

29. Mobile Phone Policy

Aim

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines.

This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools – which in turn can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes practitioners, volunteers, committee members, children, parents, carers and visitors.

Policy statement

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It is recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

Designated '**mobile free**' areas are those which are considered to be the most vulnerable and sensitive, and include:

- **Baby, toddler and pre-school rooms**
- **Sleep areas**
- **Toilets/changing areas**
- **Bathrooms**
- **Resources room**
- **Kitchens**
- **Outside play areas**

A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal mobiles by staff in these areas, and if this policy is not followed disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

It is therefore ensured that all practitioners:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

Procedures

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

In the interests of equality, and to further promote safety, the guidance applies to any individual who has a mobile phone on site, including parents and visitors.

Practitioners are permitted to bring their mobile phones to work, however they must be stored in their locker. However, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch breaks, and used **offsite**.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched to silent or switched off.

Practitioners are not permitted, in any circumstance to use their phones for taking, recording or sharing images and 'mobile free' areas must be observed at all times.

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any of the designated mobile free areas. Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children in order to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.

Under no circumstances is any individual permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone. Any individual bringing a personal device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Emergency contact

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access particularly at stressful times.

Practitioners, therefore, in agreed exceptional circumstances are permitted to keep the volume of their phone switched on, and store it in the office.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstances request have been resolved.

Staff are able to be contacted on the work landline number.

Authorisation and review

Agreed by:

Authorised signatory:.....

Date:

Date of review: