

Home-Start Hertfordshire

Employee Health and Personal Safety Policy

Policy Statement

Trustees of Home-Start recognise and accept their responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions which are safe, healthy and comply with all statutory requirements and codes of practice and to ensure the health and safety of any other person who may be affected by the operations of Home-Start.

Home-Start will endeavour to create and develop a working environment in which there is an awareness of the vital importance of health and safety and which encourages employees to participate in developing and practising safe working methods and to have regard for the safety and welfare of themselves and others.

Board of Trustees

Trustees hold the following overall responsibilities:

- a) The provision and maintenance of a safe place of work with safe access to and egress from it
- b) A working environment that is free from hazard and risk to health
- c) Equipment and systems of work that are safe and free from risk to health
- d) Such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees
- e) Formal systems for identifying hazards and risk
- f) Adequate first aid facilities
- g) Adequate means of preventing and fighting fires
- h) The monitoring and review of the implementation of the health and safety policy
- i) The allocation of overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy to the Manager/Senior Organiser who has authority to delegate responsibility to other employees.

Information and Training

All employees will be informed about, supervised and trained in, health and safety matters including exposure to any identified risks. Changes in the law or circumstances affecting health and safety will necessitate information and/or updates to training. Employees' training will be conducted during working hours if at all possible and may be on a one to one and/or a course.

Senior Worker Responsibilities

The Senior Manager within the scheme has overall responsibility for the implementation of the health and safety policy. He/she will maintain safety records, conduct accident investigations, assessments and inspections and ensure the health and safety policy is implemented and adhered to. He/she will familiarise him/herself with all relevant health and safety legislation in order to advise the board of trustees.

The Senior Manager is responsible for the operational health and safety of employees and will:

- Ensure that on joining the organisation all new employees are provided with adequate information, instruction, training and ongoing supervision in health and

safety matters appropriate to their role, and any specific information appropriate to them. This will include accident reporting, emergency procedures, fire precautions, code of safety practice and location of first aid box.

- Ensure that all employees are familiar with the health and personal safety policy.
- Co-operate with and participate in the investigation of all accidents and conduct of assessments and inspections as required by the board of trustees.
- Within their area of authority, regularly inspect the workplace with regard to the suitability of equipment provided for health and safety of employees, check work methods and practices to ensure safe systems of work.

Employees Responsibilities

The success of the health and safety policy and its implementation cannot be ensured unless there is active co-operation from the employees. All employees have a statutory duty to promote their health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions.

Code of Safety Conduct

All employees:

- Will make themselves familiar with and conform to the health and safety policies and procedures, all health and safety rules and signs, fire precautions and emergency procedures and observe code of safety conduct requirements at all times.
- Ensure that they understand and follow the safe operation of their duties; ask if they do not understand any aspect of these.
- Comply with statutory obligations and requirements of the code of safety conduct requirements.
- Report all accidents, near misses, potential hazards and damage immediately.
- In an emergency ensure that the police/emergency services are summoned
- Shall not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of safety.
- Not act in a way that could endanger themselves or others
- Shall use any equipment provided in accordance with the training and instruction that they have received.
- Not run, especially on stairs or steps. Use handrails; never read while walking.
- Keep work areas tidy and clear of obstructions; do not leave things lying around.
- Clean up any spilt liquids, tracked in rain, etc. immediately.
- In the event of being called upon to handle bulky or heavy objects, employees should only lift or move what they can easily manage; always bend their knees and keep their back straight, taking the stress in their legs, not their back. Call for assistance if in doubt.
- Employees should not overreach, climb on anything not meant for the purpose; use a ladder, ensuring that it is in good condition.
- Notwithstanding that electrical equipment is regularly checked and is normally safe when properly used, ensure that they:
 - Never touch electrical equipment with wet hands
 - Disconnect electrical equipment before moving it
 - Never attempt electrical repairs unless authorised
 - Keep electrical supply cables and wires away from wet areas or from where they could be walked over, etc.
 - Switch off equipment if not in use; disconnect from the mains outside normal hours unless instructed otherwise.

