

VOLUNTEERS' HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

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Home-Start South Leicestershire

VOLUNTEERS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Overriding principles

- The Trustees of Home-Start South Leicestershire (HSSL) have *overall* responsibility for the health and safety of the scheme's employees and volunteers.
 - The scheme's staff – and especially the Coordinators - have *day-to-day* responsibility for the health & safety of the scheme's volunteers.
 - Any health and safety concerns that a volunteer has – either for themselves or for someone in the family they are supporting - must be shared with their Coordinator.
 - The safety of all volunteers engaged in Home-Start activities is a paramount concern for HSSL.
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- At their Initial visit, your Coordinator always carries out a risk assessment of the health and safety issues (actual or potential) for each family referred for support. S/he will discuss these with you so that your decision regarding taking on a family is an informed one. Should you identify any health and safety issues yourself (either specific or potential) then speak to your Coordinator who will discuss with you measures to combat or minimise the risks both to your health and safety and/or to the family.
 - Never attempt to do anything in your volunteering work that is of a dangerous nature. Never 'volunteer' to undertake duties outside your role as a Home-Start volunteer without consulting your Coordinator. If you are unclear as to whether you should be helping a family in a particular way, ask your Coordinator.
 - A family's home can never be entirely free of hazards but an awareness of the importance of safety matters, together with care and consideration can reduce risks to a minimum.
 - You must report all accidents, including near misses. It is essential that the Coordinator is aware so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure your safety and that of others.
 - Always report a change of circumstances, either in your own life or in the family you are supporting, which could impact on your role with Home-Start.
 - **Smoking:**
 - Volunteers are required not to smoke at the homes of families, even if a family member does or offers you a cigarette
 - If you are not a smoker and someone in the family is, the Coordinator will discuss with the family how best to prevent or minimise your exposure to smoke. Volunteers have the right to say they do not wish to support a family where a family member smokes.
 - **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.

- **Alcohol and drug abuse**
 - Volunteers are not to consume alcohol or drugs, nor be under their influence, on the organisation's premises or in a family's home.
- **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.
- **Infectious diseases:**
 - If a volunteer has an infectious disease, it must be reported in confidence to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will consider whether any extra special measures are necessary to ensure the health and safety both of the volunteer and the family supported. The disclosure of an infectious disease will not of itself preclude the volunteer from taking up their role as a home-visiting volunteer.
 - If there is someone within the family who has an infectious disease, this information will be disclosed to the volunteer if the health and safety of the volunteer cannot be reasonably met without disclosure. Any disclosure will be discussed and agreed with the family.
 - All volunteers must adopt sound hygiene practices at all times when volunteering with Home-Start to minimise the risk of spreading infection.
- **Administration of medication:** this should be carried out by a parent, not the volunteer. There may, however, be occasions when it is necessary for a volunteer to administer medication. Staff and volunteers may administer non-prescription drugs or medicines if a parent is not available to do so. A volunteer may administer prescribed drugs or medicines to a child only in an emergency (ie when there is a threat to life). Home-Start's insurance covers both these activities, and the provision of First Aid.
- **Driving:** it is against the law to use a mobile phone when driving. Under no circumstances must volunteers use their mobile phone when volunteering with Home-Start. Using a hands-free facility is also not recommended as it can cause distraction and lack of concentration.
- **Transporting families:** It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure that your motor vehicle is roadworthy and that you are properly insured to transport families. All volunteers are required to confirm on your monthly expense claim form that your vehicle is insured, taxed, has a current MOT certificate, that your car is maintained in a roadworthy condition and that you hold a valid driving licence. As a volunteer you will need to notify your insurance company of your work (see model letter in this pack).
- **Seat belts/car seats:** Volunteers must comply with the law concerning this (see RoSPA guidance in this pack). If you are transporting a family in your car, it is advisable to use the family's own

car seat. Always ask a family member to install the seat in your car as s/he will be familiar with its installation. A car seat can be borrowed from Home-Start in which case you will need to check the appropriate installation guidance before installing the seat in your car.

