

Chaucer Junior School Lone Working Policy

Updated September 2019
Review September 2020

Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. Context
5. Definition
6. Mandatory Building Procedures
 - 6.1. Security of buildings
 - 6.2. Working alone at another building/location
7. Personal safety
8. Assessment of
9. Planning
10. Staff working at home
11. Practice Guidance – Personal Safety
12. Monitoring and Review

Appendix 1 - Personal Safety

Appendix 2 - Protocol and Guidance for Home Visits

Appendix 3 – Visit Flow Chart for home visits

Appendix 4 - Protocol in an emergency

Appendix 5 – Avoidance and diffusion strategies

1. Policy Statement

1.1. Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policies including, where relevant, those of partnership organisations

2. Purpose

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

3.2. Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy.

4. Context

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role (i.e. Head Teachers, Family Support Workers, attendance monitors, DSL and DDSL's). Chaucer Juniors principle for supporting lone workers include:

4.1. A commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices.

4.2. Recognising and reducing risk.

4.3. A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff.

4.4. A clear understanding of responsibilities.

4.5. The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property.

4.6. A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff.

4.7. Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

5. Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

6. Mandatory Building Procedures

6.1. Security of buildings

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that: -

6.1.1. All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible

6.1.2. Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder

6.1.3. If applicable, key codes for access should be changed from time to time and when a member of staff or sub-contractor that knows the code leaves and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected.

6.1.4. When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms.

6.1.5. There is access to a telephone and first aid kit.

6.1.6. If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering.

6.1.7. External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone.

6.2. Working alone at another building/location

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that: -

6.2.1. All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible.

6.2.2. They are familiar with the fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms.

6.2.3. When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Building Manager or HT) this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

6.2.4. There is access to a telephone and first aid kit

6.2.5. If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering.

6.2.6. Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures.

6.2.7. Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area.

6.2.8. Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed.

7. Personal safety

7.1. Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together.

7.2. Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.

7.3. Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

7.4. Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Line Manager.

7.5. Where required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers.

7.6. Staff must inform their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base.

7.7. Staff such as Family Support Workers, who work to a pre-planned programme, must inform their Line Manager if they deviate from the programme.

7.8. If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.

7.9. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:

7.9.1. Staffing levels and availability.

7.9.2. The identified risks.

7.9.3. Measures in place to reduce those risks.

7.10. Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must: make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

7.11. Staff working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile 'phone for this purpose. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile 'phone is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider.

8. Assessment of risk

8.1. In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

8.1.1. The environment – location, security, access.

8.1.2. The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.

8.1.3. The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.

8.1.4. History – any previous incidents in similar situations.

8.1.5. Any other special circumstances.

8.2. All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

9. Planning

9.1. Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc.

9.2. Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.

9.3. Communication, checking-in and fall back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.

9.4. The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member.

10. Staff working at home

10.1. Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

10.2. Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods.

10.3. Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for staff that live alone.

10.4. Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display, and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person, you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

11. Staff working for Chaucer Junior School

Staff working for Chaucer Junior School, should ensure that they are familiar with and comply with the appropriate Health & Safety guidance for the site that they are visiting.

12. Practice Guidance – Personal Safety

‘Reasonable precautions’ might include:

12.1. Checking directions for the destination

12.2. Ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover.

12.3. Ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected back.

12.4. Avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas.

12.5. Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.

12.6. Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

13. Monitoring and Review

13.1 Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.

13.2 If an incident does occur – refer to school’s policy, ‘violence to staff policy document’ held in schools office and complete appendix 3 (copy of this appendix is attached to this policy at appendix 5)

Appendix 1 - Personal Safety

1. Personal Safety

1.1. There are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The organisation has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.

1.2. This is not about raising anxiety levels, but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

2. Be aware of the environment

2.1. Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

2.2. Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.

2.3. If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates arrange to check in when the visit is over.

2.4. If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.

2.5. Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

3. Be aware of yourself

3.1. Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?

