necessary, a contact form can be taken from admin and given to parents to update.

If staff are expecting to need to make a referral to children's services they need to let families know, if there has been a problem with contact this conversation should happen during the visit so that the referral can be made as soon as is required.

The visit should be a positive experience, students and families should be commended for the things that are going well and additional support should be offered.

Follow-up

If there are additional safeguarding concerns following the visit these must be actioned as per the Academy safeguarding routines. The student should continue to be monitored closely and observations recorded onto the vulnerable students log after one week and then after two weeks. If actions have not been completed and concern remains the key stage team should review and determine the next steps in collaboration with the SLT.