



Handbook



Welcome to ESCAPE

This handbook has been devised to introduce you to ESCAPE and everything that we do. We hope to answer all of your questions and provide you with a reference source. If you do have any questions then please do not hesitate to give us a call or an email.

Having a child with a disability can often be isolating, and stressful. Not only are families trying to cope with the day to day (sometimes 24/7) care of their children, they are often having to deal with the 'system' to ensure the best outcomes for them. Siblings, too, miss out on things and are often classified as young carers, but, through joining ESCAPE, members are surrounded by like minded families who know, and can empathise with, what it is like to have a child with specific needs within the family, and can feel relaxed in company where they don't feel they have to justify themselves or their children. They can just be themselves and have fun, which is what Escape is all about.

Is your child disabled? Not all disabilities are visible, and at ESCAPE we acknowledge that, therefore there is no "criteria" for joining. Your child does not need a "diagnosis". If your child is not meeting expected targets that would be usual for their age, or maybe they present more challenges than their peers, whether it be emotionally or physically, and you feel, as a parent/carers, that you would benefit from the support ESCAPE has to offer, you can join us.

We understand that accepting a child has a disability is a lot to process. The emotions alone can be huge. Anger, sadness, blame, grief, amongst others...but Escape aims to help families celebrate the small things as well as joy, individuality, achievements, acceptance...once families are able to look forward, accessing the support available, life should become a little less challenging, and hopefully with us, a lot more fun too!

Disability takes many shapes, and the children we support range from those with mild learning difficulties to non-verbal wheelchair users, from Down's syndrome to children with autism, from sensory processing to visual impairment...we aim to offer support to children with all forms of disability, whether mild or other. All we ask is that all children are supervised at all times when on our outings.

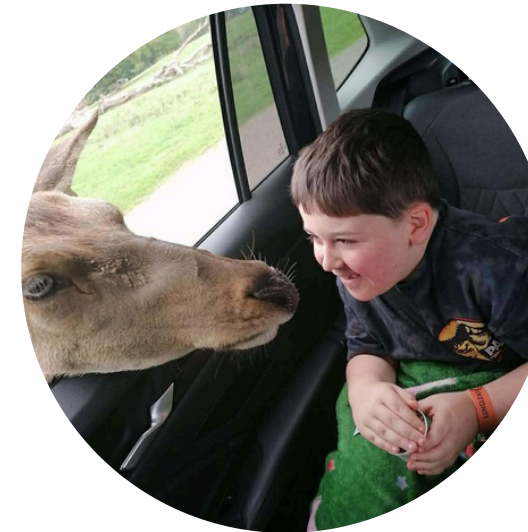


What do we do

- * Weekly day trips during the school holidays (at least one trip every week).
- * Fortnightly swimming sessions (Term Time & in School Holidays).
- * Monthly Coffee & Chat for Parent/Carers.
- * Monthly Hub Club for the whole family.
- * Monthly Young Carer/Sibling Bowling
- * Monthly Family Fun Club
- * Monthly Teen Club
- * Special events during the Christmas period.
- * Carer specific activities.
- * An annual special (usually involves an overnight stay somewhere very special).

See our Website or Facebook page for more details

www.escapesupportgroup.com



escapesupportgroup

ESCAPE trips....who can come?

Increasingly, in this modern age, families come in all shapes and sizes. Similarly, our children are very different, with some needing more support than others.

ESCAPE defines a “family” as up to two parents (or appointed carers), the child registered with ESCAPE, and any siblings living within the household. We class these as “immediate family”.

- In addition families are entitled to book up to two people, who do not live within the family household, to offer support, (e.g. other family members, children’s friends, extra carers) who are also entitled to the subsidy. These people **MUST BE NAMED ON THE MEMBERSHIP FORM AT TIME OF ENROLLMENT/RENEWAL**. Please check T&C’s regarding Responsibility For Children.
- Any booking made for over two additional people will be charged the full cost of the trip, with no subsidy. These bookings also risk cancellation if a space is required for a member (on a full coach for example).