- **Violence:** See attached personal safety guidance for if you should encounter this.
- **Animals:** You will be advised by the Coordinator when you are offered a family if there is a possibility of contact with an animal/s during your family visits. If this is a matter of concern for you, you will not be placed with the family unless appropriate measures can be put in place to extinguish or reduce the risk of contact. If an animal is present during a visit:
 - Be assertive – ask for the householder's co-operation, eg by keeping the animal in another room
 - Announce your visit and check that safeguards are in place
 - Report any concerns you have to your Coordinator
 - Be aware that family pets may be unpredictable. Not all pets appreciate being patted and stroked.
- **Lifting and Handling:** Volunteers should be aware of their own limitations. Lifting or moving an object should not be attempted unless you as the volunteer are absolutely sure that it is *within your personal capabilities*. When under pressure it is easy to take on more than you can safely handle. This is an issue that each individual volunteer must consider according to your own physical health needs. Care should be taken when handling carrying cots, car seats, toddlers and babies. Feel - THINK - Do!
- **Looking after children in the absence of their parents**
See policy enclosed in this pack
- **Lone Visiting:**
 - always carry a mobile phone with you
 - always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return
 - If your plans change, inform someone as soon as possible
 - do not carry with you any valuables or large sums of money
 - trust your intuition – if you feel scared or uneasy, do not ignore these feelings
 - avoid dark unlit areas
 - avoid visiting at night
 - take care where you park – always have your car keys ready before you leave the house of the family
 - do not make impromptu visits.
- **Maternity** – if you become aware you are pregnant, please advise the Coordinator of your condition. Such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Coordinator will assess what adjustments, if any, need to be made to your volunteering role to ensure that any additional health and safety issues are addressed.
- **Stress:** Volunteering can be very rewarding. But it can also on occasions be stressful. If you do feel you are becoming stressed, distressed or upset following a family visit, then discuss your feelings with your Coordinator who is there to support you. It is very important that you do this – the need for support within Home-Start is built in at every level.

Child Seat and Seat Belt Laws

Children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles must be carried in an appropriate child seat from birth until they are at least 135cm (4'5") tall or 12 years old, whichever comes first. There are very few exceptions. They must then use a seat belt (although it would be preferable to use a booster seat until they are 150cm (5') tall).

Children under 3 years

Children under 3 years old must use an appropriate child seat in the front or rear of a car. They cannot be carried in a car that does not have seat belts because it is not possible to fit a child seat in such a vehicle, unless it is an ISOFix child seat and the car is fitted with ISOFix points into which the child car seat fits. However, vehicles with ISOFix points will also have seat belts.

It is illegal to carry a child in a rearward-facing baby seat in the front if there is an active front passenger airbag. The airbag must be deactivated or the rearward-facing child seat must be placed in the rear of the car.



Rear-facing



Rear-facing
(lie-flat)



Forward-facing

Children aged 3 years to 135cm tall (approximately 4'5") or their 12th Birthday

Children aged between 3 and 12 years old or who are more than 135 cm tall (whichever comes first) must use an appropriate child car seat when travelling in a car, van or other goods vehicle.



High-backed
booster



Forward-facing



Booster
cushion

Children aged 12 years and over (or younger children over 135cm tall)

Children aged 12 years or older (or younger children over 135 cm tall) must wear a seat belt if fitted in the front or rear of a car, van or other goods vehicle.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under 14 years old use an appropriate child car seat or wear their seat belt.

Exceptions

There are a small number of exemptions for specific purposes.

Unexpected necessity over a short distance

If an appropriate child seat is not available, children over 3 years old may travel in the rear of a car using a seat belt in emergencies and unplanned situations. For example, when someone has to carry a child due to an "unexpected necessity" over a short distance, and where not carrying the child (because a child car seat is not available) might leave him or her at risk.

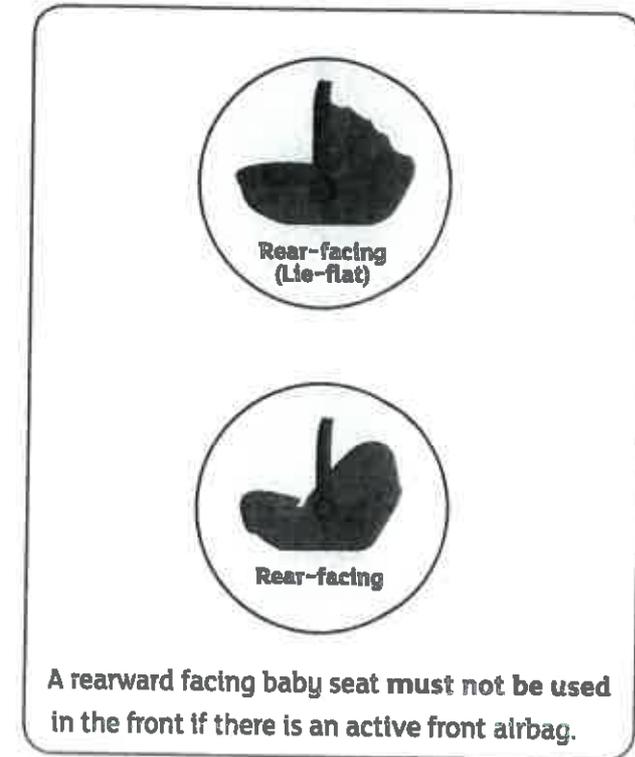
This does not apply to:

- Trips that could have reasonably been planned (e.g., a school run)
- 'Long' journeys
- Children under 3 years old.

