



Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk (Home-Start)

Employee Health and Personal Safety Policy

History of Document

Issue no.	Author	Date Written	Date approved by board	Comments/ Updates made
1	CR & AD	08/07/2019	24/07/2019	

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/s 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 Manager Responsibilities

The Senior Manager/s within the Organisation have overall responsibility for the implementation of the health and safety policy. They will maintain safety records, conduct accident investigations, assessments and inspections and ensure the health and safety policy is implemented and adhered to. They will familiarise them self with all relevant health and safety legislation relating to their role in order to advise the board of trustees.

The Senior Manager/s are 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.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are expected to abide by the health & safety policy and procedure put in place in Home-Start premises and activities. Any issues they believe could adversely affect the safety and wellbeing of others should be reported as soon as possible to their manager or co-ordinator.

Code of Safety Conduct

All employees & volunteers:

- 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 / volunteers 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/ volunteers 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 Manager/s. 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 Managers who will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent a recurrence. The Senior Managers 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 DSE 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 DSE 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 DSE 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 DSE as well as other duties, they should organise their working time so that DSE work is interspersed with other activities whilst maintaining an acceptable level of efficiency and productivity.
- Employees engaged on intensive DSE work will be allowed a 10 minute break following 2 hours of continuous DSE 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 DSE to increase your comfort. The top should be just below eye level. Contrast and brightness may be adjusted for your individual preference. Position the DSE 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 and volunteers must ensure:

- They have read and familiarised themselves with the Home-Start Health & Personal Safety Policy and Procedures and the Home-Start Fire Safety Policy
- 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.
- Keep fire exits, routes and access to firefighting equipment clear from any obstructions; do not wedge fire doors open
- Keep your working area free of waste as far as possible and in particular those areas which are not easily accessible, e.g. under desks, behind radiators, etc. Keep all combustible materials a safe distance from heating appliances and do not place anything on heaters

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:

- You will be expected to ensure that all staff within the office have successfully evacuated the building.
- Where it is safe to do so you will be expected to check all the rooms within the building to ensure they have been successfully evacuated. Do not open a door if you suspect a fire is behind it.
- You must telephone the Fire Brigade to report the fire.
- Prevent people re-entering the building until it is safe to do so.
- Know the location of the fire alarms and fire appliances.

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 Manager/s /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

- To ensure the safety of staff and volunteers, families who have been involved with children's services, social care or a self-referral the initial visits to families will be risk assessed by the Family Manager with information given by the referrer before allocating to a designated co-ordinator. Then will advise whether the initial visit should be undertaken by 2 workers.
- Volunteers will only visit a family following an initial visit by the co-ordinator.
- We undertake personalised risk assessments on each family. This ensures that we are able to identify any needs relating to the safety of the children and parents, and pass on any relevant information, as well as supporting families to improve the safety aspects of the environment, and their situation. We are also able to help to ensure the safety of volunteers working with the family.
- If the risk assessment changes the coordinator should alert the Scheme Family Manager that the risk level has changed.
- If a family is classed as a high risk the times and dates of visits are made known to staff.
- 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 must agree a visiting day and time with their family. The coordinators must be informed and the information recorded on the Section 2 form. Should this change for any reason then the office must be informed immediately.
- 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
- Also refer to the Travel policy

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/ volunteers 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 and volunteers 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 and volunteers 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.

Stress Management

It is the aim of Home-Start to ensure that all employees and volunteers are kept safe and healthy at work and are not subjected to excessive workloads, onerous working practices or a detrimental working environment which might, if unchecked, cause the employee stress. See Employee Wellbeing Policy for more detailed information.

Home-Start endeavours to ensure that all employees and volunteers 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: August 2021

Signature of Chair: *C Read* C Read

Date policy to be reviewed: July 2022

Appendices

Appendix 1 GENERAL PREMISES SAFETY

Premises

Office and shop accommodation within Home-Start is generally considered “low risk” in health and safety terms. However, hazards are still present in these environments. In order to reduce or eliminate accidents in the workplace the following guidelines should be observed:

- Electrical leads should not be allowed to trail where someone may trip over them. Power outlets should be switched off overnight.
- Drawers in desks and filing cabinets should not be left open. Filing cabinets can become top heavy if more than one drawer is open. Heavy materials should be kept in bottom drawers of filing cabinets. If this is inconvenient, take care to open only one drawer at a time.
- Gangways and passages should be clear.
- Employees and volunteers should report to their supervisor any defect they are aware of in floors.
- Care should be taken when climbing or descending stairs. No running is permitted.
- Shelves should not be overloaded
- Where it is necessary to move heavy office equipment such as computers, etc. care must be taken to avoid personal injury and if necessary assistance should be sought.
- The greatest cause of absence from work is back trouble. Employees and volunteers must take special care to control their posture especially when sitting down. An upright position should be maintained if possible and the chair should support the small of the back. Anyone experiencing problems with their chair or adjustment of seating position must seek further advice and guidance
- If working outside the main office area, perhaps in the garden, then additional risk assessments will be required.