3.2. Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.

3.3. Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?

3.4. Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

4. Be aware of other people

4.1. Take note of their non-verbal signals.

4.2. Be aware of their triggers.

4.3. Don't crowd people – allow them space.

4.4. Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.

4.5. Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?

4.6. Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

Appendix 2 - Protocol and Guidance for Home Visits

Introduction

1. Guidance for Home Visits

1. Family Support Workers and any other staff members making a home visit should under no circumstance compromise their personal safety. If staff are anxious on arriving at a location and feel their safety could be jeopardised, they should not take the risk of proceeding further. They should telephone the home and advise that they are unable to attend. Alternative arrangements should be made.
 - 1.1. Pre-planned appointments must be entered into the school electronic diary so that colleagues are always aware of all staffs' movements and appointments.
 - 1.2. Unannounced home visits staff decide to make as welfare or attendance concerns should be discussed with at least one other member of staff before they are made to agree there is justification for the visit.
 - 1.3. The name and address of the pupil's home the staff member(s) will be visiting shall be logged in the folder in the office. The log is held securely in the folder kept in the red box in the school office to ensure the information remains confidential.
 - 1.4. The details of the persons whom the staff are visiting and a known contact number will be held on RM Integris. All relevant staff have access to this system and staff contact details will be held by all relevant staff.
 - 1.5. An approximation of how long the Family Support Workers and any other staff members making a home expect to be at these locations should be given to the office staff. They will set a timer and ring the staff member, if they have not returned. If the staff member doesn't answer the phone, no longer than 5 minutes will be waited before trying again and if still no contact made, then a staff member will go to the address.
 - 1.6. The Family Support Workers and any other staff members making a home visit should ensure they have a fully operational and sufficiently charged mobile phone with them for the visit.
 - 1.7. Staff should appraise themselves of any previous visits by other staff or agencies and acquire background information from others.
 - 1.8. Staff visiting should be fully acquainted with the location of a pupils' home and how to

get there to avoid having to stop and ask for directions. Staff should have the appropriate insurance cover as such visits are regarded as 'business' by insurance companies.

1.9. All home visits should be recorded on CPOMs with the reason of the visit, points discussed, agreements reached and any concerns that the member of staff may have from the meeting however trivial these may appear at the time. Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent problems in the future.

1.10. Travel plans should only be changed if relevant staff have been alerted.

1.11. Staff may consider the carrying of a personal alarm.

1.12. Public transport is a poor option for home visits since a great deal of personal control is taken away. Only a thorough risk assessment should allow for the use of buses, taxis and trains.

1.13. Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential danger the staff member should make a speedy exit from a home. Never assume that violence wouldn't happen as while there are hundreds of home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incident should be reported to the Head Teacher and Office Manager immediately.

1.14. Visiting staff and volunteers are reminded to keep up-to-date with current legislation and safeguarding training.

2. Protocol for Home Visits

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

2.1. Show respect for parents/carers/families as equal partners in the relationship.

2.2. Always try to make appointments in advance and offer a choice of meeting at school.

2.3. Accept families' rights not to want a home visit, unless you deem the welfare of a child overrides the families rights.

2.4. If applicable confirm parents/carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents, or that both have the same surname as the child.

2.5. Do not assume that all learners or carers are literate. Other issues may prompt the Support worker to contact bilingual support services for the family.

2.6. Be aware of Social, Cultural and Religious differences.

Working in Partnership with other Agencies

2.7. Where appropriate check with Social care to find out if a Lead Practitioner (Professional) is identified.

2.8. Where possible, communicate with other agencies already involved with the family.

2.9. There is a need to clarify the role of other professionals involved to avoid duplication and so that Pupil, Family or Family Support Workers are not working at cross-purposes with other agencies.

2.10. Evidence of good practice is where the two services liaise and support each other with a clear common aim of assisting the learner/family to overcome barriers to learning, where this involves attendance and punctuality etc.

