



Mobile Phone and Social Networking Policy

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Completed by: Rebecca Freeman

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Illuminate AP Mobile Phone and Social Networking Policy

Introduction:

Staff and volunteers at **Illuminate AP** are expected to take all necessary measures to protect both themselves and the children/young people in the setting by responsibly managing their use of modern technology.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance to pupils, Parents/Carers, and staff about the use of mobile phones and digital devices within the provision.

This policy has been updated to reflect the '**DFE Guidance for Schools on Prohibiting the Use of Mobile Phones Throughout the School Day**,' published in February 2024. This guidance advises education settings to develop policies that create a mobile phone-free environment, prohibiting the use of mobile phones and similar smart technology throughout the day.

At **Illuminate AP**, we understand that many of our secondary-aged young people own mobile phones, and some may find it challenging to be separated from them. However, in accordance with the new guidance, **Illuminate AP** follows a policy where mobile phones are **“Never Seen, Heard, or Used.”**

Aims:

- To maintain a distraction-free and safe environment.
- To raise awareness among staff, visitors, and children regarding best practices for modern technology use.
- To ensure the health and wellbeing of all students, staff, and visitors.
- To establish a clear protocol for responding to non-compliance with the policy.
- To minimise risks by taking all reasonable precautions to protect staff, visitors, and children.

Staff Guidance:

Illuminate AP staff act as role models for children and young people and must not use personal mobile phones while on site during working hours. Staff must adhere to the guidance, ensuring their mobile phones or similar devices are neither seen, heard, nor used on-site. In case of emergencies, staff may share the provision's mobile or landline numbers to remain contactable.

Personal mobile phones must never be used to take photographs or videos of children. The provision has its own equipment for such purposes, and parental consent must always be obtained beforehand, typically via the induction pack.

Staff should not discuss work-related matters on social networking platforms and must maintain professional boundaries by refraining from accepting or sending friend requests to current or former students or their family members. Staff must maintain high levels of privacy on social media and are required to keep their personal profiles private.

Sharing personal mobile phone numbers or social media handles with students or Parents/Carers is prohibited. Work-related phone numbers and emails may be shared where appropriate. This policy also applies to all other online platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the staff handbook. Concerns regarding inappropriate mobile phone or social media use by staff should be reported to a line manager.

Student Guidance:

Illuminate AP recognises that many children and young people bring personal devices to provision, which may grant them unrestricted internet access through mobile networks. This unmonitored access may increase the risks of harassment, bullying, sharing indecent images, and accessing harmful content.

To mitigate this risk, **Illuminate AP** allows students to bring mobile devices only if they are **never seen, heard, or used** on site.

If staff notice students using mobile phones, they should report it immediately to management. This may lead to confiscation of the device, parent/carer contact, or referral to relevant agencies. Persistent breaches of this policy may result in a ban on bringing personal devices to the provision. Confiscated devices will be returned at the end of the session, and ongoing collaboration with the student's registered school will take place to review necessary adjustments.

Extenuating Circumstances:

At **Illuminate AP**, we acknowledge that some children have unique needs that may prevent them from fully adhering to this policy. In exceptional circumstances, children may be permitted to access their devices for physical or mental health reasons. Such exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with external agencies and Parents/Carers, and any approved use will be closely monitored by a designated staff member. Parents/Carers, carers, or other professionals may request exceptions by speaking with a member of management.

Contact Details:

Each site has a designated mobile phone for communication purposes, which can be used by staff, students, Parents/Carers, and professionals. These phones will be switched on during working hours but may not be available outside of those hours. Some staff members are assigned work phones that are also used for communication during the day. All communication between staff during working hours should be conducted using these work mobile phones, as personal phones are not permitted for use on site.

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