

Early Years Home Visit Guidance

Rationale

We believe that our first encounter with parents and children is crucial in helping to form a positive partnership between home and the nursery or reception class. Before coming to nursery, parents/carers are their child's first teacher. Parents/carers have valuable knowledge about their child which will help staff to provide appropriate experiences for them at nursery. Home visits provide a familiar place for such knowledge to be shared in informal way.

Our visits are to support families in providing an environment that promotes the healthy growth and development of their children.

Home visits are to identify ALL children's potential and can identify/ support a child who is more vulnerable than the typical child because of health or developmental concerns. More able children can also be identified in the home visit and provision to support them can be planned.

Purposes

1. Ensure that children are admitted to Nursery and Reception classes following Local Authority and Nursery procedures.
2. Visit each child's home to share information and knowledge and complete relevant admission paperwork.
3. Encourage parents to ask questions in an informal way.
4. Begin to build up a relationship with the child and parent/carer

Guidelines/procedures

1. Pre-visits

- Visits are organised in location areas.
- Dates are set by the Nursery Teacher/ Foundation stage teacher for home visits to be carried out. Letters are addressed to parents/guardians.
- Letters are delivered
- Families are phoned the day before the home visit to remind them of time and date; emphasis should be made that timings are flexible due to other visits/unexpected traffic etc.
- If a family are reluctant to have a home visit an individual visit at the setting can be arranged as an alternative.

2. The Visit

- The Keyperson will attend the visit with a colleague (at least 2 members of staff to always visit)
- A copy of the daily visiting schedule should be left with staff at school and an emergency telephone number should be left with staff.
- An agreed key phrase should be used in case of emergency/difficulties, so that staff are protected at all times.
- A fully charged phone should be taken for communication.
- The staff will take the 'starting nursery/reception' pack with them.
- Staff should take iPads/tablets, pens and pencils, coat peg pictures, story books and a jigsaw Each visit should last approximately 20 minutes, making time for 4/5 visits per session.

3. Carrying out the Visits

- One person will record relevant information whilst the other person gets to know the child.

We need to:

- Hand out the prospectus/starting nursery pack for parents who have not received one through post.
- Complete record form - medical details, emergency details, likes, dislikes, etc. Leave a copy of the 'I am starting nursery/school' booklet for parent to read with child
- Leave a copy of the 'All about me' sheet for parent and child to complete if they wish and send back to nursery.
- Take a photograph of the child to display back at nursery/reception.
- Does the child have any health problems or specific needs which we should be aware of?
- Information about ethnic and cultural background, any special dietary requirements.
- Have the parents any concerns about the child starting nursery?
- Encourage parents to ask any questions.
- Confirm start date, time and nursery location.

4. Return to Nursery

- Staff to check that all information is correct and that any areas of concern are highlighted.
- Staff completes the languages spoken, medical needs, emergency contacts, overview forms, etc.

5. Staff safety during home visits

- The nursery staff are to remember that they are guests who have been invited into the family's home. Staff can ask parent/carers for information but they are under no legal obligation to give it to you. Parents/Carers can also ask the nursery staff to leave at any time or decline that the nursery can undertake a home visit.
- When the nursery staff arrives, they should assess if it is appropriate for them to be there. For example, do you feel welcome? Do you feel unsafe? Have you turned up in the middle of another appointment?
- Nursery staff should make sure they have appropriate identification and encourage the family to check it properly, particularly if they haven't met you before. Before you enter the house or flat, ask the family to put any uncaged animals in a separate room.
- Maintain professional boundaries in your relationship with the family e.g. do not drink alcohol or smoke with them.
- Consider confidentiality at all times. Do not chat about other families that the family is in contact with. Do not discuss anything in front of other family members without checking beforehand or privately that it is ok to do so.

This policy has been adopted from Oxfordshire County Council.