

Handheld Device Policy – including mobile phones

This policy sets out what is ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ use of mobile phones and other hand held devices during InterAct activities. This applies to all individuals who may be involved in activities – including children and young people, vulnerable adults, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.

It is to be recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many handheld devices that will give the most cause for concern; and which should be considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It must be understood that should handheld devices be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual’s safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not to be considered exclusive to children and young people, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent unacceptable use of mobile phones and other hand held devices and thereby to protect our service users, staff and volunteers from undesirable materials, filming, intimidation or harassment.

General

Mobile phones/hand held devices have many positive uses. However they can be abused, for example the unsuitable use of a mobile phone or hand held device would include:

- Taking photographs or making recordings (without the prior consent of those in the photographs/recordings)
- Placing photographs or recordings on the internet (e.g. social networking sites) without the prior consent of those in the photographs/recordings
- Any activity connected with text / cyber-bullying
- Gaining access to inappropriate internet sites

Mobile phones/hand held devices must not be used inappropriately at any time during activities. A member of staff will confiscate the mobile phone/hand held device should this occur, and report the incident to the Designated Lead for Safeguarding.

Mobile phones/hand held devices brought to activities are entirely at the owner’s risk. InterAct accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or hand held device brought to activities.

Staff use of Handheld Devices and Other Digital Photographic and Recording Equipment

InterAct uses photographs, videos and sound recordings in project reporting and in the promotion of our services online, including via social media, and face-to-face.

- Where feasible, staff will use mobile phones and/or other recording equipment provided by InterAct to do this.
- However, it may be the case that staff members will use their own mobile phones or other devices, to produce material of higher quality, or because InterAct equipment is unavailable or inconvenient to use at the time.

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Should this occur, the staff member(s) should aim to:

1. Produce any appropriate social media content using the material as soon as possible, OR
2. Transfer the photo/video files to a colleague to do so
3. Save the material onto an appropriate secure storage location, so it can be used by InterAct - preferably onto the 'Team Files' or Server, or if that is not possible, onto their InterAct laptop until the files can be transferred elsewhere for any future use. File transfer to a manager's phone or laptop may also be possible.
4. Delete the material from their device, and from any personal computer or cloud-based storage which they use that is linked to it.

Looked After Children (Children in Foster Care, or Other Care Placements) and Adopted Children

Consent is sought and noted for photos/videos of any child/young person participating in InterAct activities, and staff should be made aware of any who have chosen not to give that consent.

Particular care needs to be taken to ensure no identifiable photographs or recordings are made of Looked After Children (and some Adopted Children, when we have been notified by their parents), as these could result in child protection or safeguarding issues.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff leading the activity, and staff members or volunteers taking any photos/videos, to ensure that they are aware of who these children/young people are, so that they do not appear recognisably in any photos or videos which are being taken (intentionally or otherwise).

Staff or volunteers may also need to intervene, as sensitively as possible, to ensure that other young people do not take any photos or videos of those children/young people. They should make it clear which young person(s) are not allowed to be photographed, without giving confidential personal details about the reasons for this.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will reviewed every three years.

Ongoing monitoring of actions and impacts/outcomes will be:

- Feedback via incident reports to Designated Lead for Safeguarding