



POLICY PROGRESS GUIDE



North Tyneside Council

Beacon Hill School and Specialist College for Business and Enterprise

Portage & Pre School Home Teaching Policy

Policy adopted

June 2016

Date

Interim policy review

June 2018

Date

Full policy review

June 2020

Date

Governors
Responsibility

Partnership

Teacher Co-ordinator

Lynn Scorer

Signed

13th June 2016

Date

Chair of Committee

Sheila Clapperton

Signed

13th June 2016



Portage and Pre-School Home Teaching Policy - 2016

The policy document was reviewed after consultation with the Portage team, during a team meeting in May 2016.

As a registered service the National Portage Association (NPA) Code of Practice and Ethical Guidelines 2006 have been adhered to throughout the policy.

It is to be read in conjunction with the other relevant policy documents of Beacon Hill School and North Tyneside Council. As well as being available on the school website hard copies are also kept in the Portage office - Child Protection, Lone Working, Complaints/Grievance Policies, Equal Opportunities, Continuing Professional Development, Bereavement, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Staff Safe Guarding Policies.

The policy fulfils the following aims of Beacon Hill school. Beacon Hill is a **creative, enterprising and innovative community** in which we all:

- Are happy, healthy and heard
- Empowers families

Portage is a service that values and respects the family through its work. Research undertaken by the National Portage Association has shown that Portage does empower parents. The vast majority of families who engage with the service report that it is a positive experience for both them and their child. Portage visitors actively involve parents/carers in all aspects of their work, valuing the parent as a partner in the process of enhancing their child's development through joint working towards common goals.

The Portage Service Level Agreement with parents emphasises the need for mutual trust and respect and sets out clearly how parents are partners in the service delivery. An effective relationship between the PHV and the family is fundamental to successful Portage work with the child.

- Communicate effectively
- Ensure inspiring positive partnerships
- Nurture core values of respect and friendship.

The Portage Team in North Tyneside is founded on the principle of a multi-agency model. The service has close links with Learning Disabilities North East Early Years project, Funding from Children in Need has enabled us to provide 5 groups a week for families - 2 of these in partnership with colleagues from Speech & Language Therapy and Physiotherapy.

Portage Home Visitors are employed in a range of Early years and specialist settings and work with the Portage team for part of the week. Over 60 people have been trained at Portage Basic Workshops in North Tyneside. These have included Early Years settings, Special schools, Children's centres, Additionally Resourced Nurseries, Educational Psychology, Speech & Language Therapists and Physiotherapy. It is not expected that they would all then become Portage visitors but rather transfer the skills and Portage model into their daily roles.

Parents are always offered free places on the training. At least 3 parents have attended each work shop.

There is an understanding that information relating to a child's needs will be shared between relevant professional involved with the children and families. This is agreed at the introductory visit with the allocated Portage Home Visitor. Portage visitors will arrange joint visits with other

professionals wherever this is appropriate. The 2 professionals will then discuss joint target setting and share these with parents.

Parents and their PHV generally agree their preferred method of communication - this can be regular texting, e mails or phone calls. Many parents see their PHV more than once a week if they attend group activities. In 2016 the Portage service has launched both a Twitter account and Facebook.

Portage Home Visitors are key members of any Team around the Child and will attend meetings wherever possible. If the PHV is unable to attend then the Head of Service will go in their place.

- Promote inclusive communities
- Maximise independence

Portage is a service that supports children with special educational needs to achieve and make optimum progress. Learning goals for the child are broken down into small, achievable steps and families agree to practise activities with their child on a daily basis. Portage Home Visitors support families in transition to education settings or to access playgroups, LD North East Playgroup sessions or any other community group the family wants to join in with their child (eg. Local Children's Centre, Tumble tots etc) E mail addresses for families are gathered to enable any relevant information to be sent out on a regular basis - Contact a Family newsletter, Pathways activities, holiday activities, social events etc.

- Extends confidence
- Develop learning for life, lifelong learning
- Widen aspirations through innovative technology

Portage visitors and parents/carers agree targets for their child. Parents are encouraged to record progress and celebrate achievements, no matter how small, with the Portage visitor as part of the weekly visit. Children's progress is reported twice yearly. Ipads are used during visits and loaned to families in line with the iPad policy.

