



## **MOBILE PHONE, CAMERA AND TABLET POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

Having a mobile phone at activities can be beneficial as it means that if there is an emergency it is always possible to contact parent/carers if required, the emergency services and the emergency contacts for employees and volunteers. It is therefore advisable for the activity leader to have a mobile phone with them at all times.

However, cameras and mobile phones do present a safeguarding risk to children at The Family Centre (Deaf Children)'s activities. The risk is that inappropriate/unauthorised images are made and that those in a supervisory position are distracted as a result of making or receiving calls or texts.

### **2. Mobile phones at activities**

#### **2.1 Activity Leader**

The following guidance should be adhered to by the activity leader:

- They should always have a mobile phone with them at activities for emergencies.
- The phone should have sufficient charge to last for the activity and enable calls to be made.
- On arrival they should ascertain if the phone has adequate reception in all areas of the activity, or if a particular location is needed to pick up a signal.
- If their phone is unable to get good reception they should identify a landline or an alternate mobile to be used in case of emergency.
- Phones should not be used to make or receive personal calls or texts whilst on duty, unless:
  - No activity is taking place which requires their supervision – e.g. parents are supervising children/young people at that point.
  - It is important to make or receive a call or text AND a suitably qualified person has taken over the supervision of the activity AND the activity leader has excused themselves from the activity.
  - If it is an emergency and although no suitably qualified person is available to take over supervision, the activity is halted during the phone usage. The duration of the call/text should be kept to the absolute minimum.
- No mobile phone should ever be used to take images (photographs and/or video) at any activity with the following exception:
  - To capture evidence for a health and safety accident, incident or near miss if no other camera is available, and any images of children/young people are supervised by the parent/carer.

#### **2.2 Staff**

The following guidance should be adhered to by other permanent staff:

- Staff are permitted to bring their phones to activities, but ideally they should be switched off.
- Phones should not be used to make or receive personal calls or texts whilst on duty. If it is necessary to make or receive a call or text they should excuse themselves from the activity, having first agreed this with the activity leader.
- No mobile phone will be used to take images (photographs and/or video) at any activity.

### **2.3 Other workers**

The following guidance should be adhered to by sessional workers, professionals, volunteers and trustees:

- Ideally phones should not be brought to activities, if they are they should be switched off.
- Phones should not be used to make or receive personal calls or texts whilst on duty. If it is necessary to make or receive a call or text they should excuse themselves from the activity, having first agreed this with the activity leader.
- No mobile phone will be used to take images (photographs and/or video) at any activity.

This guidance does not apply to trustees that attending activities as service users, who will fall into the guidance for service users below.

### **2.4 Service users**

The Family Centre (Deaf Children) is not in a position to place specific restrictions on mobile phone usage by service users.

However all workers at activities (staff, sessional workers, professionals, volunteers and trustees) should be alert to specific incidences which are inappropriate, such as:

- Phone calls or texts being made or received which interrupt the activity or cause a health and safety risk or a nuisance to other attendees.
- Offensive language being used during phone calls.
- Images being made of children/young people other than:
  - Their own family.
  - General images of the activity – i.e. not of a specific child/young person.
  - Images of non-family members where the parent/carer of any child/young person is present.
  - Images of non-family members, such as group photo, taken openly.
- Any covert or disguised capture of images.
- Any other incidence causing concern.

These should be referred to the activity leader or the senior member of staff present at the activity who will speak to the service user about the appropriateness of their actions.

If there is any concern that inappropriate images have been taken, or attempted to be taken, this should be considered as a safeguarding issue and the Safeguarding Children Policy should be initiated.

## **3. Mobile Phones in the office**

The charity places no restrictions on mobile phone usage in the office, although guidance on personal matters during the working day, covered in the Employee Handbook, applies.

However if children/young people are present as visitors then the office should be considered as an activity and the above guidance applies.

## **4. Cameras and tablets**

The Family Centre (Deaf Children) has a camera which is used to capture images of activities and a tablet which is used at the Deaf Youth Club. These are the only permissible device to be used by charity workers for photography.

Images taken on the charity's camera or tablet may only be downloaded onto the charity's computer(s) and used for legitimate purposes.

Service users may bring cameras/tablets to activities. However all workers at activities (staff, sessional workers, professionals, volunteers and trustees) should be alert to specific incidences which are inappropriate, such as:

- Images being made of children/young people other than:
  - Their own family
  - General images of the activity – i.e. not of a specific child/young person
  - Images of non-family members where the parent/carer of any child/young person is present
  - Images of non-family members such as group photo
- Any covert or disguised capture of images.

These should be referred to the activity leader or the senior member of staff present at the activity who will speak to the service user about the appropriateness of their actions.

If there is any concern that inappropriate images have been taken, or attempted to be taken, this should be considered as a safeguarding issue and the Safeguarding Children Policy should be initiated.

## **5. Use of images**

The Family Centre (Deaf Children) regularly takes photos at activities. These images are used in the following ways:

- To create activity galleries on the charity's website.
- To create albums on the charity's closed family Facebook group.
- On the charity's website.
- On the charity's promotional materials.
- On displays within the office.
- In reports to funders.

All new members (service users) are advised that photos will be taken in their New Members Welcome Pack, what they may be used for, and that they have the option to refuse photographs. It will be made clear at activities, and in promotional materials and joining instructions, that photos are being taken and all families are able to opt out. No photos will be taken covertly.

Where a family refuses their permission to be photographed they should not be included in photos. If a photo has already been taken, it should be deleted.

Images taken at an activity may only be downloaded onto the charity's computer(s). There is no legitimate reason for photos to be copied or downloaded to any other device, and disciplinary action will be taken should this occur.

When using an image in one of the defined ways (see above) it should be carefully considered if it is appropriate.

Any photo that is found to be inappropriate in any way will be permanently deleted immediately.

The Family Centre (Deaf Children) runs activities at public venues and locations, and care should be taken to photograph only those attending with the charity. It is however possible for photos to inadvertently contain individuals that were not part of the charity's group. These photos should be used cautiously as consent cannot be considered to have been given. Ideally these individuals should be cropped from photos, or covered, although this is not necessarily a requirement for long distance photos of adults where it would be impossible to identify the person.

On occasion The Family Centre (Deaf Children) may receive a request from a partner organisation to use one of the charity's photos. The request should be very carefully considered and if it is deemed to be a reasonable request the charity will seek specific permission from everyone in the photo. Written consent should be obtained where possible, and the permissible uses should be put in writing to the partner organisation.

There is no legitimate reason for images captured at the charity's activity to be used in any other way. If any image is found in an individual's possession, or is used in any other way, it is likely to result in disciplinary action.