

Home Visits Policy & Procedure

EYFS Requirement

This policy has been written in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements (section 3.4,3.27)

Related Policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Individual Children
- Settling In and Transition
- Equality and Inclusion
- Parents as Partners

Legislation

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Children Act 2006

Our Aim

To provide an opportunity for a home visit to a new child and family accessing our setting, allowing them to meet the key person and a senior member of the team in their own home prior to the child starting at the setting.

The purpose of the visit is to help the child, family and key person get to know more about each other in the home environment where the child usually feels most relaxed. We hope to establish a partnership between parent/carers and staff, where both parties share their knowledge and understanding of the child to plan stimulating and challenging learning opportunities, as well as planning to meet each child's individual needs.

At Grass Roots Private Day Nursery, we recognise that parents/carers are their children's first and most enduring educators. Forming relationships with parents/carers and working closely is beneficial for each child's learning and development.

It is our policy to visit the children at home before they enter nursery, where possible. However this is an optional service that the setting provides and as such not all parents will require/want an appointment.

During the visit, time is taken to find out about the child's likes, dislikes and interests. Visits are not to judge parent/carers parenting skills, but to offer parent/carers the opportunity to ask questions and gather any information needed from staff to support the transition. Usually, one home visit per family is sufficient, unless one is required when the child moves rooms, in which case we can, if necessary, repeat a home visit to support the transition. We also complete a baseline of the child with the parents, building the home/ nursery links and we complete an observation on the home visit.

Benefits:

Home Visits have many benefits for both parents/carers and staff. For parents and children, visits give them the opportunity to meet the key person in a safe environment at home where they feel confident and at ease.

The visit provides the opportunity to:

- Establish early, positive contact
- See children in their own familiar setting and at nursery
- Meet other family members and talk about other people and pets who are important to the children
- Understand the anxieties children may feel when starting nursery, and also understand the wealth of learning that goes on at home.
- This all helps staff providing care for children to get a fuller picture. Staff can gain lots of information to inform their planning from observing a child where he or she feels settled and in control.

Rationale:

- To share information between parents/carers, staff and children. Providing a starting point for staff to understand family background, including cultural background.
- Ensure children feel that they are valued and have a familiar face when starting at nursery.
- To provide an opportunity for parents/carers to talk about their child and the nursery, to voice concerns, clear up any misunderstandings and to lessen worries and fears.
- To establish effective procedures to ensure the safety of parent/carers, staff and children during the visits.
- To ensure parents/carers understand the purpose and procedure before the visit.

Procedure:

A key person is allocated before the child starts at the setting. Home visits will be offered in the welcome email. During registration parents will be informed of the following:

- Who will be attending and when
- How long the visit is expected to last
- What will happen
- What kind of questions will be asked
- What information staff will bring
- Any information the key person would like from the parent/carer during the visit
- Appointments should be confirmed in writing to parents/carers on a welcome email/letter and recorded in the nursery diary and calendar, which are kept in the office.
- Home visits will take place at a time convenient to parents/carers; this will be established during registration.
- The child's 'Learning Journey' on Family will be explained and we will complete any background information with the key person (in their absence another member of room staff), who will conduct the home visit along with a senior member of the leadership team.
- Staff carrying out the home visits will identify themselves before entering the family home.
- Staff will be briefed about the area they are visiting and location.

- Parents are informed about the nursery's website, social media page and Family newsfeed and the contents as well as provided with email/hard copies of policies if requested (policy & procedure file available at all times).
- If parents/carers are not at home when staff visit then a compliments slip will be posted to let them know we called.
- Staff will leave the following at nursery before the visit, in the nursery diary:
 - The name, address, and telephone number of the child's home
 - The approximate arrival time and estimated length of the visit
- If there is a change to plan after leaving nursery or the child's home then the nursery must be informed.
- Staff are expected to have their mobile phones switched on at all times and must make parents/carers aware of this during the home visit.
- If staff feel uncomfortable in the child's home then they should leave immediately, reporting back to management at the nursery
- There is a password system in place in case of emergencies, staff can say the password during a telephone conversation and management at the nursery will know if everything is ok or not.
- An evaluation of each visit must be recorded in writing by staff when they return to nursery including:
 - Any incidents that may have occurred during a home visit
 - Any actions agreed during the home visit and confirmed with parent/ carers
- A thank you message sent to the parent/carers.
- Visits will be carried out in pairs, allowing one staff member to speak with the parent/carers and the other to interact with the child. This enables parents/carers to talk without worrying about the child as well as providing an opportunity to observe the child at play in a familiar environment.
- The staff will stay together during the home visit and would not expect to be left alone with the child during the visit.
- Visits will last a maximum of one hour.
- Staff will be conscious of the fact that they are guests in the family home and will treat all families and homes with a high level of respect and regard during the visit.
- At any time during the visit parents/carers may ask both staff members to leave and do not have to give a reason why.

What staff will take on a home visit?

- A home visit pack; this is kept in the office.
- A selection of toys from the child's new nursery room, as this enables the child to choose whether to play with a familiar or unfamiliar toy, providing a source for interaction.
- Information from nursery to discuss with parent/ carers - there is a check list of documents to discuss
- The child's registration records to check details and ensure that all evidence has been seen prior to the child starting at nursery
- A tablet to take a photo for child's peg and complete an observation (permission must be obtained verbally from parent/carers)

This policy will be reviewed by management annually, who are responsible for ensuring the dissemination of this policy to all staff, volunteers and parents.