Newly trained Portage Visitors will work through a programme of Core Competencies as part of their initial supervision. This is to ensure that they have met the standards expected of visitors by the National Portage Association (NPA).

All Portage Home Visitors are encouraged to undertake training as part of their Continuing Professional Development. This is offered through Beacon Hill School, their own schools/settings, North Tyneside council and at both Regional and National level through the NPA. At least 1 member of the team attends National Conference each year.

The National Portage Association has developed an online support Hub over the past 3 years and all members of the Portage team have access to the information and resources available.

The Aims of the Portage and Pre-School Home Teaching Service

- To provide effective early years structured teaching for children who have additional support needs.
- To support parents/carers in promoting their child's learning and development.
- To work with others to provide a holistic service to parents/carers and children.
- To facilitate the successful transition from one phase of Early Learning opportunities/education to the next.

- To provide Early Years Assessment information and Statutory Advice as part of the process of meeting a child's additional support needs.

Principles

The National Portage Association is committed to promoting services that are -

- Family Centred
- Well co-ordinated
- Accessible
- Competent
- Accountable
- In partnership with other agencies.

" Portage is most effective when it is both a source of support for individual children and families and a link by which other services are accessed and used effectively." NPA Code of Practice and Ethical Guidelines 2006

The Portage Model is characterised by:

- Regular home visiting - weekly or fortnightly visits are offered.
- Supporting the development of play, communication, relationships and learning for young children within the family. Portage Visitors complete initial assessments, set long term goals in agreement with families (and break these down into achievable targets) which are reviewed at least every 6 months, in consultation with parents.
- Working together with parents/carers within the family, with them taking the lead role in the partnership that is established.
Planning individual activities and encouraging parents to carry these out and record their child's progress throughout the week.
- Helping parents/carers to identify what is important to them and their child and plan goals for learning and participation. Observing and assessing child and then, in discussion planning long term goals
- Keeping a shared record of the child's progress and other issues raised by the family. Using agreed pro forma documents as specified by the NPA. All Portage Home Visitors should be familiar with the NPA guidelines on confidentiality and adhere to the general rule that no information is to be disclosed to another agency without parental consent, except in the case of any Safeguarding issues. Information about individual children will be kept under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.
There are digital cameras and iPads available for the PHV to record a child's progress. Use of photography/video is discussed with parents at the initial visit and is agreed to within the Service Level Agreement parents sign with their PHV.
- Responding flexibly to the needs of the child and family when providing support. Working to the agreed model of the 3 elements of Portage visits - Child Led play, Structured Teaching activities and Family Focus. Each of these elements is of equal importance and may be the primary element during any Portage Home Visit.

- Portage Home Visitors accessing support through regular team meetings, on behalf of the family they work with.
Portage Visitors in North Tyneside are drawn from a variety of Pre-School settings and services and commit to the equivalent of a day a week to the Portage service. This enables them to visit their family or families and attend Supervision meetings.
- Working closely with other agencies. Establishing Service level links and individual family links with other professionals and agencies. Joint target setting and visiting where appropriate. Visiting children in other settings (eg. Childminders, Early Years settings, playgroups etc.

Service delivery should be responsive to the key themes, desired outcomes and developments in government strategy for early intervention and family support. All Portage Home Visitors in North Tyneside have undertaken training on the Early Help Assessment and the Solihull Approach and work in settings where they will be kept up to date with regard to changes in Early Years/SEND policy at Regional and National level.

Management Group

- The North Tyneside Portage and Pre-School service is managed through Beacon Hill School and is overseen by the full Governors and a Sub-Committee of Governors, which meets once per term
- The Head of the Service provides a written report on the Service to both the Full Governors and the Sub-Committee once every term.
- There is a balanced membership of parents/carers and representatives from both statutory and voluntary sector organisations who provide services to families with children with additional needs.
- The Governors Sub-committee has the responsibility to: Review service outcomes, review measures of family satisfaction and advise on standards and developments in service delivery.

