



VIRTUAL HOME VISIT: CHECKLIST

FROM 'LABELING' TO 'ENABLING' – ACROSS SCREENS, NOT ACROSS DISTANCE

“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

PURPOSE OF ONLINE HOMEVISIT:

Home visit is an act of dignity, listening, and humility. You are entering a sacred space – someone’s home. Enter it not with the authority of a teacher, but the curiosity of a learner. Online Home Visit is not a substitute—it is a continuation of our belief in building trust, empathy, and partnership with families. It ensures that geography or circumstance doesn’t come in the way of a teacher understanding the whole child.

Online Home Visits are designed:

- To help teachers understand the child's home environment and emotional context— digitally, but meaningfully.
- To create an authentic partnership with parents, even in virtual spaces.
- To reinforce that learning is collaborative, and teachers are invested beyond the screen.

BEFORE

TONE & MINDSET

1. *“Don’t let the laptop lens shrink your lens of empathy.”*

This is not about performance or inspection. This is a sacred conversation—held with grace and attention. Respect the digital intimacy that a home screen offers. You're entering a household through their chosen space—be it a living room, a corner of the kitchen, or a balcony with better signal.

Keep your presence:

- Warm, never formal.
- Curious, never conclusive.
- Open-hearted, never rushed.

SETTING THE TONE

- Establish the relevance for the Online Home Visits.
- Share that the intent is to understand their world outside of school.
- Let them know the teacher is excited to meet their family and their world—even through a screen.

HOUSE-KEEPING DETAILS: SCHEDULING AND COORDINATING WITH PARENTS

- Create a digital schedule (Google Sheets or Excel).
 - Obtain parents' email addresses / other details for connecting online.
 - Make a schedule keeping aside 30 minutes per call. Factor in adequate buffer time of 5-10 mins between two virtual visits.
- Be open to accommodate the changes in parent availability.
- Ensure both parents (if possible) can be present.

HOUSE-KEEPING DETAILS: COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- Send a formal invitation email to parents with information on purpose, date and time of the virtual home visit (*Check resources for the email template*) clearly stating:
 - Purpose of the Online Home Visit
 - Preferred platform: Google Meet
 - Time slot and duration
- Include tips: find a quiet space, let the child be part of the call, use headphones if needed.
- A day before, remind the parents about the visit via the school diary and SMS / WhatsApp.

TECH PREPAREDNESS

- Teachers to review the child's background (admission form, notes and observations).
- Rehearse the flow and talking points with the co-teacher.
- Test your tech: ensure internet stability, backup device, charged laptop, and working mic/ camera.
- 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.*
- Print out/ or keep the soft copy of the individual Home Visit form for capturing data during the visit. *(Check resources for the template of the Home Visit form)*
- Advise parents to use only one device for the call which is convenient for taking around to share a glimpse of their home.
 - 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**A. BEGIN WITH RESPECTFUL PRESENCE**

- Greet parents by name/ title (eg: Colonel/ Doctor / Sir etc.). Greet the child and extended family with warmth and energy.
- Greet the grandparents (if available) with a 'Namaste'. Else do a quick check-in confirming from the admission form.
- Appreciate their time and presence.
- 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.

B. OPENING WELL-BEING CONVERSATION

- Introduce the visit's purpose simply: "We would love to know the world behind the screen where [child's name] learns, grows, and thrives."
- One teacher engages in the conversation; the other takes notes / observations from the conversations.
- Discuss the attendance patterns and trends and share a word of caution if needed.
- Discuss the post – school engagements of the child.
- Update regarding the Saturday Open House meetings (last Saturday of every month). The parents could use these meetings to take their concerns forward.
- Observe with Empathy and notice the following:
 - Notice the background, mood, and interactions – without judgement.
 - Stay mindful of power dynamics and household boundaries.
 - Compliment aspects of the space, the child's behavior, or a parent's gesture.
 - Be present, minimize multitasking, avoid typing when someone is speaking.
- Ask open-ended questions:
 - "What is one family ritual that you follow?"
 - "How does a day look like in the family?"
 - "How does the child's daily schedule look like?"
 - "Where does [child's name] usually sit for self-study?"
 - "What's a moment from this past month you're proud of them for?" o "How has your summer break been?"

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! ©*

C. MEET THE CHILD

- 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 college prep / expectations from parents about the child.

D. VIRTUAL HOME TOUR, MEET THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND TAKE FAMILY PICTURES

- 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:

- 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.

E. CLOSE WITH GRATITUDE

- Share an anecdote or compliment about the child.
- Can end with a fun Rapid-Fire Round.
- Thank the family genuinely for letting you into their space and time.
- Let them know how this visit helps you be a better teacher to their child.

AFTER

A. DOCUMENT AND DISCUSS THE INSIGHTS

- 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.
 - Note key insights: emotional tone, challenges, positive family practices, child's strengths.

B. PEDAGOGICAL REFLECTION

- 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.
- What might need to change in your approach based on what you saw or heard?
- Share observations with your school leaders and team.
- **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.** Follow through on the following:
 - Address any concerns raised by the family in a timely way.
 - Share additional resources or suggestions that could support the child at home.
 - Use Saturday open house meetings to your advantage.

C. SHARE BACK IN CLASS

- After completing all the Home Visits, have a dialogue (or Conglom or Community circle) with the students about the Home Visit experience and share all the joyful and wonderful stories (non-private) the teachers picked up during the visit to build empathy and belonging.

D. CLOSURE

- Close the process with a Closure e – mail, thanking the parents and also pulling data and observations along with actionables from the Home Visit Sheet to enrich the email and give it a personalized touch.

SOME IMPORTANT TIPS

- Ensure privacy and minimize interruptions during the call.
- Maintain confidentiality—this space is personal and shared in trust.
- 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.
- If the connection drops or isn't ideal, offer to reschedule rather than force a poor-quality conversation.
- The buffer time between home visits can be used to make notes along with the co-teacher.
- Acknowledge concerns and turn it as opportunity for growth: use Advisory to your advantage.
- 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

“Distance is just data. Connection is the constant.”

Even if we meet through screens, we must arrive with the same heart: to listen, to learn, and to love.