

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

The Trustees of Home-Start North West Kent 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 NW Kent.

Home-Start NW Kent 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 all employees to participate in developing and practising safe working methods and to have regard for the welfare of themselves and others.

2. PROCEDURE – ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees delegate the following responsibilities to the senior member of staff.

1. The provision and maintenance of a safe place of work with safe access to and egress from it
2. A working environment that is free from hazard and risk to health
3. Equipment and systems of work that are safe and free from risk to health
4. Such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees at work
5. Formal systems for identifying hazards
6. Adequate first aid facilities
7. Adequate means of preventing and fighting fires
8. The monitoring and review of the implementation of the health and safety policy

MANAGERS

All managers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff and will :

- Ensure that all new employees are given induction in health and safety matters appropriate to their duties, including accident reporting, emergency procedures, fire precautions, code of safe conduct and location of first aid box
- Ensure that all employees are provided with adequate information, instruction, and supervision to ensure health and safety of employees and volunteers

- Ensure that all employees are familiar with this health and safety at work policy
- Co-operate with and participate in the investigation of all accidents and conduct of assessments and inspections
- 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

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.

All employees :

- Shall make themselves familiar with and conform to the health and safety policy and observe safety rules at all times
- Will work safely and efficiently and with due regard for the health, safety and welfare of others including the public
- Report accidents and incidents promptly that may lead to injuries
- Report all unsafe conditions that may arise
- Co-operate with management when accidents require investigation
- Comply with statutory obligations and requirements of the codes of practice
- Shall not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of safety
- Shall use any equipment provided in accordance with the training and instruction that they have received

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

1 FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

First Aid

During the induction programme employees will be made aware of the location of the first aid boxes available at all offices. Names of first aiders and appointed persons together with information on how to contact them will be given to the employee as part of their induction pack.

Accident Reporting

- All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the relevant line manager/HR Manager who will complete an accident report form (near misses, potential hazards and any damage must also be reported immediately)
- All accidents (near misses, potential hazards and damage) will be investigated by the manager who will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent a recurrence. The manager must inform the board of trustees
- The trustees will notify the appropriate authorities where necessary

2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Procedures

On discovering a fire you should:

- 1 Leave the building by front door if possible (if not, back door)
- 2 Ensuring all in premises leave
- 3 Call for help

• 3 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Potential fire risks need not be dangerous provided that some simple but important precautions are observed by all employees

- Memorise the evacuation procedure, your emergency exit and assembly point in case of fire
- Familiarise yourself with the position of fire fighting equipment and the correct method of operation of extinguishers and never interfere with, or misuse, the fire equipment
- Keep fire exits, routes and access to fire fighting 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, eg under desks, behind radiators, etc. Keep all combustible materials a safe distance from heating appliances and do not place anything on heaters
- There is to be NO SMOKING on the premises (This includes e-cigarettes)
- If you do see anything which may be a fire hazard, correct it yourself if easy and safe to do so, or report it immediately

4 CODE OF SAFETY CONDUCT

A code of safety conduct specifies that all employees should :

- Conform to the health and safety at work policy, all health and safety rules and signs, fire precautions and emergency procedures
- Ensure that they understand and follow the safe operation of their duties; ask if they do not understand any aspect of these
- Report all accidents, near misses, potential hazards and damage immediately

- Not interfere with or misuse anything provided for the health and safety of employees
- Not act in a way that could endanger themselves or others; do not play practical jokes that could impact on the health of others
- Not run, especially on stairs or steps. Use handrails; never read while walking
- Keep their work area tidy and clear of obstructions; do not leave things lying around
- Clean up any spilt liquids, etc immediately
- In the event of being called upon to handle bulky or heavy objects, only lift or move what they can easily manage; always bend knees and keep back straight GET ASSISTANCE if in doubt. Do not overreach; do not 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 :
 - electrical equipment is never operated or touched with wet hands
 - electrical equipment is disconnected before moving it
 - electrical repairs are not attempted unless qualified and authorised
 - electrical supply cables and wires are kept away from wet areas or from where they could be walked over, etc.
 - equipment is switched off when not in use and disconnected from the main outside normal hours unless instructed otherwise
- Information on any specific hazards and precautions will be issued as appropriate. Training in dealing with hazards will be conducted as appropriate.