GUIDELINES

1. Entry & Discharge Criteria

Referrals:

In line with NPA guidelines it is recommended that all Portage services operate an open referral system, accepting referrals from families themselves as well as other agencies.

- The North Tyneside service works with children from birth up to the time they enter a formal Early Years Education setting.
- The service is available to any child who:

"is experiencing significant developmental impairment or delays, in one or more of the areas of cognitive development, sensory or physical development, communication development, social, behavioural or emotional development;

or

has a condition which has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay."

(From "Together From the Start Practical guidance for professionals working with disabled children (birth to third birthday) and their families". DfES LEA/0067/2003-10-13)

Referrals can be made using the Service referral form or taken over the telephone and the necessary information recorded on the service referral form. Where an agency is making a referral for a child and family, it is essential that the referral has been fully discussed with parents/carers and their permission obtained.

A waiting list will be maintained if necessary. Priority of take up will be determined by a balance across the following criteria:

- Depth of need.
- Breadth of difficulty
- Length of time on waiting list
- Number of other providers currently involved
- Parent/carer views

Where a waiting list does exist the Head of Service will continue to arrange initial visits to newly referred families. They will be informed of how long it is likely to be until a Portage Visitor is available and offered access to group activities run in partnership between the Portage team and LD North East.

Service Level Agreement

This is discussed with parent/carer during the Initial Visit by the Head of the Service and, if the involvement of the service is agreed, it is signed by both parent/carer and their allocated Home Visitor during the introductory visit. The agreement outlines the agreed aims and objectives and what both the Portage Home Visitor and parents can expect during home visits.

Discharge Criteria

Visits **may** be gradually phased out, suspended or withdrawn when:

- A 3 Year Child is receiving Funded Education in an Early Years setting.
- A 2 or 3 year old child is attending 4 or more half-day sessions in an Early Years setting and is deemed to be settled, with their needs being met confidently by the establishment.

The Portage Home Visitor will liaise and attend transition meetings with setting staff, supporting the setting of initial targets. The Portage Home Visitor will visit the child in the setting until it is agreed that it is appropriate to withdraw.

The Service will also liaise directly with Educational Psychology and share information in line with agreed guidelines.

- Family requests temporary or permanent cessation of visits.
- There is a succession of unexplained failed visits.

The procedure, in this instance, is detailed below:

1. From the outset parent/carer will be informed of discharge policy.
2. Unless formal notification of cancellation is received from parent/carer prior to visit, the Portage appointment will be kept.
3. Cancellation will be recorded in visit notes.

4. Non-attendance at a scheduled visit will be recorded by leaving a non-contact slip with the family. This will be recorded in visit notes. If Text messaging has been used as the main form of contact for arranging visits, this will be maintained by the PHV.
 5. After two consecutive and unexplained, missed appointments or two appointments missed in a four visit cycle, a parent/carer will be sent a supportive letter of enquiry re non contact and requesting response from parent/carer.
 6. Lack of response to enquiries or a further unexplained missed visit will result in formal discharge.
 7. If there are concerns about a parent's/carer's capacity to maintain appointments for reasons relating to personal circumstances, the Portage Team will liaise with him/her and with other agencies agreed by parent/carer in order to mitigate the problem.
- Programmes of work are repeatedly not followed through.
 - Parent//carer is not present during teaching sessions on consistent/regular basis.
 - Where there are fears for staff safety through threatening or abusive behaviour.

2. Service Evaluation

When visits have ceased parents are sent an evaluation questionnaire. This feedback is kept on file for monitoring purposes. After a period of 6 to 12 months a second evaluation is sent. Again feedback is monitored and analysed in terms of Parental satisfaction with the Home visits, transition into nursery and the support they felt they were offered.

In June 2011 a new Service Evaluation was sent to those families currently receiving Portage Home Visits. This is sent out annually in June of each year.

The Service will be monitored and evaluated through systems in place in Beacon Hill and in line with the National Portage Association and Local Authority. An annual Portage Action Plan is included in the Beacon Hill School Progress Plan. Progress towards targets is discussed at monthly School Progress Meetings and then evaluated at the end of the year (in July)

Lynn Scorer collects data regarding the number of referrals received, uptake of the service, numbers of families visited and referrals on the waiting list (where appropriate). This will be collated annually (in July) to facilitate analysis of performance, inform budgetary and staffing requirements for the service and ensure an effective use of resources.