3. Health and Safety

3.1. Always provide the Administration Team with details of any home visits arranged, including named, address, phone number of the home/individual visited and an estimated time of leaving and returning.

3.2. The Office must act as a “buddy” and set a timer to monitor the return of the visiting staff member, and act accordingly if they don’t return on time.

3.3. Ensure that your mobile phone is operational and fully charged beforehand

3.4. Demonstrate normal courtesy - wait to be invited into the home.

3.5. It is important that all contact with children and families are recorded on CPOMs

3.6. A note should be made of all people present at the meeting, dates and times etc.

3.7. Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels threatening - leave, saying for example, that you are going back to get something from your car.

3.8. If in doubt cancel the visit and re-arrange.

3.9. Log any future home visits in the electronic calendar and put a note on CPOMs.

3.10. The staff member undertaking a home visit must ensure they telephone or text their “buddy” in the office immediately after visit has taken place at the agreed time.

3.11. If the home visit takes longer than anticipated, the staff member should ring the office to say that it has run over and give an expected completion time.

3.12. If the staff member doesn’t ring at the expected time, admin staff will ring the mobile phone to make sure the home visit has finished and that they are safe.

3.13. If there appears to be any cause for concern, a code phrase will be used “I forgot to tell Mrs Upton her appointment is at 10” and the staff member should respond accordingly to the questions

3.14. If there is no answer, the administrator should try to make contact again after 2-5 minutes.

3.15. If there is still no answer the administrator should ring the contact details for the home being visited to ensure that the staff member has left and at what time.

3.16. Attempts should then be made to visit the house if there is still no contact made with the staff member.

4. Risk Assessment

4.1. Check records as to what is known and what information is available.

4.2. Talk to other professionals who may have already have had contact or involvement with the family.

4.3. Discuss with the Line Manager what strategies to adopt when working with a potentially difficult family.

4.4. Where there are deemed to be potential risks, contact by phone/post and invite them to meet in a public place or do a joint visit with another trained staff member or volunteer.

5. Unaccompanied visits

5.1. Staff may be permitted to make home visits alone. In this instance the following guidelines should be observed:

5.1.1. Permission to make an unaccompanied home visit must be given by the head teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team in advance of the visit.