Risk Assessment

Regular and systematic inspections and risk assessments of all potential hazardous substances and work activities will be made by, or under the authority of, the Trustees and senior worker who will take into account all the relevant regulations and codes of practice.

Specialist advice will be obtained if necessary and the risk assessment will be reviewed periodically. The significant findings will be recorded and appropriate preventative and/or protective measures taken as necessary.

Administrative Arrangement's for First Aid and Accident Reporting

First Aid

During the induction programme employees will be shown the location of the first aid box available at all relevant premises, along with the contact details for named first aiders/ appointed persons.

Accident Reporting

- All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the senior worker. An accident report form will be completed (near misses, potential hazards and any damage must also be reported immediately).
- All accidents (near misses, potential hazards or damage) will be investigated by the Senior Manager who will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent a recurrence. The Senior Manager must inform the Trustee Board without delay.
- The Trustee Board will notify the appropriate authorities where necessary.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

In order to optimise the use and application of DSE whilst safeguarding the health, welfare and job satisfaction of those involved in operating such equipment the following should be observed:

- Upon recruitment to jobs involving a significant amount of VDU work employees will be advised to have an eye test, the cost of which will be reimbursed to the employee. Where an employee is advised that glasses are needed, these must be obtained and worn. This procedure will also apply to current employees. All VDU users are reminded that regular check-ups are advisable and should not be neglected. *In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for an employee to obtain spectacles for use in VDU work that differ from those worn at other times. Where this is the case, the scheme will meet the cost of basic spectacles obtained for use at work.*
- Where the employee's workload includes the operation of a VDU as well as other duties, they should organise their working time so that VDU work is interspersed with other activities whilst maintaining an acceptable level of efficiency and productivity.
- Employees engaged on intensive VDU work will be allowed a 10 minute break following 2 hours of continuous VDU operation.
- Adapt the furniture to fit your body. The lower back needs support; adjust the backrest if necessary. Place feet flat on the floor or use a footrest and use a document holder if necessary.
- Adjust the VDU to increase your comfort. The top should be just below eye level. Contrast and brightness may be adjusted for your individual preference. Position the VDU at a 90° angle to windows if possible.

- Dim the lights or adjust blinds/curtains if necessary but do not make the room too dark.
- Look into the distance periodically – at something at least 60 cm (20 feet) away.

Fire Safety and Precautions

Employees must ensure:

- They have read and familiarised themselves with the Home-Start Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
- They are aware of the fire instructions relating to their area of work
- They know what to do in case of fire
- They know where the alarms are located
- They are alert to anything that could be a potential fire hazard, reporting any such hazard to their manager
- They know where the fire fighting appliances and equipment are located, the various types and how to use them.

Nominated Fire Officer and Deputy Fire Officer Roles

A nominated fire officer and deputy fire officer will hold additional responsibilities in the case of a fire alarm being raised or discovering a fire. Details will be outlined in writing and as a minimum will include:

In the event of a fire any meeting in the meeting room people will have signed in on the form provided in the red box on the wall. The group leader will be responsible for bring the form with them in the event of a fire and giving to the staff member who is the nominated fire office, in most case this will be Di Shilton.

Alcohol and drug abuse

Over-indulgence in alcohol and drugs can lead to dependency and resultant health problems. It can impair an individual's performance at work, adversely affecting the efficiency of the organisation and jeopardising the safety of others. Senior workers/employees/trustees who identify potential sufferers are required to advise the Trustee board of their concerns.

Employees will familiarise themselves with the adopted Drug and Alcohol policy.

Employees or volunteers are not to consume alcohol or drugs, nor be under their influence, on the organisation's premises. In the event of an employee failing to comply with this rule, it is likely to result in dismissal without notice.

Blood born viruses (BBV)

Home-Start will not require or seek information from staff or volunteers as to whether they suffer from a BBV. If any such information comes to light it will not affect their involvement with Home-Start beyond their own health limitations and the information will be held in strictest confidence.

Smoking

In line with smoke free legislation of 2007 smoking is not permitted at any of the scheme operated premises.

