Home Visit Protocol

Why Home Visits?
Home visits provide a way for schools to reach out to their students’ families and build a relationship of trust and respect. Home visits are especially valuable for hard-to-reach parents.

Who Should Conduct a Home Visit?
Teachers, counselors, and school administrators. The visitor should know the child well and be familiar with their grades and behavior in class.

Preparation
- Identify a staff member who has a relationship with the family.
- Choose an accompanying staff member – visits should always be conducted in teams of two.
- Schedule the visit in advance, if possible. Be prepared to have a translator present if necessary.
- Review records, family history, cultural background.
- Make copies of records that need to be shared.
- Prepare informational materials (resources, district brochures, business cards).
- Notify supervisor of location and time of home visit.
- Review safety tips.

The Visit
Arrival
- Set the tone with a warm introduction.
- Spend 10 minutes establishing a rapport and developing a caring relationship.
- Include all family members in the home who would like to participate.
- Suggest an environment conducive to the meeting – the visit can occur somewhere in the community if the family feels more comfortable.

During the Visit
- Clearly state the purpose of the visit – welcome two-way communication.
- Talk about the students’ and families’ strengths.
- Spend 10 minutes establishing a rapport and developing a caring relationship.
- Give information about the students and his performance. Ask the parents what they would like to share about the student.
- Establish goals on how the student can improve.
- Share resources and ideas for helping the child learn at home.
- Get their feedback. Ask for the parent to give you suggestions about how you can help the child improve at school.
- Answer questions.
Concluding the Visit
☐ Summarize the visit.
☐ Discuss next steps.
☐ Provide your contact information.
☐ Say goodbye.

After the Visit
☐ Write up a short paragraph summarizing the visit.
☐ Evaluate the visit and how you can improve.
☐ Follow-through on referrals, action items, etc.
☐ Send the family a copy of the document.

Tips for Making the Home Visit a Success

Remember to:
• Be a good listener
• Have specific goals or objectives for each visit
• Be flexible
• Be prompt to your home visits
• Realize the limitations of your role
• Help parents become more independent
• Keep language appropriate
• Dress appropriately and comfortably
• Be confident
• Remember that small improvements lead to big ones
• Be yourself
• Respect cultural and ethnic values
• Monitor your own behavior- the parent is observing you

Avoid:
• Imposing values
• Bringing visitors without the parent’s permission
• Socializing excessively at the beginning of the visit
• Excluding other members of the family from the visit
• Talking about families in public
• Being the center of attention
• Expecting perfection from the parent
Safety Tips

- Try to complete home visits early in the day
- Stay alert
- Dress appropriately
- Leave jewelry at home
- Leave purse at office or trunk
- Carry necessary cash, keys, and driver’s license on person
- Remove yourself from dangerous situations
- Travel in pairs when possible
- Survey the neighborhood
- Identify safe areas (i.e. restaurants, telephones, rest rooms, police stations)
- Trust your instincts
- Consider a neutral meeting location if visit cannot be made safely at home (i.e. library, conference rooms, restaurants)
- Take universal precaution by washing hands before/after visit
- Ask family members to come out to meet you if uncomfortable with area
- Keep car in good repair
- Keep emergency supplies in car, include all-weather gear
- Ask family to secure pets before arrival
- Attend safety seminars
- Consider the use of cellular phones or pagers