

## Home Visit and Long-Term Absence Policy

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## Introduction

Syon Manor College is committed to promoting excellent attendance, safeguarding the welfare of all students and providing appropriate support where barriers to education arise.

The college recognises that long-term absence can be an indicator of unmet need, safeguarding concerns, emotional wellbeing difficulties, family circumstances or other barriers impacting a student's ability to engage in education. Home visits form part of the college's supportive and proactive approach to student welfare, attendance and reintegration.

This policy outlines the circumstances in which home visits may take place, the professional expectations of staff conducting visits, and the procedures followed before, during and after a visit.

This policy should be read alongside the colleges:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Communication with parents/carers Policy

The college's approach is underpinned by current safeguarding guidance and statutory expectations regarding attendance, safeguarding and partnership working with families and local authorities.

## Purpose of home visits

The purpose of a home visit is to:

- Promote student welfare, safeguarding and wellbeing
- Support positive engagement with education
- Identify and understand barriers to attendance
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers and students
- Provide support and guidance to families
- Establish whether additional intervention or external agency support may be required
- Support reintegration into college following prolonged absence
- Ensure students are safe and receiving appropriate support
- Fulfil the college's safeguarding and attendance responsibilities

Home visits are intended to be supportive and solution focused. They are not designed to be punitive or intrusive.

## Threshold for home visits

A home visit may be considered where:

- A student has been absent from college for two consecutive weeks without sufficient engagement or explanation
- Repeated attempts to contact the student or family have been unsuccessful
- There are concerns regarding a student's welfare, wellbeing or safety
- A student is identified as vulnerable or at risk
- Reintegration support is required following prolonged absence
- The college believes a home visit is necessary as part of its safeguarding responsibilities

The college reserves the right to arrange a home visit sooner where safeguarding concerns or significant welfare concerns are identified.

## Notification to the local authority

Where a student's absence becomes long-term or persistent, the college will notify the relevant Local Authority in line with statutory attendance and safeguarding expectations.

Following a home visit, the college may share relevant information with the Local Authority, safeguarding services or appropriate external agencies where:

- There are safeguarding concerns
- A student is at risk of becoming missing from education
- There are ongoing concerns regarding attendance
- Additional support or intervention is required

Information sharing will be conducted in accordance with safeguarding legislation, data protection requirements and the college's safeguarding procedures.

## Arranging a home visit

Where possible, home visits will be arranged in advance with the parent, carer or student.

The college will explain:

- The reason for the visit
- Who will attend
- The intended purpose of the discussion
- Any support that may be offered

However, in exceptional safeguarding circumstances, the college reserves the right to conduct an unannounced welfare visit where it is considered necessary and proportionate.

Home visits will normally be conducted by appropriate members of staff, which may include:

- A member of the safeguarding team
- Pastoral support workers
- Senior leaders
- A member of staff from the students Mentor Group

Where appropriate, visits may be conducted jointly with external professionals or agencies.

## Staff conduct during home visits

All staff conducting home visits are expected to always maintain professional standards.

Staff must:

- Treat students and families with dignity, respect and sensitivity
- Remain professional, non-judgemental and supportive
- Clearly identify themselves as college staff
- Conduct visits in line with safeguarding and professional boundaries
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with college procedures
- Record factual and accurate information following the visit
- Avoid entering a property if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Immediately report any safeguarding concerns in line with college safeguarding procedures

Where possible, home visits must be conducted by at least two members of staff.

Staff must not:

- Place themselves in unsafe situations
- Make promises regarding outcomes that cannot be guaranteed
- Share confidential information inappropriately
- Engage in confrontational or argumentative behaviour
- Conduct visits outside of professional expectations

The safety and wellbeing of both students and staff remains paramount throughout the process.

## Safeguarding considerations

Home visits form part of the college's safeguarding responsibilities and may provide important information regarding a student's wellbeing, safety and engagement.

Any safeguarding concerns identified during or following a visit must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recorded in line with safeguarding procedures. If the DSL is not available, concerns must be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or another member of the safeguarding team.

Where concerns indicate a student may be at risk of harm, appropriate referrals will be made to safeguarding agencies and/or the Local Authority.

## Recording and Documentation

A written record of all home visits will be completed and securely stored.

Records should include:

- Date and time of visit
- Staff members present
- Who was spoken to
- Reason for the visit
- Key information discussed
- Any support offered or agreed actions
- Safeguarding or welfare concerns identified
- Recommendations and next steps

All records will be handled in accordance with GDPR and the college's confidentiality procedures.

## Reintegration support

Where appropriate, the college will work collaboratively with students and families to support reintegration into education.

Support may include:

- Attendance support plans
- Timetabled reintegration programmes
- Wellbeing support
- Safeguarding intervention
- Referrals to external agencies
- Academic support arrangements
- Pastoral mentoring

The college recognises that successful reintegration is most effective when achieved through positive partnership working between students, families and college staff.

## Equality and inclusivity

Syon Manor College is committed to ensuring this policy is applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

The college will consider individual student needs, vulnerabilities, disabilities, medical conditions, cultural factors and safeguarding considerations when arranging and conducting home visits.

## Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders to ensure compliance with current safeguarding, attendance and statutory guidance.

The college reserves the right to amend this policy in response to legislative updates, safeguarding guidance or operational requirements.