E cigarettes

E cigarettes, personal vaporizers and electronic nicotine delivery systems fall outside the

scope of smoke free legislation as the act of smoking requires a substance to be burnt. However, although outside the legislation, the smoking of E cigarettes will be treated in the same way as smoking cigarettes. This is because it is not known whether the vapour from E cigarettes poses a potential health risk for others through passive consumption (like passive smoking) as the long term health effects of E cigarettes are unknown.

Mobile Telephones

- When travelling, employees should be free from using the phone and mobile phones should therefore be switched off whilst driving a car. It's illegal to ride a motorcycle or drive using hand-held phones or similar devices. The rules are the same when stationary at traffic lights, queuing in traffic or have pulled over to use a phone with the car engine still running.
- Use of the mobile phone with a hands free facility is also not recommended as it can cause distraction and lack of concentration.
- Phones should be set up to take messages which can then be checked at the start or end of a journey when the car is parked.

Volunteer Safety

- Volunteers will only visit a family following an initial visit by the co-ordinator.
- Volunteers will not be placed with families where there is a known danger to personal safety. A question will be asked at the referral stage to establish if there are any known hazards to personal safety e.g. dangerous dogs, violent partner
- Volunteers will only visit families who have specifically and willingly requested a Home-Start volunteer and where all adult members of the household consent to Home-Start involvement
- Volunteers will be immediately withdrawn from visiting a Home-Start family if a potentially dangerous situation develops or is feared to develop
- Volunteers will be fully supported with any personal safety concerns.

Travel

It is important that employees:

- Ensure someone knows and can easily determine their whereabouts and their expected time of return to home or office.
- Try to use the same "known" travel routes where possible, avoiding isolated areas if they can.
- Keep activities confined to daylight hours wherever possible
- If concerns about safety develop, stay alert and get help as quickly as possible. Car doors should be locked. If help is needed, drive to a police station or garage forecourt. Do not leave the car unless absolutely necessary.
- If on foot, try to walk with someone else and be as visible as possible. Be aware of possible places of safety to head for if trouble develops.
- Always take a common sense approach and pay attention to the gut reaction

Personal Safety

It is the policy of Home-Start to ensure that everyone in the scheme is aware of and fulfils their responsibilities for safety from violence or harassment at work.

To this end, Home-Start will:

- Adhere to the adopted Violence and Harassment at work policy and procedure
- Conduct a regular analysis within the organisation to identify risk, hazards, problems or patterns or other issues and introduce as required, preventative measures to minimise the risk of violence or harassment at work.

- Make all employees aware of the Violence and harassment at work policy and personal safety policy and their responsibilities within it.
- Provide after care procedures such as counselling and time off work.
- If necessary train staff to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities under the policy and protect them at work.

All employees must:

- Adhere to the Violence and harassment at work policy.
- Take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omission.
- Use sensible measures to ensure their safety when working alone, travelling to keep appointments with people they have never met.
- Attend training events such as those concerned with the policy.
- Not endanger themselves or their colleagues. In particular, they are warned against using provocative language or gestures towards fellow employees or members of the public.
- Not put at risk his or her life or the lives of others whilst attempting to prevent an act of violence.
- In an emergency ensure that the police/emergency services are summoned.
- If subjected to any violence whatsoever (including verbal abuse, threats and actual physical assault) must complete a report form at the earliest possible opportunity and return it to their manager.

Home-Visiting

Employees should always:

- Be assertive about any personal safety issues arising in a home. Ask for the householder’s co-operation in their personal safety, e.g. keeping a dog in another room during a visit, ascertain who else may be in the home
- Read the signs as early as possible. If a potentially dangerous situation is developing, they should leave as quickly as possible. They should not attempt to referee a domestic conflict situation.
- Contact the relevant emergency services if necessary.
- Consider if there are any child protection implications and follow child protection procedures
- Report any incidents immediately to their manager, seeking support and guidance for your own needs
- Consider, with their manager, the feasibility of any continued contact with a family or a volunteer.

Home-Start endeavours to ensure that all employees are kept safe and healthy while performing their role. None of the following guidance is meant to override common sense or instinctual reactions or to cause alarm. The personal safety of the employee is of primary consideration.

Date policy adopted: _____

Signature of Chair: _____

Date policy to be reviewed: _____