Home Visit Policy

Rachel Keeling Nursery School,
where the child comes first.

September 2018

To be reviewed September 2020
Why do we offer home visits?
At Rachel Keeling Nursery School, we recognise that parents/carers are their child’s first educator and we aim to work in close partnership with families to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child.

We believe that home visits are an essential part of getting to know a child and family. It means that families can have 1:1 time with their child’s key person in their own surroundings and a home visit may help the child settle better when they get to nursery.

All parents/carers are offered a home visit which will take place before the child starts school.

Aims of Home Visit

- To develop a caring relationship with the child/parents/carers before the child starts nursery
- To meet the child in their home environment and to establish a friendship to ease the settling in period
- To ensure that the child has met staff on familiar territory. This can help children to feel more confident about making the transition from home to school
- To encourage parents to share information about their child and to get an understanding of the child’s needs and interests so these can be catered for in nursery
- To share information about nursery
- To provide an opportunity for parents/carers to talk freely about their child and to ask any questions they may have

Initial Contact

- All children who are offered a place at Rachel Keeling will be invited to Stay and Play sessions the term before they are due to start
- All Parents/Carers are invited into school for a new parents meeting with the head teacher and class teams. These meetings will be held in July for children starting nursery in the Autumn Term and December for children starting in the spring term. Any other entry point will have meetings arranged to suit the needs of the family
- At this meeting a time will be shared for the home visit. The importance of home visits will be stressed to parents/carers. However if parents/carers do not
want a home visit, arrangements will be made for a family conference in school
• Before a home visit staff will be provided with a map showing children’s homes to enable them to co-ordinate their family visiting times more effectively
• Each visit is expected to last approximately twenty minutes
• Before the visit it is important to establish if a translator is needed. Where necessary and within reason the school will provide a translator. However, parents may be able to provide their own and should be asked in the first instance especially where the child speaks a community language not represented by staff in school

Guidelines for Visiting Families at Home

• All visits will be carried out by two members of staff one of whom will be the child’s key worker who will be responsible for settling in the child
• Families will be given written confirmation of the home visit date and time
• Parents will be asked to ensure that pets are in another room and that the child is up and dressed ready for the visit
• Before leaving for a visit, staff will inform the office where they are going and check that they have the address and family contact numbers
• Staff are advised to carry a mobile phone so that they contact the school in case of an emergency
• All home visits will take place during school hours between 9am and 3.30pm
• As staff will be visiting in pairs it is agreed that one staff member will concentrate on playing with the child and one will talk to the parent/carer
• Bags of toys will be available for home visiting containing things such as: construction toys, puzzles, books, cars, paper, pens, small world toys

Things staff will take on the visit

The bag of toys
Question Forms as a prompt to enquire about family history, child’s health, development, play, interests etc.
Any notes taken during a visit will be shared and agreed with the parents/carers

Staff Safety

• Staff safety is of paramount importance. Do not place yourself in any situation where you feel your safety or that of your colleague will be compromised
• Parents should ask for I.D. All staff are provided with this and should carry it on home visits
• Do not give out personal phone numbers to parents. If you are late for a visit, call the school who will inform the parents/carers
• If staff do not feel comfortable visiting a house with pets they can express their concerns to parents and ask them to make arrangements for the pet to be looked after for the visit or come in to school to talk to staff
• Staff should keep their mobile phones on during the visit and tell parents that they have been requested to do this for their own safety and apologise for any inconvenience if the phone does ring.

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School Organisation

• Most visits will take place on the second day of the Autumn and Spring term and subsequent weeks. It will be necessary to use extra members of staff to cover teams to continue visits in that week
• New children will not be admitted until the majority of home visits have taken place

Professional Approach

All families are different and will require different approaches. It is important for staff to remain professional and non-judgemental at all times if they are to gain the trust of children and families.

Issues that arise from home visits should be discussed within the team only and shared with the head teacher.

Any safeguarding issues should be reported in line with Safeguarding Procedures.

Confidentiality should be respected at all times.