

# Mobile Phone Policy (For Beaver and Cub Sections ONLY)

Approved by Executive Committee Date. 29.06.22

**Contents**

[Mobile Phone Policy 1](#_Toc107411702)

[Version Control 1](#_Toc107411703)

[Introduction 2](#_Toc107411704)

Procedures ……………………………………………………………………………………...…………………..2

## Version Control

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## Introduction

It is the policy of the Elvington Scout Group that mobile phones should not be taken on camps, activities or to weekly meetings.

The reasons are as follows:-

1) Within the rules of the Scout Association, the Elvington Scout Group has a strict procedure for contacting parents/carers or the relevant authorities should accidents or problems arise on an activity or camp. The use of mobile phones might compromise this procedure.

Every camp/activity has an official telephone number for parents/carers to contact the responsible Leader in the event of an emergency. There are also contact numbers held by the Leader should the need arise to contact parents/carers.

A mobile phone gives members the opportunity to contact their parents directly, bypassing the role of Scout leaders. Undue distress may be caused on the part of the parent and/or their child concerning incidents leaders may know nothing about it. This particularly applies to cases of homesickness. It is important that members use a leader as their first point of contact for any concerns or problems they have, so that the leadership team can work to resolve these issues. Leaders will then arrange to contact parents via the official channels as and when necessary.

2) Now that most phones have cameras and internet access, there is the potential for actions taken by young people, however innocent the intent, to be misinterpreted, leading unintentionally to Child Protection issues. This is particularly true if photographs are taken without consent or are inappropriate and then subsequently broadcast on social networks.

**Procedures**

1. Camp or outdoor Activity

Parents/carers should ensure that their child does not arrive for a camp or outdoor activity with their phone. If a young person is found using a phone, they will be withdrawn, and parents/carers will be asked to collect them immediately. The safety of every young person is the responsibility of the leaders and they will always have their own form of emergency contact, should problems arise. Young people should not take on this responsibility.

1. Events

Very occasionally young people may be asked to bring a phone to specific events, particularly if they are alone. If so, they will be asked to ensure the phone is wrapped securely in a plastic bag and used for emergency calls only. If young people have not been specifically asked to bring a phone they should not do so.

3. Weekly meetings

Mobile phones can become a source of disruption at a weekly meeting with continual interruptions taking calls, texting, playing games or listening to music. This makes it very difficult to run the scheduled programme for all young people.

Some young people may arrive for meetings alone and parents/carers wish them to carry phones for safety reasons. In these situations, phones should be handed in to a leader at the start of the evening (switched off) and they will be stored and returned at the end.

Parents/carers are advised to speak to a section leader if they wish to discuss any matters arising from this policy.