**Mobile Devices Policy**

Links to Media and Social Media Policy

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**Policy Owner –** Sarah Rands – Group Lead Volunteer

**Date of Policy –** May 2024

**To be Reviewed;** Every 12 months

**Version - 1**

**Policy Applicable to:** All Leaders including Trustee Board Members, Young Leaders, Volunteers, Suppliers, Contractors and members of the Public who are involved with 1st Topcliffe Scout Group.

 **In Brief**

It is the Policy of our Scout Group that mobile phones must not be taken on camps, activities or to weekly meetings unless specifically authorised in advance for camera work or a specific purpose.

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# Version Control

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# Who are we?

# Our Scout Group, 1st Topcliffe Scout Group, is a youth charity. Our mission is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. From this point on 1st Topcliffe Scout Group will be referred to as “we” or “the Group” or “1st Topcliffe”. We are incorporated by royal charter and are regulated as a member of The Scouts Association in the United Kingdom. We hold an annual general meeting (AGM) every year. This is where members of the trustee board are elected. Any parent, guardian or carer of a youth member can volunteer to be on the trustee board at the AGM. Every parent, guardian or carer also has the right to attend the Annual General Meeting.

**Lines of communication**

Within the rules of the Scout Association, we have a strict procedure for contacting parents or the relevant authorities should accidents or problems arise at a meeting, on an activity or camp. Mobile phones can compromise this procedure.

 Every meeting/camp/activity has an official telephone number for you to contact (in the event of an emergency) the meeting/camp/activity leader. The meeting/camp/activity leader is also able to contact parents, either directly or via a home contact, should the need arise.

 A mobile phone gives scouts the opportunity to contact their parents directly, bypassing the role of leaders. Undue distress may be caused on the part of the parent and/or their child concerning incidents leaders may know nothing about. This particularly applies to cases of homesickness. It is important that scouts use the leadership team 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.

 **Safeguarding**

Now that most mobile phones have cameras and internet access, there is the potential for actions taken by scouts, 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.

 **Expectations of junior members**

Mobile phones can become a source of disruption by taking calls, texting, playing games or listening to music. This makes it very difficult to run an exciting, educational and safe programme. During Scout activities, junior members are expected to leave their mobile phones at home. In the event that a junior member needs their phone to enable them to walk home safely (for example); the phone needs to be handed in to the leader, and secured in the lock box until the end of the meeting.

On some occasions, mobile phones may be required for a meeting or activity. On such occasions, parents and young members will be advised ahead of time that this will be the case. These occasions may also warrant the need for the leaders to have the contact number of the young member for safety purposes. These will be held for the duration of the event and then deleted.

For camps and overnight activities, decisions will be made on an individual event basis as to whether mobile devices will be required; and will be communicated to parents clearly before the event.

 **Expectations of adult members**

 Mobile devices are used to carry out administrative tasks related to Scouting, including but not limited to:

* using Online Scouting Manager for the purposes of recording attendance; updating badge records; accessing contact information and personal medical information
* taking photographs
* demonstration purposes

As such, mobile devices will be present and on display during Scouting activities. Use of mobile devices will be limited as much as possible to carrying out Scouting duties rather than the day-to-day personal use of said devices.

**WhatsApp**

Each section has its own Parents WhatsApp group administered by the Group Lead Volunteer and the relevant Section Lead Volunteer. These groups are optional for parents to join; and permission will be sought during the registration process of a junior member.

Junior members cannot be included in these WhatsApp groups.