Data regarding the progress of the children is collected twice yearly from all PHV's. This takes the form of the number of skills recorded on the agreed checklist and direct comparison is made with the child's baseline score. This gives a percentage increase in the level of skills the child demonstrates.

3. Responsibilities of PHV's and Supervisors

Portage Home Visitors have a range of responsibilities as set out in the NPA Code of Practice and Ethical Guidelines. These include their work with children and families, Attendance at Supervision and Team meetings, Monitoring and evaluation, Working with other agencies, Training, Professional Development and Promoting the aims and values of the National Portage Association (NPA).

Portage Supervisors are required to have responsibility for the day-to-day service management, they may also have a number of families to visit and are required:

- To undertake to provide the link between the Portage team and the Management Group (Governors)
- Organise service delivery and training in accordance with NPA recommendations
- Act as contact person for the Service, carry out initial visits to families, organise events where families can meet informally.

- Offer supervision and support to all members of the team - (accompany on home visits where appropriate/assist in report writing etc.)
- Evaluate Service Delivery and report service outcomes to the Governors/Management Group.
- Play an active role in the local multi-agency network, including supporting children from Portage through transition into an Early Years setting.
- Organise training for parents and early years workers from other agencies to support the inclusion of children with additional needs, including the delivery of the Portage Basic Workshop. Organise in-service training for the Portage team, which must include Child Protection and Disability Equality Training.
- Maintain own Professional Development
- Promote the values and aims of the NPA as an individual member and as a member of a registered service.
- Keep their team up to date on developments at regional and national level within the NPA.

The Portage Service requires administrative support to assist in the ordering of resources, payment of invoices, minuting of meetings, receiving and relaying messages to the appropriate personnel and typing/photocopying of reports for Governors, Management group etc.

This responsibility is fulfilled within the existing administration team within Beacon Hill.

4. Equal Opportunities - refer to Beacon Hill and NPA policy documents

The Portage Service is available to all Pre-school children with developmental delay in one or more areas, regardless of race, religion or gender.

"It is expected that all Portage Home Visitors should have respect for all children, parents and colleagues they are working with, regardless of their background or circumstances" (P.37 of NPA Code of Practice and Ethical Guidelines 2006)

Portage Home Visitors need to be sensitive to the requirements of particular families and respond appropriately (eg. Booking interpreters for families where English is an additional language, removing shoes at the door etc) It is expected that all Portage Home Visitors will attend relevant training in relation to Disability Equality. It is a condition of registration with the National Portage Association that Supervisors organise this for their teams.

5. CPD for Portage Home Visitors (PHV's)

There is a system of Continuous Professional Development within the Portage service. New PHV's are required to complete a 'Core Competency' file as part of their supervision. This covers 5 main areas - Family Partnership, Multi Agency working, Continuing Personal Development, Continuing Professional Development and Planning, Recording and Sharing Activities. They work under direct supervision until they have completed their file and have received the certificate for this. (For North Tyneside this may take in excess of 12 months because the team members may only work for Portage one day each week)

All PHV's are expected to undertake relevant Training Opportunities offered through the NPA, Local Authority, Beacon Hill or their own work settings. Training records are held as part of their Individual Supervision files.

6. Child Protection - Refer to Beacon Hill Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 & NPA Code of Practice 2006

The Service follows the principles developed by North Tyneside Council Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Parents/carers are made aware of the Portage Service commitment to these principles during the Initial Visit. It is agreed with parents at this stage that Portage is a

partnership and as such they are expected to take an active part in the Portage visits. This means that the PHV should not be left alone with a child for any significant length of time.

All members of the Portage Team have up to date Child Protection training. All PHV's have DBS clearance. These are kept on file in the Portage office. All members of the Portage team have received and signed for the Beacon Hill Child Protection Policy dated January 2016.

Where a child is the subject of a Care Order the Service undertakes to attend meetings and/or to provide reports, given reasonable advance notification.

