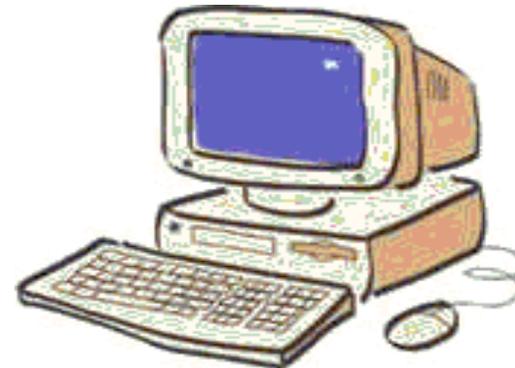# Children's Residential Home

Guidance on Mobile Phone, Camera, Tablets, Social Media And other Technical Devices in Children's Residential Homes

RESIDENTIAL HOME'S GUIDANCE

Guidance on Mobile Phone, Camera and the Use of Technology in Children's Residential Homes

We recognise that the use of modern-day technology plays an important part in the day-to-day work we all do with children and realise the significance of the use of cameras and computers in supporting their learning and development.

From time to time the media plays its part in highlighting significant concerns around events that lead to children and young people not being safeguarded and possibly being abused within or linked to care provisions.

Whilst there is an absolute need to ensure the safety and well being of all children in childcare provision a sense of proportion and common sense is needed in making decisions around the use of technology.

Within the LADO's procedure there is a general expectation that personal mobile phones, tablets, cameras or Social Media are not be used by staff when working with children and young people.

CHILDREN'S HOME PROTOCAL

Mobile Phones

The following must be adhered to:

- ❖ At the beginning of each individual's shift personal mobile phones should either be locked away safely.

- ❖ All staff should be issued with the mobile phone Policy, Internet use Policy and Social Media policy

- ❖ You may wish to state that in absolute emergency mobiles may be used in the privacy of the office where there are no young people present with the express permission of a manager.

- ❖ All staff, Including casual assistance and agency staff, are made aware of the home's telephone number and they should be told to pass it on to their nearest and dearest to use only in an emergency.

- ❖ It is reasonable to request visitors not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises they are visiting for a purpose not to chat on their phones. There may be some exceptions, for instance building maintenance and where this is the case they are to use it out of earshot of young people in a designated area identified by the Home Manager.

- ❖ The arrangements for when staff take young people on outings is to use the homes technical equipment only

If staff have to take their own mobile phones for emergency use on outings then they are required to ensure the following:

- ❖ Staff must never use their own mobiles to make or receive social calls as they could become distracted leading to the potential for an accident to happen.

❖ They must not use their own personal phone for taking photographs of children and young people, nor should they allow any one else to use a personal mobile phone to take photographs.

Cameras/ Video Recordings

❖ No personal cameras will be allowed into the home.
❖ All photographs of young people should only be taken on a designated camera for the sole use of the home.
❖ Staffs are to complete the logging in camera sheet.
❖ The camera will be stored in the manager's office and you request it when needed.
❖ When there are beds vacancies the managers will leave the camera with the shift leader where it will be stored in a lockable safe.
❖ The camera is to be supervised by staff at all times.

❖ You should ensure that photographs are only taken of young people for whom you have permission to photograph. All staff should be made aware of which young people cannot be photographed.
❖ There should always be a valid reason for taking photographs, i.e. to promote young people's learning and development, holidays and day trips, etc. You should have a local procedure in place for the safe storage of any images on camera; you may decide that once photographs have been printed for display use then images are deleted from the camera.
❖ All staffs are required to gain parental permission for certain visitors to the home to take photographs. for example for promotional purposes, you should always ensure that only young people with parental permission gained for such activity are photographed and that you seek assurance that once printed the photographs are stored securely or deleted.

Computers/Internet Usage

Today's young people are more knowledgeable than previous generations in understanding the workings of computers and in finding their way around the internet. There has been a steep rise in younger children accessing the internet and social networks in recent times. Whilst we would never seek to prevent children from developing their IT skills we must be wary of the hidden dangers that face children in using the internet and children's naivety in these matters.

- ❖ Staffs are increasingly using the internet whilst at work in order to access relevant information in relation to their work. You must observe the City Council's Internet policy and Social Media policy.

- ❖ Staffs are to follow the procedures in place to safeguard children who access the internet from accessing unsuitable sites and what steps you take to ensure children know how to safeguard themselves when using the internet.

- ❖ Staff will be monitored accessing the internet.

- ❖ You should also make clear to staff that their usage is monitored and that it is expressly forbidden for staff to access any sites that are not directly linked to their work.

Social Networking Sites

- ❖ No staff employed by you, including casual assistants and agency staff, should ever use a social networking site, whether within or out of the home's premises, to refer in any way whatsoever to your home, the staff, parents, visitors or young people looked after (in care).

- ❖ You should seek assurance from all staff that they do not discuss any matters in any capacity in relation to your setting with individuals that do not have a right to the information. This should also be covered in your confidentiality procedures by way of a signed declaration.

- ❖ Remember reference to your home on such sites by your own staff, agency, casual assistants and students could result in your home being brought into disrepute.