

## The Friendship Project for Children

We are a voluntary organisation independent of the Children's and Educational Services. We work closely with these services and are supported by them. We aim to help children in need between the ages of 6 and 16, who have been referred to us by Children's Services or via the Early Help system in schools.

We recruit adult volunteers (Older Friends) and carefully examine their suitability to be an Older Friend to a child. We take up two references for each prospective Older Friend and carry out Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks. Older Friends attend regular Safeguarding training and we ensure they understand the need to observe Child Protection guidelines at all times. We brief the Older Friend on the Projects Guidelines and give them a copy of the document. We will have visited the Older Friends home to check for suitability, if they have told us they might like to take your child there. We will ask you, and the Older Friend, to sign an agreement to work together for the good of your child and to keep each other informed of times of outings, activities, venues and progress of the friendship.

The Older Friend for your child will call once a week (depending on their availability) and try to interest the child in a variety of simple activities and outings. The Older Friend's role will be to help your child develop interests, confidence and have fun. The Friendship is 'social' in nature rather than 'professional'.

We hope the friendship will also indirectly help you, as the child or young person's parent or Carer but **the sole objective of the project is to provide an Older Friend to your child.** We do not allow our Older Friends to become involved in general family problems. Our Older Friends will, of course, respect any reasonable request from parents/carers - for example, when the child is to be returned home and what activities the child enjoys or does not like.

We allow our Older Friends to claim limited expenses and mileage for the outing. Our intention is that the outing broadens the child's outlook and is in addition to normal family activities. The Older Friend must be satisfied that the activity meets the objectives of The Project. It is difficult to generalise about what would be an 'outing' as every child or young person is an individual. An outing may be: a walk in the park, playing board games, baking, playing football together, going swimming or to the cinema.

We do not expect any difficulties to arise with the friendship. However, if they do and you cannot resolve them with your child's Older Friend by discussion, then you should raise them with the Social Worker or your School contact who arranged the friendship.

**We do hope the friendship will prove a happy relationship for all.**

For further details please view: [www.friendshipproject.co.uk](http://www.friendshipproject.co.uk).



## What you might want to know about the Friendship Project

<b>What are we?</b>	We are a charity and everyone who works for us is a volunteer We find adult friends (Older Friends) to help children We are ordinary people We are not social workers We are not professional helpers
<b>Who do we support?</b>	Children and young people who would be helped by having a little more time with an adult than they get at the moment They can be between the ages of 6 and 16 years old
<b>Who are the volunteers?</b>	They are all 18 or over They have all been trained They have all been DBS checked (Enhanced) They have experience of and enjoy being with children/young people
<b>What do we do?</b>	Our friends will spend a couple of hours each week with the child They will give the child one-to-one attention They will enjoy a range of activities with the child that fit the interests of the befriender and the child or young person
<b>What we do not do</b>	We are a friend to the child, but cannot be a friend to the whole family We do not get involved in family matters
<b>Who pays for what?</b>	Our friends claim basic expenses to pay for outings for the children