

## Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham: Looking after Children in the Absence of their Parent/Carer

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham that volunteers do not look after children from supported families outside the family home without the parent/s/carer present. The scheme has agreed the only exception we will allow volunteers to look after children without the parent/carer is when accompanying the family (e.g. to a Citizens Advice Bureau, or to the GPs) to look after children in the waiting room while the parents/s go into their appointment.

#### 1. Context

Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham volunteers provide non-judgmental, practical and emotional support to help build the family's confidence and ability to cope. Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham allows volunteers to look after children (in a waiting room) in the absence of parents whilst at appointments. For example:

- accompanying the family (e.g., to a Citizens Advice Bureau, or to the GP's) to look after the children while the parent/s go into their appointment.

#### 2. Procedures

- 2.1 The volunteer and the family should have had the opportunity to get to know each other, and the activity should be planned in advance.
- 2.2 The co-ordinator will have signed agreement in advance to the activity in discussion with the family and volunteer, and will have risk assessed the relevant circumstances.
- 2.3 The co-ordinator will ensure that the volunteer has the necessary information from the parent, including telephone number.
- 2.4 The volunteer will be clear about how and who to contact at Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham if they have any concerns.
- 2.5 The co-ordinator will undertake any appropriate follow up review with the family, and/or discuss in supervision with the volunteer.
- 2.6 At all times and in all arrangements the welfare and safety of the child should be the prime consideration. Children should feel comfortable and content with any arrangements made for them to be looked after in the absence of their parents.