If Portage visitors have concerns regarding children they should initially report their concerns to the Service Manager - ie. Helen Jones or Judith Moore, Deputy Head, who is one of the designated Child Protection officers for Beacon Hill.

Similarly if allegations or suspicions are made against a member of the team these must be reported to the Service manager. Parents/carers will be advised of how to progress this course of action.

7. Complaints against staff - Refer to Beacon Hill Policy Document.

The Portage Service will ensure that the number of complaints received is minimal by ensuring that the Service is operated to the highest professional standards.

This standard will be maintained by:

The Recruitment of suitably qualified staff

The provision of ongoing training

The provision of formalised supervision, monitoring and appraisal systems

Seeking regular feedback from service users

Implementing a procedure for reviewing service policy and practice, both in light of any complaints and as part of a strategic service development plan.

8. Safeguarding of Staff - Guidelines for Home Visitors - Refer also to Lone Working Policy Document (Reviewed 2016)

As Portage is a home visiting service there needs to be agreed, specific guidelines and procedures for members of the team to follow.

Many of these have been drawn from the Beacon Hill Safe Guarding Code of Conduct and the Educational Psychology Service Staff Safety and Security Policy. These documents will be available to read in the Blue file kept in the Portage Resource base for the PHV team to access at any time.

The Head of Service will arrange for training on Lone Working for all members of the team through North Tyneside Council.

All PHV's have a mobile phone provided for them by the Portage service. This is for their use in order to maintain contact with their families, other professionals and contact the Portage office.

All Portage Home Visitors fill in the diary kept in the Portage office to record their home visits and attendance at meetings.

Professional Judgement

All members of the team will:

- Understand the responsibilities which are part of their role and be aware that there may be sanctions if these are breached.
- All adults will act and be seen to act in the child's best interests.
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions or question their suitability to work with children.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with their supervisor.

- Record discussions and actions taken with justifications.
- PHV's will NEVER use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment.

Visits

- The Head of the Service has a timetable to show the visits of each member of the team.
- All members of the team have agreed to text the Portage office when they have completed their visit. This is particularly relevant at the end of an afternoon where the Home Visitor may be going home rather than returning to their place of work. They have been provided with a mobile phone specifically for this.
- PHV's are not obliged to stay in a situation in which they feel uncomfortable. (eg. If the parent they usually visit is not in and they are left alone with an unfamiliar adult) They should use their own judgement in cutting short the visit and leaving at the earliest opportunity.
- If a PHV feels that a visit is likely to be difficult they should discuss this with the Supervisor who may accompany them, if this is appropriate.

Transportation in Cars

- PHV's may on rare occasions be called upon to transport a child in their car. This should always be discussed with a Supervisor first.
- They should NEVER do this alone - preferably always with a parent present.
- PHV's MUST ensure that they have an appropriate car seat in their car and that they are insured for such transportation.

Dress and Appearance

- It is expected that PHV's will dress in a manner appropriate to their work - decently and safely for the tasks they need to perform. (usually sitting on the floor during a home visit)
- No clothes likely to cause offence, misunderstanding or embarrassment to be worn. (eg. Slogans, very revealing etc)
- Out of courtesy PHV's should always ask the family if they should remove their shoes.

Gifts

- It has been agreed that PHV's can send the child they visit a birthday card but are generally advised not to purchase personal gifts.
- Gifts received from families are disclosed to the team at Group Supervision meetings and recorded in the minutes.

Bereavement - Refer to Beacon Hill Policy Document

- A number of children referred to Portage have life limiting conditions.
- PHV's are advised to refer to the Beacon Hill Bereavement policy.
- In the event of the death of a child receiving Portage Home Visits the PHV will contact the Head of Service and either contact the family themselves or request that the Head of Service does this. If they feel able to deal with the situation themselves this is acceptable. However if they feel they require support at this time this is the responsibility of the Head of the Service.
- The Head of Service and/or the PHV will attend the child's funeral and maintain contact with the family via telephone or letter until it is appropriate for this contact to cease.

Lynn Scorer - Head of Portage and Pre-School Home Teaching Service

Reviewed and updated - June 2016