

Introduction

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections in particular have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Many phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording.

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 or work-related mobile phones on site. This includes practitioners, volunteers, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors, trades man and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

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 also 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 mobiles phones are misused it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of all.

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.

Absolutely NO mobile phones should be in use in the following areas:

- sleep areas
- changing areas
- toilet's and bathrooms.

A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work-related mobiles by any individual in these areas.

Mobile Phone 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.
- Are vigilant and alert to potential warning signs.
- 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.

Personal mobiles

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

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off, stored in the office and signed in and out at break times, calls and texts must not be taken or made during work time.

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.

Practitioners are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting.

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any part of the nursery. Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, please step out side.

Work mobile

The use of a designated work mobile is promoted as it is:

- An essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips.
- An effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- A back-up facility should problems be experienced with the landline - or where contact needs to be made outside of work hours.

The work mobile is very basic, no camera, just the ability to make and receive calls and text. Effective security measures are in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals have access to the work mobile, which is password protected, and stored securely when not in use.

Personal calls are not permitted to be made on the work mobile, other than in agreed exceptional circumstances. Contact or calls can be made via the work mobile in the event of an emergency. All calls are logged.

As well as safeguarding children and avoiding any unnecessary disruptions during the day, this procedure also aims to protect staff against any unfounded allegations.

Cameras

We have a nursery camera which can be used by staff. The images can be loaded in to the nursery IMac for printing and sharing.

Staff have the use of iPads for taking pictures and carrying out observations. These divides are monitored by management and have no email or links for outside sharing. Any breeches in this will be investigated by management.