

## **7 Use of Mobile Phones**

Those whose work with children and young people need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phones and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people.

Leaders must also take care to protect the children in their care and themselves.

- Leaders involved in Squash should only have children's and young people's mobile numbers to use in case of emergency eg if child or young person gets lost while travelling or away at an international event
- Parental permission should be sought if the leader in this role will be contacting children or young people via mobile phone.
- A method of accountability should be arranged e.g. copies of texts could also be sent to the administrator or to parents. Eg Whats App group would always include parents.

### Texting – Communication not Conversation!

- Leaders should use Texts or Whats App to communicate with parents only for the purpose of reminding children or young people about events which are forthcoming.
- In certain circumstances a leader may use Whats App to communicate with children and young people eg an international event to communicate details of event. In such case permission will have been sought beforehand from parents and parents would also be included in the Whats App message.

### **Camera Phones**

Camera phones should be used safely and responsibly. Pictures can be very powerful and stir up strong emotions. Camera phone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

Children/young people should not send pictures that are obscene, indecent, or menacing and should be sensitive about other people's gender identity, sexual identity, racial heritage, religion, or personal background.

Both leaders and children/young people should be made aware that it is a criminal offence to take, make, and permit to be taken, distribute, show, or possess an indecent or sexually explicit image of a child under 18.

See section 5 on Filming and Photography when commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity as well as guidelines on taking photographs at events.

### **Use of Mobile phones during activities**

Leaders, coaches, managers should ensure that children and young people and their parents are aware of appropriate use of mobile phones at training and international events.

This guidance could include:

- Confirmation that when at an away event the manager is the primary point of communication and is to be contacted if there is an emergency or change to previously agreed arrangements.
- That the usage of camera phones including text messaging or playing games cannot be allowed to be a distraction from a safe awareness of the environment or be allowed to interfere with full participation in the activity.
- That when at an away event there is a stated preferred time period when parents may make contact, if they wish? Parents should be advised that contact outside of this time may not be possible due to activities.
- Consider that use of phones while away can worsen rather than alleviate homesickness. In this context it can be good to encourage children/young people to consider that 'no news is good news.'

#### **Use of Computers/Tablets/Web-enabled Games Consoles/Smart TVs**

If such devices are used as part of activities within the organisation, guidelines should be produced to ensure that they are used for the correct purpose, and include, for example, what websites are suitable for the age of children/ young people that the leaders are worth with.

#### **Internet Safety**

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