You cannot take children under 3 years old in a vehicle unless they are using an appropriate child car seat.

When three child seats cannot be fitted in the rear

If it is not possible to fit three child seats in the rear of a car, then two children up to 135 cm in height must travel in child seats and the third child may use a seat belt on its own. This exemption does not apply to children under 3 years old, who must be carried in an appropriate child car seat.



In this situation it may be better for the third child to sit in a child seat in the front rather than wear the seat belt on its own in the rear. If there is an active passenger airbag, check with the vehicle manufacturer or the car handbook about using a child seat in the front. If you do, move the front seat as far back as possible on its runners to maximise the distance between the child and the dashboard.

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Home-Start
South Leicestershire
(covering the Harborough District)

Dear Sir/Madam

Policy Number:

I am an accredited volunteer working with Home-Start South Leicestershire, which is a voluntary home-visiting scheme. In the course of this work, I occasionally use my car to escort families when carrying out social acts

For such journeys, I am eligible to receive a mileage allowance of 40p per mile. This mileage payment is not for 'hire or reward' – it merely contributes to the cost of fuel.

I should be grateful if you would confirm that my insurance policy covers any Passenger or Third Party claims which might arise out of the use of the vehicle for this purpose.

Yours faithfully

Home-Start South Leicestershire

Personal Safety for Volunteers

- **Volunteers will only visit a family following an initial visit by the Coordinator.**
- **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.**

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 safeguarding implications and follow safeguarding procedures.**
- **Report any incidents immediately to the Coordinator, seeking support and guidance for your own needs.**
- **Consider, with the Coordinator, the feasibility of any continued contact with a family.**

Home-Start South Leicestershire (HSSL)

Looking after children in the absence of their parents

Policy statement

It is the policy of Home-Start South Leicestershire that in some situations or in unforeseen circumstances, volunteers may be asked to look after the children without the parents present. This may involve taking the children out or looking after them in the family home.

Context

Home-Start volunteers provide practical and emotional support to help build parents' confidence and ability to cope. The Home-Start service is primarily about '*being with*' not '*doing to*' or '*doing for*' and it is important to avoid building the impression that the volunteer is able to provide a baby-sitting or child-minding service.

However, HSSL recognises that in some circumstances it will be helpful and appropriate for volunteers to look after the children in the absence of parents. For example:

- Looking after the child/ren in the family's home while the parent/s attend a meeting or appointment
- Accompanying the family to look after the child/ren while the parent/s go into their appointment
- Taking the child/ren out for a short while to the park or library to give the parent a brief break, or to enable a parent or volunteer to spend some focused time with a child
- Giving child/ren some 'special time', which parent/s are unable to offer due to parental physical or emotional ill health.

Procedures

- The volunteer and the family should have had the opportunity to get to know each other - for at least 2-4 visits. Wherever possible the activity should be planned in advance.
- The coordinator will normally have agreed in advance to the activity in discussion with the volunteer and undertaken an appropriate risk assessment which includes arrangements for transporting the children (if appropriate), which may include signed permission from the parent.
- The family record and the volunteer diary records the activity and the reason for the arrangement.
- The coordinator ensures that the volunteer has the necessary information from the parent, including emergency contact details
- 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.
- HSSL recognises that in rare circumstances an urgent situation may require that a volunteer takes sole charge of the child/ren without the opportunity of discussing it with the coordinator in advance. In such a situation the volunteer will record on the volunteer diary the reason and circumstances for the event and inform the coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity by phone.
- The coordinator will undertake any appropriate follow-up review with the family and/or discuss in supervision with the volunteer.
- Volunteers are not permitted to invite the family they support to their own home.

SEE OVER FOR VOLUNTEERS CHECKLIST

Home-Start South Leicestershire

Looking after children in the absence of their parents

A Checklist for Volunteers

NB: Volunteers are not permitted to invite the family they support to their own home.

The coordinator agrees the arrangements with the volunteer and family

The volunteer ensures s/he has the following information:

- **Where the parent/s are going**
- **A phone number to contact the parent/s (ensure your phone is charged before your visit)**
- **An agreed time that the parent/s will return**
- **An alternative contact number for the volunteer should the parent/s be late**
- **A contact name and telephone number in case of an emergency if the parents cannot be contacted**
- **Location of the home telephone number if the volunteer does not have or wish to use their own mobile**
- **Information on where clean clothes and nappies are kept if needed**
- **Clarity on what the child/ren are allowed to eat/drink, and when**
- **Where the children are allowed to play, eg in the garden, in the bedroom, on the path outside (if there are older children)**
- **Whether the child/ren have any special needs and the preferred way of dealing with their needs.**

The volunteer should negotiate clearly:

- **How long they are prepared to stay (it is NOT admissible to stay overnight)**
- **How often they are prepared to offer this support**

It is important that the child/ren know they are being left with the volunteer