5 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) – PRECAUTIONS

The following should be observed:

- Employees engaged on intensive VDU work will be allowed a 10 minute break following 2 hours of continuous VDU operation
- 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
- [A decision is required by the board of trustees [Employees are eligible for a free eye test and the necessary voucher should be requested from the Manager]
- Where an employee is advised that glasses are needed, these must be obtained and worn
- 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. A decision is required by the board of trustees. [Where this is the case, and upon submission of the necessary document from the optician, Home-Start can provide a further voucher towards the cost of spectacles]

- 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 20 feet away

6 INFORMATION AND TRAINING

- All employees will be informed about health and safety matters including exposure to any identified risks, such as manual handling. Such information will be given in the event of there being a change in circumstances affecting health and safety, and otherwise will be adapted and repeated periodically where appropriate. If training is necessary this will be conducted during working hours if at all possible and may be on a one to one and/or a course basis.

7 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 Executive and 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.

8 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS 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
- Managers who identify potential sufferers and are required to advise the Chair of their suspicions
- When an employee admits having a problem of this nature and agrees to undergo treatment for it, we will regard the matter in the same way as any other illness and Home-Start will support the individual's efforts to overcome the problem
- Should the individual not co-operate with treatment or suffer a relapse, or if it appears that recovery is unlikely, a warning will be issued to the employee requiring a full recovery. If this does not materialise, then dismissal is likely
- This policy in no way relieves an employee from the requirement not to consume alcohol or drugs, nor be under their influence, on the organisation's premises. Failure to comply with this rule is likely to result in dismissal without notice

9 SMOKING

Smoke-free legislation was introduced in England and Northern Ireland in 2007, banning smoking in nearly all enclosed workplaces and public spaces, following similar bans in Scotland and Wales. Smoking is therefore not permitted at Home-Start offices. Smoking constitutes a fire hazard and can be unpleasant and dangerous for the smoker and colleagues.

▪ E CIGARETTES

E cigarettes, personal vaporizers and electronic nicotine delivery systems are battery operated devices that mimic tobacco smoking and are often used as a replacement for cigarettes and as an aid to stop smoking. They produce a vapour, including flavoured aromas either with or without nicotine, rather than traditional smoke. E cigarettes fall outside the scope of smoke free legislation as the act of smoking requires a substance to be burnt. 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.

10 BLOOD BORNE 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.

11 MOBILE TELEPHONES

When travelling, staff should be free from using the phone and mobile phones should therefore be **switched off whilst driving a car**. Use of the mobile phone with a hands free facility is also not recommended as it can cause distraction and lack of concentration.

The 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. Please read the safety notes from your 'phone use guide as a reminder.

12 PERSONAL SAFETY

- It is the policy of Home-Start to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of and fulfils their responsibilities for safety from violence at work. To this end, Home-Start will :
 - Conduct a regular analysis within the organisation to identify risk, hazards, problems or patterns or other issues
 - Introduce as necessary, preventative measures to minimise the risk of violence at work
 - Make all new members of staff aware of the need for personal safety and their responsibilities within it
 - Provide after care procedures such as counselling (DAS telephone line) and time off work

- Train staff to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities under the policy and protect them at work
- All employees must :
 1. Take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omission
 2. Use sensible measures to ensure their safety when working alone, travelling to keep appointments with people they have never met
 3. Attend training events such as those concerned with the policy
 4. 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
 5. Not put at risk his or her life or the lives of others whilst attempting to prevent an act of violence
 6. In an emergency ensure that the police/emergency services are summoned.
 7. 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

13 STRESS

- It is the aim of Home-Start to ensure that all employees 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. It is also the aim of Home-Start to identify and assist those employees who are suffering from stress, for whatever reason, and finding it difficult to cope by offering reasonable, practical alternatives and support mechanisms
- Employees may seek help themselves from a GP, counsellor or colleague. If it is the employee's belief that their work or the working environment is the problem, the employee is encouraged to raise it with his/her manager. Any such complaint will be dealt with immediately, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate, fully investigated and appropriate steps taken to assist
- An employee may initially not recognise the symptoms of stress. There are a variety of symptoms which may indicate a tendency to stress which has an adverse impact on the employee's work. A manager may recognise symptoms associated with stress and discuss these in confidence with the employee. If an employee experiences any symptoms, for example, if the employee is prone to accidents, constantly feeling drowsy, has an inability to concentrate, feels or becomes violent or aggressive, and experiences mood swings or erratic behaviour, or depression, these may be signs of stress. The employee is encouraged to seek help to identify the cause and take appropriate steps to deal with it