

### **Policy Statement**

Home-Start Herefordshire is committed to promoting and protecting the reputation of Home-Start and to ensuring that all those associated with Home-Start are treated with respect and confidentiality.

The use of telecommunications including the e-mail system and the Internet within Home-Start Herefordshire is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates communication, promotion of the scheme and efficiency. This policy provides guidance on the correct use of email and the internet and explains the scheme's response to inappropriate use.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Home-Start Herefordshire's Online Presence**

- 1.1 The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that Home-Start Herefordshire's online presence on any sites and servers does not breach our policies and procedures and that the scheme's good reputation is maintained.
- 1.2 Content for social networking sites is uploaded and approved by the Scheme Manager.
- 1.3 Privacy settings are set as agreed by the Trustees.
- 1.4 Photographs are only uploaded with the consent of all those pictured, (by parent/carer if it is a child).
- 1.5 Quarterly checks that the website / social networking site content is appropriate and up to date are undertaken by the Chair of Trustees.
- 1.6 The Home-Start corporate identity is used correctly and identifies the site by the scheme name and logo.
- 1.7 Any complaints that may be brought up on the site are immediately responded via a private communication channel, and follows the scheme's complaints procedure.

#### **2 Telecommunication (including mobile phones), E-mail and the Internet**

- 2.1 The e-mail and the internet is available for communication on matters directly concerned with the activities of Home-Start.
- 2.2 Employees using text messages or the e-mail system should adopt a style and content consistent with the standards expected by Home-Start from written communication and in accordance with the ethos of the organisation.
- 2.3 Text messages or E-mail messages should only be sent to those employees/trustees/volunteers for whom they are relevant.
- 2.4 Text messages or E-mails should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication where this is more appropriate.
- 2.5 If the message is confidential, the employee must ensure that necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality.

- 2.6 Home-Start will not tolerate the use of the system for any of the following:
- sending any message that could constitute bullying or harassment
  - sending any message with an obscene, indecent, racist or illegal content
  - personal use (except where such use has been authorised by the employee's manager)
  - on-line gambling
  - accessing pornography
  - downloading music.
- 2.7 Home-Start may monitor and record e-mail messages and telephone calls to ensure compliance with this policy.
- 2.8 Employees covering the work of colleagues will have access to their e-mails in order to carry out the colleague's duties in the normal course of their duties.
- 2.9 Users must ensure that critical sensitive information is not stored solely within the e-mail system. Hard copies must be kept, or stored separately on the system. If necessary, documents must be password protected.
- 2.10 Users are required to be familiar with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and to ensure that they operate in accordance with the requirements of the Act. (See Data Protection Policy)
- 2.11 Employees who feel they have cause for complaint as a result of e-mail communications should raise the matter initially with their manager. If necessary, the complaint can then be raised through the grievance procedure.

### **3. Trustees and Staff's Personal Use of Social Networking**

- 3.1 Trustees and staff ensure that they do not breach the confidentiality or dignity of colleagues, volunteers or Home-Start families if they discuss Home-Start in their personal blogs or on social networking accounts.
- 3.2 Trustees and staff are encouraged to promote and celebrate Home-Start's successes and news in their personal blogs or on social network accounts within the boundaries of confidentiality and respect as above.
- 3.3 Staff do not engage in personal social networking activities during work hours.
- 3.4 Trustees and staff ensure that they do not bring Home-Start Herefordshire or the wider Home-Start network into disrepute by making inappropriate comments in their personal blogs / social networking accounts.
- 3.5 Home-Start staff do not add any current volunteer (active or resting) as a facebook/social network friend; in order to maintain the appropriate service boundaries.
- 3.6 Home-Start staff and trustees do not add any family referred to or supported by Home-Start as a facebook/social network friend.
- 3.7 Breaches of policies and procedures are treated seriously, and may be addressed through the disciplinary process.
- 3.8 Trustees and staff do not use the Home-Start logo or corporate identity materials on personal websites, blogs or social networking accounts. They may link to and /or endorse official Home-Start sites.
- 3.9 New trustees and staff receive this policy as part of their induction into Home-Start.

#### **4. Volunteers' Personal Use of Social Networking**

4.1 Volunteers ensure that they do not breach the confidentiality or dignity of staff, other volunteers or Home-Start families if they discuss Home-Start in their personal blogs or on social networking accounts.

4.2 Volunteers are encouraged to promote and celebrate Home-Start's successes and news in their personal blogs or on social network accounts within the boundaries of confidentiality and respect as above.

4.3 Volunteers do not add any Home-Start supported family as a facebook/social network friend during the period of their support by the scheme.

4.5 Volunteers do not use the Home-Start logo or corporate identity materials on personal websites, blogs or social networking accounts. They may use and encourage others to use specific Home-Start promotional/ 'supporter' badges as approved and encouraged by Home-Start UK and the scheme.

4.5 Breaches of confidentiality or equal opportunities and diversity policies are taken seriously and may result in the volunteer being asked to leave the scheme.

4.6 New volunteers receive this policy as part of their induction into Home-Start.

#### **5. Previous Links on Social Networks**

Home-Start Herefordshire recognises that in the community it serves, families, volunteers, Trustees and staff may have been friends or acquaintances prior to their involvement with Home-Start. There is no desire to police personal relationships; these procedures are intended only to maintain appropriate service boundaries and to protect the reputation of Home-Start and the confidentiality of those we work with.

Where staff, volunteers or families have existing facebook/social networking friendships with others connected with Home-Start, these may be maintained, but they should not at any time discuss or comment on any operational or confidential Home-Start matters on the network.

Any unauthorised use of e-mail or the Internet, or failure to follow this policy, is likely to result in disciplinary action including summary dismissal.

Signature of Chair: .....

Date policy adopted: November 2013

Date policy to be reviewed: