

**Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Education Services  
Policies and Procedures**

**HOME VISITATION SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES**

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2008

**Purpose:**

To ensure that OES staff are knowledgeable and competent in matters of home visitation safety.

**TARGET GROUP:** All OES staff.

**Procedures:**

- Wear agency identification badge at all times.
- Limit valuables or money on your person when visiting students' homes. Please secure credit cards and keep your wallet out of sight. Before leaving the office, secure personal belongings in the trunk of the vehicle, or under seats, or on the floorboard, if the vehicle is a van. Secure GPSs under the seat or in the glove box while parked at a visit.
- Be aware of your "audience" when placing items inside your vehicle trunk, or under the seats, or on the floorboard.
- Maintain appropriate appearance and grooming in order to project an image of cleanliness, dress, and neatness. Keep jewelry to a minimum.
- Lock your vehicle when traveling and when you return to it after a visit. Check inside and under your vehicle before entering it. Carry vehicle keys in your hand for accessibility as well as a means of protecting yourself.
- Enter a home only after an adult gives you permission to do so.
- Carefully consider your safety before entering a home.
- Where there is suspicion of weapons, illicit drugs, or alcohol present, the home visit is not to be made.
- Plan your route to visit and know your destination. Inform supervisory staff if you change your schedule. Supervisors and Office Assistants should have your weekly schedule at the beginning of each workweek with destinations and times clearly noted.
- Take whatever immediate steps are reasonably necessary for personal safety. If you believe your safety is threatened, remove yourself

immediately from the situation. Document in your records what happened in the situation. Inform you supervisor immediately.

- If on a home visit and a threat to safety occurs, the employee should terminate the visit and immediately leave the scene. After ensuring the safe exit from the area the employee is to contact the necessary people. If the threat is to personal safety local law enforcement is to be called immediately followed with a call to inform supervisor of the need to contact law enforcement. Inform your supervisor immediately if the threat level does not require law enforcement involvement but was such that the visit needed to be aborted.
- When necessary and deemed an appropriate safety measure, 2 staff members shall be assigned to make a home visit. Or, arrange joint visits with staff from other agencies (i.e. the CDSA or one of their providers).
- Staff is not permitted to carry concealed weapons in State vehicles.
- Staff may request that family members keep animals chained during home visits. If animals are not adequately restrained or if the family member refuses to do so, the home visit is not to be made.
- When a visit is not made due to safety concerns, staff shall consult with their immediate supervisor to schedule an alternative meeting place.
- When accommodating parents and scheduling visits after normal business hours (5:00 PM), staff is expected to inform someone of the scheduled meeting and make contact with that person upon completion of the visit. Staff must receive permission from their immediate supervisor when scheduling any home visit after normal business hours. However, every effort should be made to schedule all visits between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.
- Staff shall carry a cell phone on all home visits. If using a personal cell phone or agency cell phone that has not been assigned to the particular staff member, the cell phone number shall be recorded with the supervisor prior to leaving the office. Cell phones shall be set to vibrate and shall not be answered during a visit, unless it is an emergency.
- Staff should check with others who have visited the child's home for potential safety issues prior to home visits.
- As a part of new employee orientation, all new employees will review this policy, as well as DHHS' Workplace Violence Prevention Policy, and sign the Home Visit Acknowledgement form.