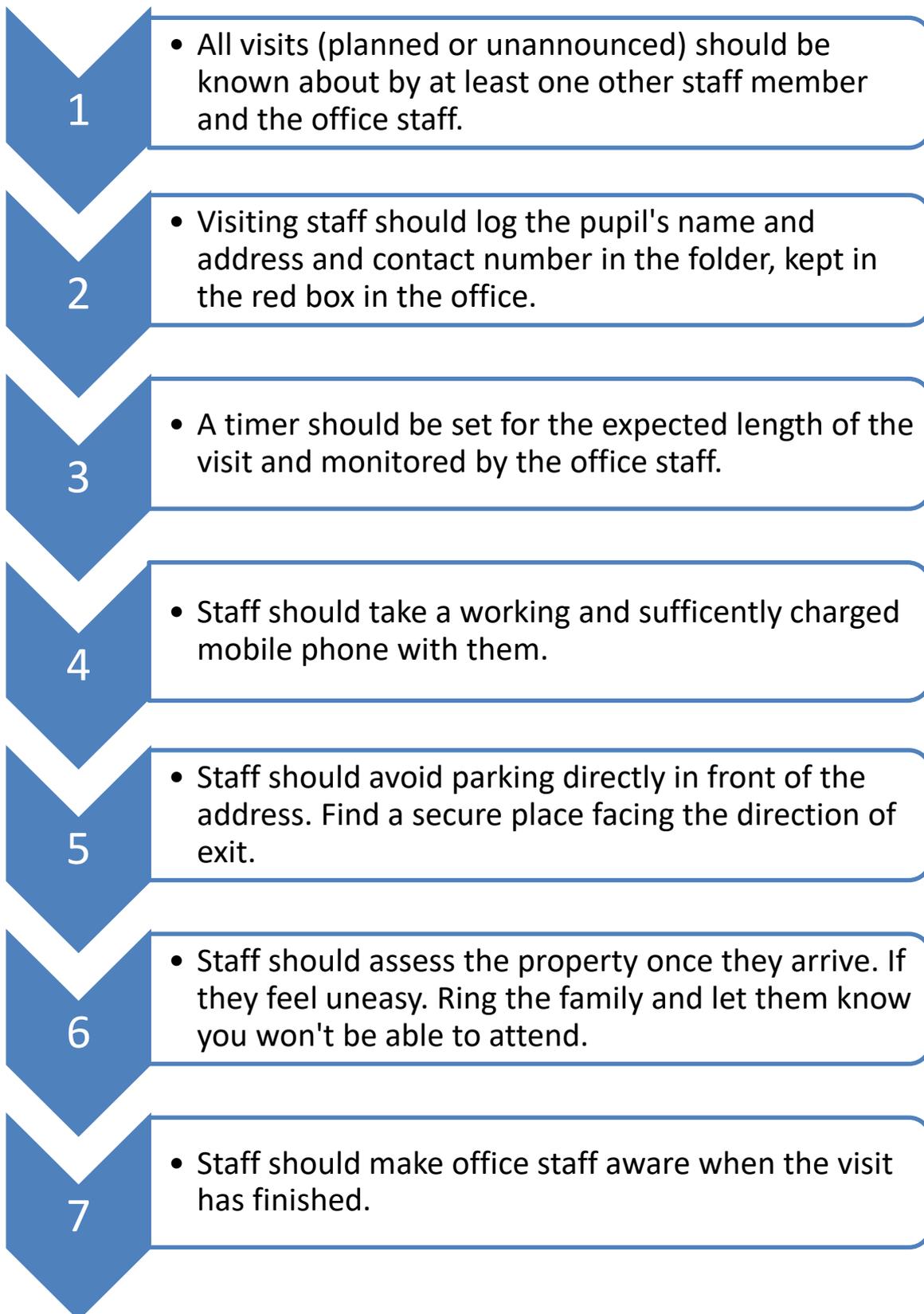
5.1.2. If you need to speak to a young person alone, a member of the family or friend should be present or near during the interview.

