

VIRTUAL HOME VISIT: CHECKLIST

FROM 'LABELING' TO 'ENABLING' EVERY CHILD

"Hi, I'm excited that you believe in building strong parent partnerships and are planning to try out the Virtual Home Visit process for yourself! I hope you found value in and have enjoyed going through the resources so far.

I invite you to use this quick at a glance checklist as a reference to ensure that you do not miss out on any of the key ingredients! It's really very simple to execute, and here are some things that I keep in mind during the process. **Feel free to innovate, translate and implement the way you want. And, I would love to know how you have done it. Do share your experience."**

- Archana Todi

BEFORE

SETTING THE TONE

Set the tone by introducing the **purpose** of the Virtual Home Visit to the parents and children, so that they understand why the teacher will be visiting their home online. The reason for planning an e-visit in lieu of an actual visit to the student's home could be **constraints of travel time, difficulty of scheduling a meeting in the day especially if both parents work long hours or during a lockdown due to an unprecedented situation**. The teacher can speak to the children about when they will be visiting each of their homes and build **excitement and anticipation**.

HOUSE-KEEPING DETAILS

- Create a day-wise schedule to be followed for the Virtual Home Visits:
 - Obtain parents' email addresses / other details for **connecting online**.
 - We recommend scheduling **two visits a day** to be able to make the best parent and child connect and avoiding digital fatigue. Make a schedule keeping aside **40-50 minutes** for each visit. Factor in adequate **buffer time** between two visits.
- Send a **request email** to parents with information on purpose, date and time of the virtual home visit (*Check resources for the email template*)
- Be open to changes in slots and days upon parents' request. However, try to get confirmation for **presence of both parents**.
- A day before, **remind the parents** about the visit via the school diary and SMS / WhatsApp.



TECH PREPAREDNESS

- Teachers should keep their devices for the call ready and ensure that they portray a **professional image** by being **appropriately dressed** and having an **uncluttered background** on the screen for e.g. *they could display a virtual background with their school logo.*
- Inform parents a day before the scheduled virtual home visit to check their gadgets (laptop / phone device) in terms of stable **internet connectivity**, **audio clarity** and **camera display** for sharing video during the call. You can also make a **test call** to re-confirm their readiness.
- Advise parents to use only **one device** for the call which is convenient for taking around to share a glimpse of their home.
- **Pre-Work:**
 - Look up the **admission form** of the child before the home visit to understand the **family background** and use this information to **build the conversation** during the visit.
 - The teachers conducting the Home Visit should list down the **questions** they would like to ask the parents and child. For a smooth conversation, it is always a good idea to decide who amongst them will be asking which question.
 - Do a **dry run** of the home visit with school leaders and / or colleagues.
 - Print out a copy of the **individual Home Visit form** for capturing data during the visit. (*Check resources for the template of the Home Visit form*)
 - You could request the parents to be ready with the child's favorite toy / food which the child would be **happy to share** about during the meeting. This will also help in **engaging** and **holding the attention** of the child during the meeting.
 - A great idea is also to have your cup of tea ready and the parents get in theirs, so it becomes a **virtual tea time ☺**! The aim is to make them feel as **comfortable** as possible, at the same time keeping the meeting **formal, tight and crisp**.

DURING

- It is helpful to do the Home Visit as a team of **two teachers**.
- Connect **5 minutes in advance** to allay any connectivity anxieties.
- Make sure that the parents and the child sit close to each other to **fit well within the frame**.
- Keep the meeting in **four phases** –

***Note:** please share with the parents the 4 parts of the Home Visit and ask them if they would like to have you meet with the members of the extended family (grandparents, etc.) first and then organize the visit accordingly.*



A. OPENING WELL-BEING CONVERSATION (10 MINS) – USE THE DATA FROM THE ADMISSION FORM

- Greet parents by their names and enquire about their work/wellbeing.
- Introduce yourself and your co-teacher and reiterate the purpose and importance of Home Visit.
- At this time, you can **build the conversation** by asking open ended questions. Refer to details about the family members especially siblings that you have collected from the admission form during the pre-work for the visit. Ask **contextual empathetic questions** which the family can connect with easily and will find relevant. Your questions could be around - *What is going on?; or related to the work/passions of parents / siblings; or about current happenings / situations - how have they managed being locked down during the Covid Pandemic, etc.*
- If there are grandparents or other members in a **joint family**, remember to meet those members as well.

Note:

- *Make sure the teacher team knows the language of the family.*
- *Since this is a conversation more with parents, don't insist for the child to attend this part of the meeting.*
- *In a nutshell, the best-case scenario for this interaction would be – we are part of the family! 😊*

B. MEET THE CHILD (10 MINS)

- Strike a **friendly informal conversation** with the child and speak in a **language** they are most comfortable with.
- Engage the child by **enquiring** about their **favorite** color, toy, food, etc. You could also make a connect by bringing a toy or book to **hook** the child at school.
- Once the interaction with the child is done, let the child **leave** the meeting.