Exits and Routes

In an emergency, the building may need to be evacuated quickly – in the event of a fire for example. It is therefore vital that all exits and routes are maintained free of obstructions at all times and that the following guidelines are observed:

- boxes or equipment should not be abandoned in corridors, or directly in front of fire doors.
- Fire Doors should not be propped open, they are designed to restrict the spread of fire.
- Extra care must be taken on staircases especially when carrying objects.

Storage and Stacking

- Heavier items should be placed on lower shelves and lighter items on higher shelves and heavier items under lighter ones.
- Materials should be stacked securely, not too high and cross stacked making sure they will not topple or overhang and that no sharp edges stick out.
- Articles should not be stacked or stored causing an obstruction to fire exit routes.
- Employees and volunteers should never stand on balanced boxes or chairs to reach stored items.
- When removing items from a stack the top items should always be removed first and safety steps used as necessary.

Appendix 2 LIFTING AND HANDLING LOADS

Lifting and handling loads incorrectly can cause serious injury including twisted and torn muscles, dislocation and bone fractures, slipped discs and hernias in addition to general fatigue.

All employees and volunteers should observe the following good handling techniques:

- **Examine the object** – for size, shape and weight. Decide how and where to hold. Check for grease, oil and sharp edges.
- **Clear your path** – of obstructions and tripping hazards.
- **Know** – where and how you will let the object down.
- **Get help** – if you have any doubts about lifting objects, don't do it !
- Employees and volunteers should be aware of their own limitations. Lifting or moving an object should not be attempted unless the employee or volunteer is absolutely sure that it is within his/her capabilities. When under pressure at work it is easy to take on more than you can safely handle.
- Lift smoothly, avoid jerky motions and look for alternatives for lifting, pushing or pulling. Wherever necessary use a mechanical aid. Stop work if you feel strain and report to your supervisor immediately.
- Wherever possible try to break down a heavy load, which can be handled more easily. However, it should be noted that several lighter loads may increase the risk if awkward movements have to be repeated.

- Where the centre of gravity is not in the middle of the load it must be handled more carefully to avoid injury. Before you attempt to handle an unfamiliar load try to get an idea of its weight distribution so that it can be handled more safely. The best way to test the load is by lifting up a corner or rocking it.
- Where a load is bulky or unwieldy, for example where it is too large to fit between your knees when you crouch to pick it up from the floor, then it will probably be necessary to get help. Generally, if a load exceeds 75cm in diameter assistance should be sought, as there is an increased risk of injury. It may be possible to break down the load into smaller loads. It must be remembered that both repetitive handling and team handling have their own risks.

Handling Techniques

- **Place the feet :** Stand close to the object – feet should be a little way apart and the leading leg as far forward as is comfortable. This should give a stable and balanced base for lifting.
- **Adopt a good posture:** Stand with shoulders facing the same direction as hips. The back should be straight, knees bent and the load grasped with both hands as near to waist level as possible. Lean forwards a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.
- **Get a good grip:** Grasp the object firmly, always try to hook fingers under the load to make sure your grip won't slip as this is less fatiguing than keeping fingers straight.
- **Lift with the legs:** Stand up slowly and slowly straighten legs. After they are straight, bring the back to a vertical position. Lift smoothly and avoid jerky motions.
- **Hold the object close:** Keep the heaviest part of the load as close to the body as possible. When changing direction, move the feet rather than twisting the body.
- **Put down before adjusting:** Place load and then move into the desired position.
- **Lifting Overhead -** Avoid lifting objects above shoulder height. Where it is necessary to lift objects overhead, a platform or sturdy ladder should be used. Never use a chair or a box. If in doubt, always get help.
- **Lifting Heavy Objects -** If an object is too heavy, large or hard to handle, get help. Ensure that one person is the leader, that moving the object is done one step at a time and the load is distributed evenly. On a stairway, the carrier of the lower end of the load should take most of the weight. This is especially hazardous if he or she is also walking backwards.