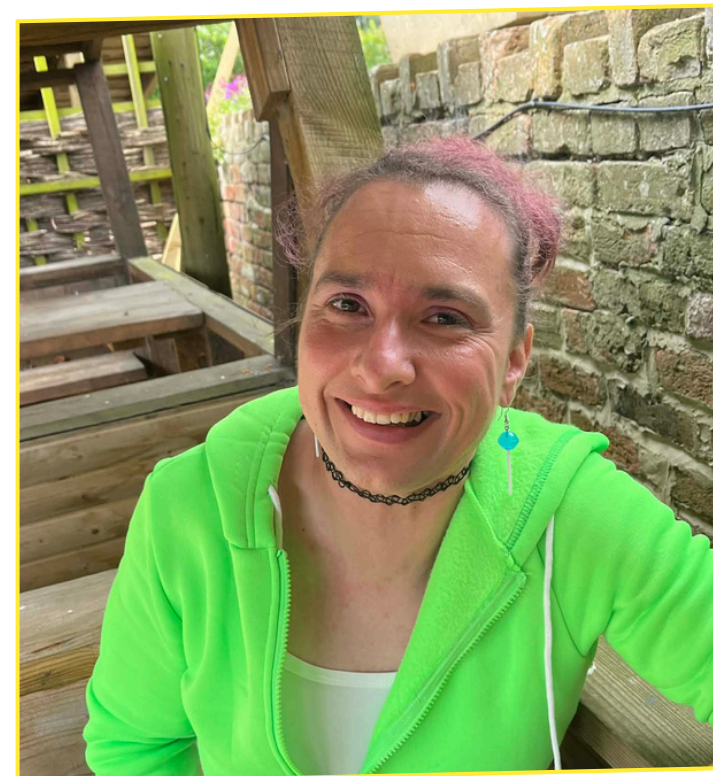
The word "SUPPORT" is written in large, bold, watercolor-style letters. Each letter is a different color: 'S' is purple, 'U' is orange, 'P' is pink, 'P' is light blue, 'O' is magenta, 'R' is teal, and 'T' is green. The letters have a soft, painterly texture with visible brushstrokes.

Office Info

We have four part time staff who work flexi hours both due to the nature of the job and personal commitments.



Debbie



Sarah

Visitors-

Visitors are welcome at any time, but due to circumstances beyond our control there may be days where the office is un-manned. If you want to check before making a special journey, do give us a call first.

Term Time-

As a general rule the office is manned Tuesday to Thursday from 9.30am-2.30pm Term Time. If you call out of these hours please leave a message and we will always get back to you as soon as possible.

School Holidays-

During the school holidays, should you urgently need to contact someone (for example, to inform us that you are unable to make a trip that day so won't be at the coach stop) please text or call the mobile on 07982 712608 - please leave a message if no one replies.

For non-urgent enquiries, if the office is not manned leave a message on 01823 442160 or email the appropriate person, and someone will be in contact with you as soon as possible.

How to book activities &

Once a member, you can access all of the events on offer. All trips and activities must be booked online in advance.

www.escapesupportgroup.com

If ever you need answers please check here first, rather than contacting the office...times and locations for coach pick ups, access and ticket distribution information, links to information about the venues....a whole host of information at your fingertips. Of course, if you cannot find what you are looking for, feel free to send us a message, or give us a call.



We aim to produce a save the date calendar at the beginning of the year so that you can plan your holidays early BUT it is important to keep your eye on our Facebook page, website and our regular email updates, because sometimes due to circumstances beyond our control we have to alter our plans.

We rarely find ourselves unable to fulfil bookings, however if this occurs we will inform you as soon as possible. You can assume that if you have made your booking in advance of the closing date that your place is secure. Closing dates for bookings are highlighted and should be noted, as late bookings will not be taken, although we may advertise spaces after the cut off date if there are coach spaces available.

Where places are limited, i.e. theatre trips, places are allocated on a first come, first served basis. We will always make you aware of such instances.

NO REFUNDS All ticket sales are final and non-refundable. If you can't attend, please email bookings@escapesupportgroup.com as soon as possible — we MAY be able to transfer your ticket to another eligible family or offer your place to someone on the waiting list (subject to availability).

Travelling with us

Transport is provided for all non-local day trips. There are some points to consider when using the transport provided:

- * Collection points - We currently collect from Bridgwater & Taunton as standard pick up points, and will continue to do so. We have offered pick ups from Burnham & Wellington occasionally. As this adds to the time families are on the coach we have decided that any extra pick ups will be subject to the length of the trip and the number of families booking from those areas.
- * Pick up times - are advertised on our website or in subsequent information that maybe emailed out It is your responsibility to get yourselves to the collection point. Please be prompt.
- * Departure times - Once on the coach you will be informed when to return for departure. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THIS TIME BEFORE DEPARTING THE COACH AND ENSURE YOU ARE BACK WHEN REQUESTED. If you are unsure of, or forget, the time, please call the ESCAPE mobile for clarification

* In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our members, please adhere to the strict departure times and be at the coach in plenty of time. Lateness can impact on other members and cause undue stress and anxiety for others.

* Wheelchair accessibility - accessible coaches are available but will only be booked if actually required. Please let us know any specific requirements e.g. wheelchair place needed, can transfer to a coach seat, wheelchair ramp required, cannot go up stairs etc. this can be accommodated as long as we are aware at the time of booking.

* Car Seats - Unfortunately coaches only have lap belts which are often unsuitable for baby car seats. Regulations state that under 2's must sit on the lap of parent/carer

* High Back Booster Seats - If your child is of an age where a seat is necessary (over 2 years) please bring it with you.

* Taking your own car - Some families prefer this and if you are one of them, that's fine, just let us know.

Coach Travel & Etiquette

Coach Leaders - For every trip and on every coach there is an allocated Coach Leader. Please identify yourselves to your coach leader before boarding.

