



Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk

Policy: Looking after children in the absence of their parents

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk that in some situations or circumstances, volunteers may be asked to look after the children without the parents being present.

Context

Home-Start volunteers provide practical and emotional support to help build the family's confidence and ability to cope. Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk allows volunteers to look after children in the absence of their parents in exceptional circumstances.

- Looking after the child/ children in the family's home or garden while the parent is in close proximity
- Accompanying the parent to an appointment e.g. to a Citizens Advice Bureau or to the GP's where there are other adults present (e.g. the doctor's receptionist)

Under no circumstances should the volunteer take the child/ren away from the family home without the parent being present.

Procedures

2.1 The volunteer and family should have the opportunity to get to know each other and where possible the activity should be planned in advance.

2.2 The Co-ordinator will normally have agreed in advance to the activity in discussion with the volunteer and undertaken an appropriate risk assessment.

2.3 Risk assessment includes arrangements (if appropriate) for transporting the children and their accompanying parent and signed permission is obtained from the parent where possible.

2.4 The family record and volunteer diary records the activity and reason for the arrangement.

2.5 The Co-ordinator ensures that the volunteer has the necessary information from the parent, including emergency contact details and medication if necessary (e.g. inhaler).

2.6 The volunteer will be clear about how and who to contact at the scheme if they have any concerns, *including* if the activity happens out of office hours.

2.7 Volunteers will not be permitted to invite the family they support to their own homes.

2.7 Unaccompanied children will never be taken to the volunteer/staff member's house.

2.8 Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk will ensure this policy and procedures are explained to all new volunteers and staff during the prep course or induction and regularly referred to during supervision/ongoing training.

Date policy adopted: 3 July 2017

Signature of Chair: C Read

Policy to be reviewed as Scheme circumstances or legislation requires