

CONTACT VISITS POLICY

Policy type	Recommended
Review period	Annual
Last reviewed on	26th January 2022
Next review due	Spring Term 2023
Approval level	Executive Board

Approved by (Name, date, signature)

Executive Board, 3rd February 2022
Executive Board Chair, David Kreyling
Published on

Omnia Foundation Website

POLICY FOR CONTACT VISITS

Mission

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

Aims of the policy:

- To provide guidance to foundation staff on the protocols and expectations around contact visits
- To provide guidance to home settings regarding what to expect from a contact visit

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Educational Visits, Risk Assessment, Child Protection

What is a contact visit?

Contact visits are visits from one or more foundation staff to the home setting and the home locality. They take place for a number of different reasons within the work of the foundation:

- **Induction** – contact visits will centre around getting to know the student and their home setting and environment
- **Off-site development** – where, for whatever reason, a student's development on-site has to be paused, contact visits will take place in order to continue to deliver consistent support, challenge and intervention to both the student and the members of the home setting
- **Transition** – where a student has spent some time off-site eg sickness or holidays, contact visits will be arranged in order to ease the student gently back into foundation life. These happen after each holiday as a matter of course
- **Keeping in touch and wellbeing** – during major holidays and where appropriate if a student is absent due to sickness or anxiety, contact visits will be arranged for wellbeing purposes as we are aware that students' experience of loss and change can be acute and trigger intense emotional responses

What happens during a contact visit?

As outlined above, the intention of a contact visit is to strengthen and develop relationships between the foundation staff and the students and their home settings. They are also a vehicle for delivering support and intervention in a setting and locality that is familiar to the student: they can become accustomed to the kinds of activities they can expect on-site in the comfort of their own home or surroundings that are familiar to them, eg a local park.

Staff will arrange an arrival time. Depending on the purpose of the contact visit, conversations with members of the home setting may take place within the home or if staff are conducting the visit in the locality then it may just be a quick chat on the doorstep. Staff will determine how long the visit will last usually prior to arrival but sometimes where circumstances change visits may need to be prolonged or cut short.

If the purpose of the visit is to deliver support or intervention with the student, the staff will then take the student to an agreed venue. This could be a local wood, park, sports facility etc. Staff will return the student back to the home setting at an agreed time. Where circumstances change, contact details are shared and any changes necessary to the visit will be communicated by phone.

How are contact visits prepared?

The focus of the visit is planned by the wellbeing team and is usually led by the Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator assigned to the student's hub or by the Outreach Hub where provision is being delivered by them.

Staff will explore appropriate venues and locations in and around the student's home setting. They will conduct preparatory visits as a team and plan and design activities that can be undertaken safely with the student in that venue. They will prepare a risk assessment in advance of the visit that is approved by the Head of Foundation, a member of SLT or the Educational Visits Coordinator. Ideally visits will be conducted by two members of staff but where appropriate, staff may undertake visits alone with the necessary risk assessments in place.

Implementation & Monitoring arrangements

The Head of Foundation has responsibility for implementing the policy with the support of the Senior Leadership Team

It will be monitored by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Executive Board

The Head of Foundation will review the policy annually and any changes will be ratified by the Executive Board
