



# **DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT**

## **Home Visits**

**November 2022**

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## **DURANTS SCHOOL – Home Visits Policy**

Home visits are an important first step in establishing an important partnership with families for the benefit of pupil's educational experiences.

It can be beneficial for teachers to conduct home visits before school begins or at the beginning of the academic year. The thought behind this action is that it gives teachers a greater understanding of their pupil's background and special needs. When visiting a student's home, the teacher can have an understanding of the financial and time resources available to the family as well as meet additional family members, and observe parent-child interactions within a comfortable setting for the family. This will help the teacher gain a more realistic picture of the pupil and his or her home life.

Teachers like to conduct home visits in order to meet his or her pupil's and their parents in a more relaxed and non-threatening environment. The first day of school is often nerve-wracking enough without adding the extra stress of meeting people for the first time. By making a home visit, teachers can avoid this stress for both themselves and their pupil's. An extra bonus is that students often come to class with much more enthusiasm than when the teacher is a complete stranger.

When making a home visit, be sure to schedule a time before hand rather than simply showing up on the doorstep. Some parents may not want to meet in their home so an appointment at school will need to be arranged.

Don't forget about safety issues when making house calls. The Head of department or the speech and language therapist should go with the class teacher. Be sure that at least one other person knows where you are. If you have a mobile phone or pager, keep it with you at all times. Use common sense when entering dangerous neighbourhoods.

When meeting with the pupil and family, keep your conversation light and be sure to tell them your position in school and the focus for the home visits. Know ahead of time what you will and won't tell them so that you aren't caught off guard by questions. Allow the pupil and parents to lead the conversation at times.

One of the most vital issues with home visits and in working with pupil's and parents is to be aware of your comments. Every comment and action has a consequence. That consequence can be either positive or negative. Be very careful in what you say and do. Ensure that you record the home visit using the 'home visit record sheet'. At the end of the home visit ensure that the teacher and parent has signed and dated the 'home visit record sheet' and inform the parent that a copy will be sent home shortly after the visit.

As teachers, we must be aware of, and acknowledge the variety of cultures we will encounter in our pupil's and parents. You certainly want to keep pupils and parents comfortable and a wrong comment or action could jeopardise a positive relationship with both.

All in all, home visits can be a very positive experience and one that will help you get the year started off on the right foot. Teachers can gain very useful information and insight to help them understand their pupil's which will help in motivation, behaviour issues, and achievement. Think carefully about this option as a tool for information as well as to help develop positive relationships.



## **Guidelines for home visits**



- Don't schedule home visits too closely together. Tell parents the start and finish time of the visit. You must clarify the purpose of the visit when you make the phone call to arrange a time. Have all relevant paperwork with you, i.e. school starter booklet, transport risk assessment.
- Get clear directions to each house when you make your appointments, and take a map, just in case.
- Get the facts straight before the visit. Make sure you know the correct name of the child and the parent. Sometimes the parent has a different last name.
- Don't take a prop. Most teachers who have done home visits for a while feel that a prop diverts the attention away from the visit and the purpose to learn more about the children, their interests and favourite activities.
- Let the child know when your visit is about to end.
- Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that some families will refuse or feel uncomfortable about a home visit for a number of reasons. In such cases, the teacher may want to find alternative ways to make special connections with the child and family.