5.1.3. Ask if an adult is present in the house before entering. If no adult is present, do not enter.

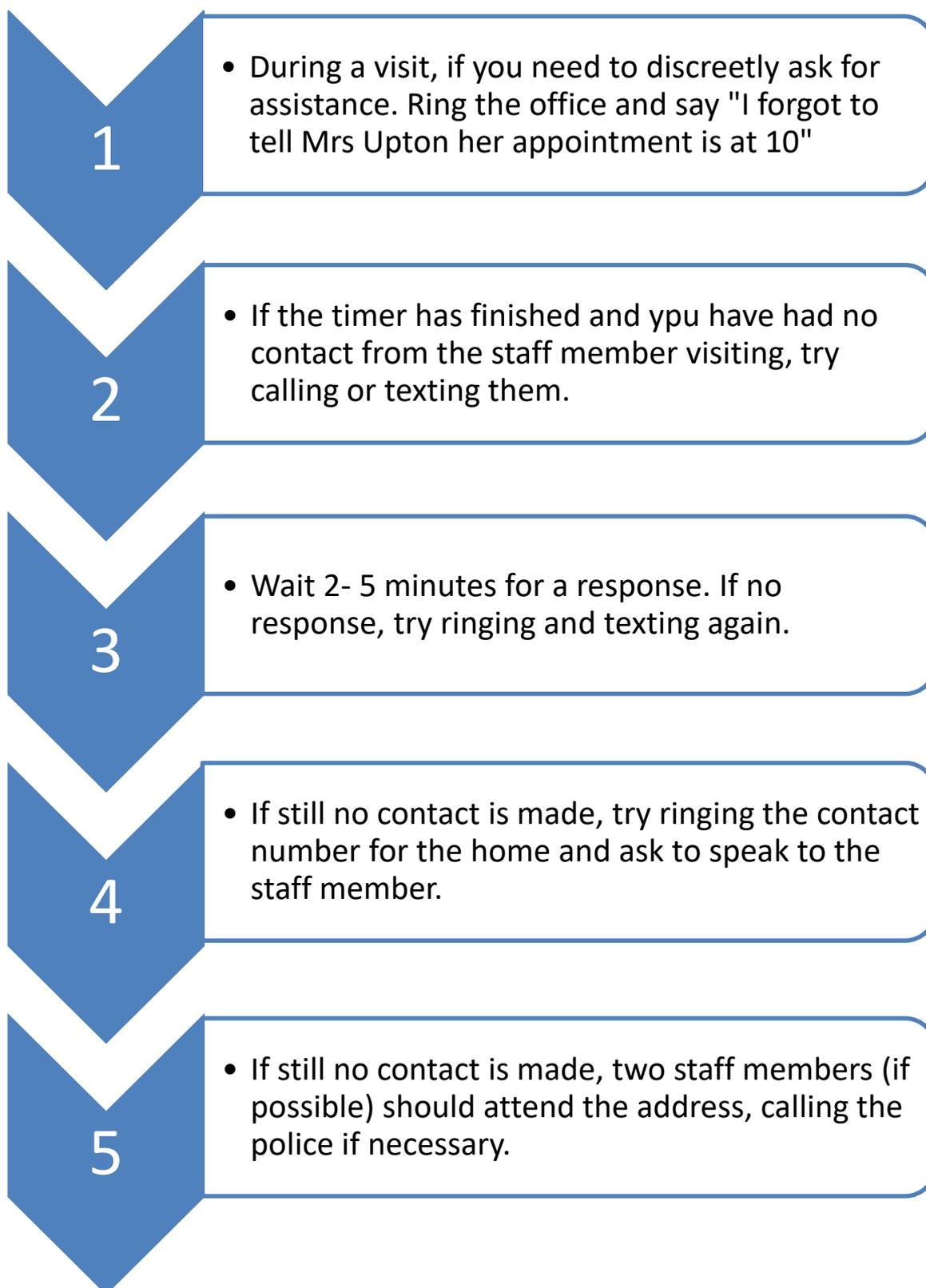
5.1.4. If the interview is in another room, the door should be left open.

5.1.5. Care should be taken that your proximity to the young person cannot be misinterpreted.

Appendix 3 – Flow Chart for Home Visits



Appendix 4 - Protocol in emergency during a home visit



Appendix 5 - Avoidance and Diffusion Strategies

Please be aware of the following to be used as necessary

Don't expose yourself to unnecessary risk
Visit in daylight and be punctual
Having knocked on the door, step back 2 to 3 metres
If in doubt, make an excuse to stay on the doorstep
Take note of body language
Use appropriate humour
Keep calm
Be Serious
Take advice
Listen
Communicate
Acknowledge their feelings
Be non-judgemental
Apologise/Empathise
Stay out of their space
Don't undermine
Give a way out without losing face
Respect
Be quietly insistent
Be assertive, not aggressive
Be aware of back-up/support
Take time to think
Set boundaries
Realise that to do all this may be difficult
Leave yourself a way out
Always make sure you have a clear exit

Appropriate Response in a crisis

Call for back-up
Walk away
"Can I help you?"
Call a halt or a pause to a meeting
"What can we do?"
"How can we move forward?"
Set boundaries – give clear signals
Define roles
Explain consequences
Don't try to be a hero – personal safety must be paramount
Record and Witness
Opportunity for debriefing