

# **Aldridge Youth Fellowship**

## **Policy Statement on e.Safety and the Acceptable Use of Mobile Technology**

### **Commitment to e.Safety**

AYF leaders are committed to taking all possible steps to model safe practice and protect young people from harm or risk of harm when using the internet and all forms of mobile technology.

This policy sets out our agreed procedures for communication with young people via the internet and all forms of mobile technology.

We undertake to communicate these procedures with young people and their parents/carers. *We will ask all young people and their parents/carers to sign an agreement about acceptable use.*

### **Expectations for the conduct of leaders**

- Leaders will remember that they are in a position of trust and will consider their personal/professional boundaries when engaging with young people.
- When using social media they will ensure that their own online image reflects integrity and provides a role model. They will also be mindful that some of their contacts may post unsuitable material on their profile. They will regularly review their own privacy settings.
- Leaders will encourage young people to consider how they use the internet and mobile technologies and how to protect themselves from risk of harm.
- They will not engage in private contact with the young people in their care through personal texts, messaging or social media. Leaders will not be 'friends' with young people on Facebook, follow young people on Twitter or Instagram, or be connected to young people on these or any other social media sites via their own personal accounts, but will only through official AYF social media accounts.
- Leaders will not communicate with young people from personal phones or email addresses except in an exceptional emergency.

### **Communication between leaders and young people**

AYF leaders will communicate information via emails, the AYF facebook page or from the AYF dedicated phone. Parents are asked to consent to this as part of the AYF 'Use of Mobile Technology Agreement'.

The primary purpose will be the communication of information. All messages will be brief and business like. Leaders will use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. For example, leaders will not end their messages with 'Xs' to represent kisses.

**Email** - All messages can be viewed if necessary by the AYF leadership team and /or safeguarding co-ordinator, and this policy is explained to children and young people. Although unlikely to happen, this can help deter bullying, insulting or abusive emails and will help to protect leaders from false allegations.

**Mobile phones** - will only be used where necessary to communicate and receive information and will be guided by the following considerations:

We recognize that not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want the youth leader(s) to have the number. Where necessary we will have alternative means of communication.

***There will be an AYF dedicated phone and a designated 'Communications Manager'.***

This way all calls and texts can be accounted for via an itemised phone bill. It also protects the worker's right to a personal life outside work. Equally workers should make it clear that a work phone is what it says it is and not divulge their personal mobile number to the children/young people they work with.

- Where possible messages will be communicated using group rather than individual texting.
- Care will be taken with the language used, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and will always end with the leader's name.
- Leaders will not give out their personal mobile number to children and young people. However, AYF leaders recognise that this may be needed under exceptional circumstances (with the agreement of the parents and other leaders).
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on/shown to the AYF team leader. If appropriate these will be discussed with the safeguarding co-ordinator(s).
- Leaders will enable a password/lock on the AYF phone for data protection and will not allow unauthorised access.
- Leaders will as ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 10.00 pm also ensure that calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school / college (stipulate times), as this may be against the educational establishments rules.

- AYF leaders recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a young person in a crisis situation or at risk of harm – they will arrange for any young person in a crisis situation to be supported by the appropriate people.
- Leaders will avoid engaging in extended conversations with young people via any texting or Instant Messaging facilities.

### **Appropriate use of Social Networking Sites**

Use of social networking sites by leaders makes it harder to boundary their private life, and also opens up the possibility of relationship between ‘friends’ who are children and ‘friends’ who are from the workers’ adult personal world. It also makes it harder for young people to understand appropriate boundaries with adults in other contexts.

There are risks both for children and also for leaders, who may find images and text posted by others appearing on their profiles, which can be damaging to their reputations and positions as role models.

- AYF has its own dedicated Facebook Page
- Workers should only use this FB account for contact with young people with whom they are working.
- Workers will not add young people to their personal social networking page if they are involved with the youth activities and are under the age of 18.
- Workers should seek to ensure that their personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature.
- Messages sent to young people regarding youth activities should be posted openly and ‘inbox’ messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy should be sent to the manager of the activity/centre to assist transparency.

### **Use of Photographs and/or Video Images**

Clear guidelines will be operated when taking photographic and video images of young people involved in AYF activities:

- Permission will be sought before any images are taken and/or displayed. Images should only be used for the specific purpose agreed by the person photographed.
- If the intention is to use an image on the internet, this must be clearly stated at the time that consent is sought.

- Parents will be given the opportunity to decide if they want pictures of their son/daughter to appear on the website and will be asked to sign a consent form.
- Written consent must specify what purposes the image will be used for, and how it will be stored if not destroyed.
- A list will be kept of parents who do not wish their son/daughter to appear on the website and this will be updated regularly.
- Photographs that include children and young people will be selected carefully and will not enable individual children to be clearly identified.
- When using photographs of children, we will use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.
- We will ensure that any use of images reflects the diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Further written consent is required if images are to be used in other ways than originally specified.
- Many mobile phones have digital cameras. Leaders will ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with the e-safety policy on photography (e.g. ensure that consent is obtained and all images are stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles).
- Any images of children taken on a mobile phone will be downloaded to the church / organisations' computer and kept securely.
- ***Leaders will not keep images of children or young people on their mobile phone.***

### **Expectations for young people amongst the group**

We ask all our young people to agree the following:

- I am responsible for e-mails, texts and instant messages that I send and for contacts made. I will only send messages, which are polite, sensible and free from unsuitable language.
- I will not send any attachments or images, which are hurtful, abusive or offensive.
- If I receive anything, see anything or come across a website which may be unsuitable or makes me feel uncomfortable I will immediately tell a responsible person / youth leader / safeguarding co-ordinator.

- I understand that I must never give my home address, phone number, send photos, give out personal information, or arrange to meet someone who contacts me over the internet or via social media.
- I will not send anonymous messages and I know that chain letters are not permitted.
- I understand that AYF leaders will communicate information via emails, the AYF facebook page or from the AYF dedicated phone.

### **Responding to e.safety concerns**

Any concerns regarding an e.safety incident such as cyberbullying, inappropriate texting or sexting or a disclosure by a young person via email or text will be reported to one of the Safeguarding Co-ordinators

Lynne Trew	07939 658194	<a href="mailto:thetrews@blueyonder.co.uk">thetrews@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
Helen Gilbert	07786 515557	<a href="mailto:helenmgilbert@gmail.com">helenmgilbert@gmail.com</a>

As with any other safeguarding concern the leader will note the date and time of the concern and the details of what was said. Leaders will never ask leading questions and will never promise confidentiality.

Young people will be reminded regularly of whom to speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns for themselves or a friend or family member.

Signed