



Mobile Devices Policy

Reviewed: 30/04/2026 | Next date for review: 01/04/2027

Rationale

Running Deer (“the Organisation”) refers to Running Deer School, Running Deer Interventions Service and Running Deer C.I.C as a whole. Running Deer is committed to ensuring the safety of children in its care. We recognise the importance of mobile devices for communication purposes but are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile devices in the Organisation could pose a risk to children and adults.

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobiles phones are misused it can impact on an individual’s dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of all.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors.

Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term ‘mobile device’ covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication or that can take images, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.

We recognise that photographs can be taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements and are an effective form of recording their progression, but this should only be done on Organisation owned devices.

Staff Personal Mobile Phones and Organisation devices

We have consulted with staff about their use of their personal mobile devices.

It is clear that there is a general awareness of previous policies and the need to take care with personal phone use.

Staff are aware that they should not use mobile phones around children or in the classroom and that personal devices should not be used to take photographs of children.

We want this policy to provide clear sensible working guidelines about how we expect mobile devices are used within the Organisation;

- Staff are encouraged not carry personal mobile phones while working. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. Phones must be safely stored out of sight of children and should be on silent so that they cannot be heard by children.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times, but this must not be in an area where children are present.
- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from their line manager, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff must give the Organisation telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted, in an emergency, during Organisation working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on journey outings in accordance with guidance – see ‘The Use of Mobile Phones on Organisation Trips’ section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used in the Organisation by staff to take images of children under any circumstances.
- Staff should not be required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before dialing the recipients number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff are not permitted to send images of children taken from any device to personal email accounts, personal social media accounts or similar.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

Children and Young Person’s use of mobile devices

It is advised that students do not bring mobile devices to any of the Organisation premises. Whilst phones will not be automatically confiscated (unless student behaviour or use of a mobile device warrants confiscation), it is recommended that phones are not used during their time on premises and are kept stored away.

Running Deer will not be held liable for any loss, theft or damage to a student’s mobile device brought to any of the Organisations sites.

If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought onto the Organisations property by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from an executive director.

In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the relevant Safeguarding Lead for further investigation. Appendix 1- Guidance on dealing with Indecent Images should be complied with.

Visitor/Contract Staff and Parents/Carers

- The Organisation will display a notice advising visitors and parents/carers that mobile phones are not to be used in areas used by children. This includes all uses including phone calls, texting and photographing. If a visitor or parent/carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.
- It is recognised that many parents/carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances on premises e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone will be permitted for photographing/videoing only; a member of staff will always remind parents/carers before a performance that images should only be taken if they include their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child.
- The Organisation recognises that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; the Organisation, therefore, is obliged to warn parents of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

Organisation Mobile Phones

There are mobile phones registered for Organisation use. All these devices are supplied with a brightly coloured orange phone case to distinguish them as Organisation owned devices and are assigned to a member of staff. These mobile phones may be used on the Organisation premises using the following guidance:

- The mobile phone is for use solely by the person to whom it is issued and should not be used by any other member of staff or persons not employed by the Organisation unless there is a valid reason.
- All Organisation owned mobile devices are to have their brightly coloured orange cases on them at all times so that they can be easily identified.
- It is the staff members responsibility to ensure that this phone is kept safely on his/her person at all times and is only used for Organisational business.
- This phone is for making or receiving calls regarding Organisation business and must not be used for personal calls unless these are recorded and paid for by arrangement.

- This phone should not be used for taking photographs or videoing for personal reasons, at any time.
- The staff member will make every possible effort to ensure that this phone is not used when pupils are present, however it is recognised that this may not always be possible.
- Staff mobile devices can be audited in line with the Organisation acceptable use policy.

The Use of Mobile Phones on Organisation Trips

The Organisation recognises that the use of mobile phones on trips can be beneficial in ensuring safety for all members of the party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

- The party leader should carry an issued mobile phone (if there is one) for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the Organisation or contacting the emergency services. If the mobile phone is unavailable (e.g. if another trip is on the same day) then the party leader should follow the advice below for staff use of personal mobile phones.

Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within the following guidelines:

- Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the Organisation or emergency services. If possible these calls should be made away from pupils.
- Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than Organisation business for the duration of a day trip. Staff should try to avoid making or receiving personal calls or texts whilst supervising children during their normal working hours. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the Organisation number so that in an emergency the Organisation is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
- If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
- Mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting as staff members for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or iPads, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using an Organisation device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader

undertakes to ensure that these numbers or not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip, unless there is consent to retain for Organisation use.

- It is advised that if the party leader is using his/her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialing 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

Appendix 1 Indecent Images FAQ

What is an indecent image?

1. Indicative

Non-erotic and non-sexualised picture showing a child in their underwear, swimming costume from either commercial sources or family albums. Picture of a child playing in normal settings, in which the context or organisation of pictures by the collector indicates inappropriateness.

2. Nudist

Pictures of a naked or semi-naked child in an appropriate nudist setting, and from legitimate sources.

3. Erotica

Surreptitiously taken photographs of a child in play areas or other safe environments showing either underwear or varying degrees of nakedness.

4. Posing

A deliberately posed pictures of a child fully clothed, partially clothed or naked (where the amount, context and organisation suggests sexual interest).

5. Erotic Posing

A deliberately posed pictures of a fully, partially clothed or naked child in a sexualised or provocative pose.

6. Explicit Erotic Posing

Pictures emphasising genital areas, where the child is either naked, partially clothed or fully clothed.

7. Explicit Sexual Activity

Pictures that depict touching, mutual and self-masturbation, oral sex and intercourse by a child, not involving an adult.

8. Assault

Pictures of children being subject to a sexual assault, involving digital touching, involving an adult.

9. Gross Assault

Grossly obscene pictures of sexual assault, involving penetrative sex, masturbation or oral sex, involving an adult.

10. Sadistic/Bestiality

- Pictures showing a child being tied, bound, beaten, whipped or otherwise subject to something that implies pain.
- Pictures where an animal is involved in some form of sexual behaviour with a child.

(from COPINE scale)

What constitutes an offence?

Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 says that the following are offences:

- To take, permit to be taken, or to make any indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of a child
- To distribute or show such indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs
- To have in his possession such indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs with a view to their being distributed or shown by himself or others.

What is meant by a child?

The Sexual Offences Act 1 May 2004 defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Indecent images protocol

Staff – what do I do?

What do you do if a child tells you they have an indecent image on their phone but has not yet shown you?

- Do not ask to view the image

- Ask the child to hand over the phone immediately
- Report this immediately to a member of the Safeguarding team and hand over the phone.

What do you do if a child shows you an indecent image?

- Do not ask the child to email you the indecent image
- Do not open the image on the phone if you think it might be an indecent image
- Ask the child to hand over the phone immediately.
- Report this immediately to a member of the Safeguarding team
- Hand over the phone.

What do you do if you are emailed an indecent image?

If you know that this image is likely to be indecent, then do not open it and report immediately to Safeguarding team.

If you open an indecent image by mistake because there was nothing in the email to suggest this was an indecent image, then report to Safeguarding team immediately. Do not email the image.

- Never email an indecent image to any member of staff - including the Safeguarding team. Doing so is committing the offence of “distribution”
- To keep, store or save an indecent image is potentially committing the offence of “possession” – you will need to discuss this further with a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Never print an indecent image. Doing so is committing the offence of “reproducing an indecent image of a child”
- Never keep/store/save any indecent image that you may have received. Report immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding team – what we will do

A member of the safeguarding team will contact the police who will investigate further. We will then take advice from our colleagues in the Police on how we proceed. Parents will be contacted.

Contact Running Deer

Running Deer CIC, 3 Court Street, Moretonhampstead, Newton Abbot, TQ13 8NE

Telephone: 01647 400201 | Email: enquiries@runningdeer.org.uk

Website: <https://www.runningdeer.org.uk>