Your Coach Leader may request that you do not board the coach immediately or that you do not choose certain seats. Please be patient with your Coach Leader as they have everyone's best interests at heart. They will be trying very hard to accommodate everyone's needs to ensure that all have a pleasant day out.

On longer journeys seats will generally be allocated, to ensure your family is seated together. On shorter trips, please use your common sense and use up remaining seats, ensuring everyone on the coach is seated near their families, and not split up.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers use the seatbelts provided.

Please take your rubbish home with you, or use the rubbish bags if provided and treat the vehicles with respect. It is parents responsibility to ensure seat belts are worn and that everyone remains seated at all times through out the journey . All children must be accompanied to the toilet, if there is one on board.



****Terms & Conditions of Membership****

At the time of signing up for membership or at annual renewal, members sign and agree to comply with ESCAPE's Terms and Conditions .

Parents/carers are AT ALL TIMES responsible for their own children and at no time should they be left unattended at any ESCAPE activity, including swimming (children/young adults must be accompanied in the pool at all times).

If a child requires 1:1 (or more) support, allowance should be made so all other children within that family group are supervised should the child requiring 1:1 distract from the others' care, whether physically or emotionally. ESCAPE allows members to bring up to 2 support workers/friends/family members at the subsidised price for this reason ONLY, to ensure parents/carers are able to ensure someone has responsibility for all members attending at all times.

The ethos of ESCAPE is to provide a supportive environment and where members require short bouts of support (for example, to be able to go to the toilet themselves at a venue, or to get a wheelchair/pushchair ready from the back of the coach,) staff members will of course provide support for a short time, knowing the parent/carer will not be long, but will not provide "childcare". Members must not ask/expect other members to supervise their children and must be responsible for their own children at all times.

Escape's reputation and acceptable behaviours;

In order to ensure that ESCAPE is welcomed everywhere, parents/carers are expected to be responsible for the behaviour of all persons within their family group (children or otherwise) whilst attending any activity or event organised by ESCAPE

ESCAPE expects members to show respect to each other at all times. This includes staff members, both within ESCAPE and at the venues visited. To date we maintain a high reputation for being a courteous and polite group, and it is most important that we continue to uphold this reputation. Parents and carers are expected to speak in a child friendly manner, restricting the use of language that may cause offence to others. Children should also be encouraged to use appropriate language in front of others.

If it is not possible to meet ESCAPE's Terms and Conditions due to not having support available, members should consider whether that activity/trip is suitable for them, as failure to comply with T&Cs could result in the termination of ESCAPE membership.

COMMITTEE

We are run by a committee of volunteers who each give up their own time to ensure that we run as smoothly as possible. The committee are responsible for overseeing activity planning, membership consultation, staff and office related issues, accounts, fundraising as well as upholding the charity's constitution.

It has three executive officers, the Chair Person, Treasurer and Secretary as well as a number of members. Each committee member is DBS checked and we also have a nominated safeguarding lead. Committee meetings are held approximately three monthly and we hold our Annual General Meeting in June, to which all members are invited.

We always welcome new committee members so if during your time with ESCAPE you feel that you would like to become involved with the ESCAPE committee, then do have a chat with one of us.

Please see website for committee contact information.

ESCAPE is committed to promoting and protecting the well being of all of the children and young people within the membership. Staff and volunteers are carefully recruited and trained but if you have any complaints about their behaviour, please contact the Office Manager or Officer of the committee. Similarly, if a staff member or volunteer has any concerns about the welfare of a child or young person in ESCAPE, action will be taken according to our Child Protection policy.

A copy of this along with all our other policies are available to view at any time, at the office or upon request.



Fundraising

As a charity and to enable us to continue the service that we do, it is vital that we all participate in fundraising opportunities, such as:

- * Quiz Nights, Bingo & Raffles.
- * Supermarket Collecting, Coffee Mornings & Lunches.
- * Participation in locally organised events such as Marathons, Family Fun Runs & Festivals.
- * We have penny jars available for all your loose change as well as collection tins to place on pub/shop counters or anywhere else you feel people may be willing to make a donation.

Taking part in our fundraising events, of course, isn't mandatory, but we do hope that you will be able to support us in some way, no matter how big or small. We have a lot of ideas and are always after new fundraising suggestions, so do let us know if you have any.

You can also raise funds when you search the Web - with easysearch, a search engine with a difference!



Keeping in touch

Webpage www.escapesupportgroup.com.-

Our webpage is being continually updated with the latest news, keeping you up to date, giving you details of forthcoming trips and ensuring you know the date when to book your trips by. You can also book all trips on the webpage using the links. As well as information from various sources that we feel may be of interest to you.

We try to send out as much of our communications by email now in order to keep you informed of any news plus possible last minute opportunities. Links for trips will also be sent by email.

Facebook - www.facebook.com search 'ESCAPE Support Group' and like us !

We keep you updated with various news, upcoming trips and activities, as well as being an area for members to share photos and comments. You can also message us via Messenger.

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