Note: Sample prompts (For Pre-K students): (teacher can have a toy / book with them to share)

- *What is your favorite toy / food / game? (start with sharing from what the buddy or teacher like to do and then ask the child what they like to do)*
- *What did you eat this morning?*
- *Tell us about your food / friends / daily routine*
- *What would you like to do when we meet?*



Sample prompts (For students of other grades):

- In what ways did you help your parents?
- Did you enjoy doing the summer BA?
- Can you share about something new you learned in this vacation?
- What is it that you missed about school?
- From Key Stage 3 students you could inquire about experience of online learning / college prep / expectations from parents about the child.

C. KNOW THE CHILD – DATA COLLECTION (10 MINS) - THE HOME VISIT FORM QUESTIONS CAN GUIDE THIS SECTION

- When you are doing a Home Visit of a **new student**, ask the parents about **any specifics** that you need to know – for instance, if in the admission form there is a mention of any allergies that the child has, **discuss** these in more detail.

D. VIRTUAL HOME TOUR, MEET THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND TAKE FAMILY PICTURE (10 MINS)

- Request the parents (and the child) to take you around for a **virtual home tour** where they show you their home, place where their child plays, etc.
- Spend time with the **grandparents** / other family members and make a connection – share about the purpose of the home visit, ask about their health.
- Come back and wrap up with the idea of **'SCHOOL AS A FAMILY'** that assures parents of a **healthy partnership**. Don't miss clicking a **virtual picture** of the family and warmly thank the family while leaving the meeting.

Note:

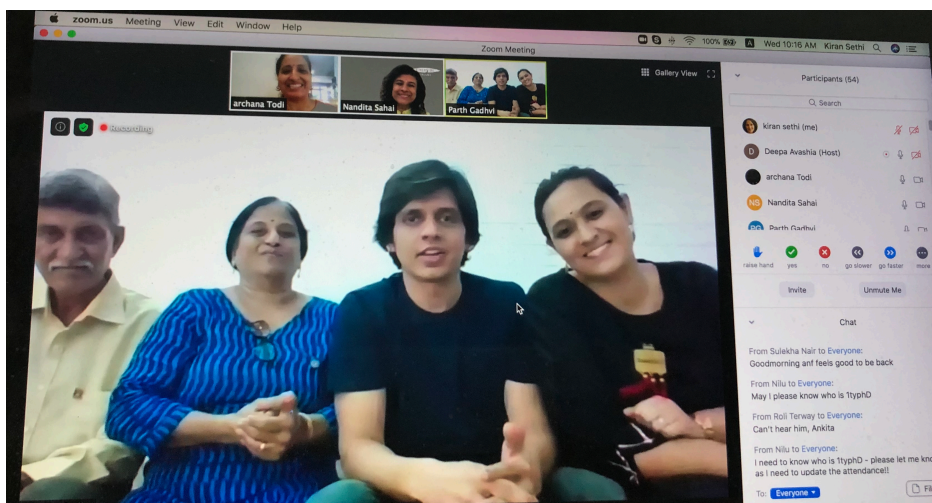
- Ensure that the Parent Orientation happens before the Home Visit. By doing so you will ensure that parents have a fair idea of the philosophy of the school and all the house-keeping details are shared with them.
- If you sense that parents have any further queries related to any concerns / administrative functioning of the school, set aside another time for that discussion (*within the next week*).
- One teacher should keep noting **insights and observations** throughout and record them on the **Home Visit form**.

AFTER

- ❑ **Complete** the Home Visit form after discussing observations and insights as a teacher pair. (*Check resources for example of a completed Home Visit form*)
- ❑ Reflect on and **collate overall insights** about the class and share with school leaders and colleagues.
- ❑ Reflect on any **alterations / additions** to be made to **classroom pedagogy** or student management style based on the insights from Home Visits of the class.
- ❑ **Make sure to follow up on any commitments that may have been made during the Home Visit – ideally within the following week. Collate insights and mail it to parents along with a thank you note.**
- ❑ After completing all the Home Visits, have a **dialogue (or Conglom)** with the students about the Home Visit experience and share all the **wonderful stories** the teachers picked up during the visit.

SOME IMPORTANT TIPS

- ❑ Only in case of Pre-K children, Home Visits are planned **a week before** their 'first day at school' for **familiarization** and making the child **comfortable** with the home-room teachers. For all other children it can be planned a month after school re-opens.
- ❑ For children who might need **special attention** for e.g., those under Right to Education (RTE) and special needs children, it is a great idea to visit their homes in both terms (twice a year).
- ❑ Before the Home Visit, share with the parents your **video** and that of your co-teacher saying a **warm hello** to the child in order to build **familiarity** and **anticipation** for the meeting.
- ❑ The **buffer time** between home visits can be used to make notes along with the co-teacher.
- ❑ Home Visit is the time to focus on building a **relationship** and **knowing** the child and family better. However, if need be this time also serves the purpose of solving their queries related to logistics.



Pic of a family during a heart-warming Virtual Home Visit