

# TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL HOME VISITS.



## Home visit tips:

Make home visits a part of the school culture and expectation so that no one feels left out or singled out

- Schedule home visits for before the child starts so that you can prepare for their needs and interests.
- Always conduct home visits in pairs, ideally teacher and practitioner.
- Try to be flexible on dates and give parents/carers plenty of notice.
- Explain when you will arrive, how long you will stay and what you will be asking.
- Confirm parents' actual names and titles.
- Review school policy on parental responsibility arrangements and ensure it is agreed which property the visit will take place in.

## Before the home visit:

- Call to confirm the appointment and make sure that both the child and parent/carer will be available.
- Check addresses and have contact numbers available with you.
- Check location of home visit and route.
- Make sure that the school office knows your schedule, and update them regularly.
- Make sure you have all your paperwork / any notes ready before you go.
- Check if there is any outstanding paperwork still to be returned by parents/carers.

## During the home visit:

- Bring your school identity card. Smile, be cheerful, try to relax, and remember that the visit is about building relationships.
- Be respectful when entering families' homes.
- Dress appropriately and always ask if they would like you to remove your shoes.
- Take some items from the setting to share with the child, for example a book of photos, some small world toys, a puppet or soft toy.
- Whilst one adult is talking to the parent/carer, the other adult can be playing with the child.
- Encourage the child to talk to you and show you their favourite things to do when they are at home.
- You may want to take a photo of the child and yourself or their key person to use in the setting (check and get permissions with parents/carers first).
- Use the home visit form to support your conversation and try not to make parents/carers feel like they are being interviewed.
- Recap start dates, structure of the day, and drop-off and collection routines.
- Make sure any outstanding paperwork has been completed and support parents/carers with this if needed (do not assume that all parents/carer are able to read/understand written communication).
- Thank the family for allowing you into their home.



### After the home visit:

- Consider sending a “Thank you” note to the child and their family for welcoming you into their home. This could contain any important information or reminders, including start date.
- Use the information that you gained at each home visit to make any adaptations to your provision, and inform planning to ensure each individual child feels welcomed and supported and settles well.

### Remote home visits:

**The importance of a home visit is seeing the child in their own environment.**

If it is not possible to conduct home visits in the usual way, consider these alternatives to ensure that they still take place:

- meeting taking place in the home garden
- door stop visits with a follow up phone call
- meeting in the school environment

Remote home visits, using technology, are a viable alternative, such as video calls. As any face to face home visit, encourage the child to talk to you and consider asking the child to show them their favourite things to do when at home. **Insist on seeing the child in accordance with safeguarding procedures.**