Brentford Community Boat House

Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy

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1. Purpose

Brentford Community Boat House (BCBH) recognises that mobile phones, tablets, smart watches, cameras and other electronic devices are essential operational tools. They are used to improve communication, safety, incident reporting and coaching.

However, inappropriate use may:

- Place children or adults at risk.
- Create safeguarding concerns.
- Breach UK GDPR.
- Damage BCBH's reputation.
- Expose staff or volunteers to allegations.

This policy establishes clear standards for the safe, professional and lawful use of electronic devices.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Sessional coaches
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Contractors
- Students
- Visitors
- Parents whilst attending BCBH activities

It applies during:

- Coaching sessions
- Camps
- School programmes
- Competitions
- Trips
- Meetings
- Online communication
- Off-site activities

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3. Definitions

Electronic devices include:

- Mobile phones

- Tablets
- Smart watches
- Cameras
- GoPro cameras
- Body cameras (where authorised)
- Laptops
- Radios with recording capability

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4. Principles

Everyone involved with BCBH must:

- Put participant welfare first.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Protect confidential information.
- Use electronic devices responsibly.
- Follow UK GDPR.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.

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5. Use During Coaching

Coaches must ensure they are contactable during activities. Mobile phones should be set so emergency calls can be received without unnecessarily distracting participants.

Phones may only be used for:

- Emergency calls
- Communication between Coaches on the water
- Contacting emergency services
- Contacting parents where authorised
- Accessing registers
- Risk assessments
- Weather forecasts
- Tide information
- Navigation
- Incident reporting
- Operational communication

They must **not** be used for:

- Personal calls
- Social media
- Shopping
- Streaming videos
- Gaming
- Texting friends

- Personal photography

while supervising participants.

6. Supervision

Mobile phone use must never reduce supervision.

Staff must remain fully attentive to participants.

No member of staff should become distracted whilst responsible for children or adults at risk.

7. Emergency Use

At least one operational phone should be available during every session. Every Coach is required to have a mobile phone with them for the duration of their Coaching responsibilities'.

For water activities:

- Phones should be fully charged.
- Stored in waterproof cases.
- Easily accessible.
- Emergency contacts should be available.

Where signal is poor alternative communication methods should be considered.

8. Photography and Video

Personal phones should not normally be used for photography.

Where photographs are required:

- Appropriate consent must exist.
- Images must support legitimate BCBH activities.
- Images should be transferred to BCBH storage as soon as practical.
- Personal copies should then be deleted.

Images must never be:

- Shared privately
- Uploaded to personal cloud storage
- Shared on personal social media

9. Communication with Young People

Staff must never:

- Exchange personal mobile numbers.
- Add juniors as social media friends.
- Send direct personal messages.
- Communicate secretly.

Communication should normally take place through:

- Parents
- Carers
- Teachers
- Official BCBH communication systems

Where WhatsApp groups exist:

- Two authorised adults should administer them.
- Parents should be included where appropriate for messages to under 18's.
- Messages should remain professional.

These expectations are consistent with the safeguarding requirements already set out in the BCBH Child Safeguarding Policy regarding professional boundaries and online communication.

10. Social Media

Personal social media accounts should remain private.

Staff must never:

- Discuss confidential matters.
- Identify children without consent.
- Comment negatively about participants.
- Engage in inappropriate conversations.

11. Data Protection

Personal devices must not routinely store:

- Medical records
- Incident reports
- DBS information
- Registers

- Consent forms

Where information must temporarily be stored:

- Devices must be password protected.
- Data must be transferred to BCBH systems promptly.
- Local copies must then be deleted.

Staff must never delete electronic communications relating to safeguarding concerns.

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12. Lost or Stolen Devices

If a device containing BCBH information is lost:

The individual must immediately notify:

- Chief Executive
- Welfare Officer

The incident will be assessed for GDPR reporting requirements.

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13. Smart Watches

Smart watches may be worn where appropriate.

They should not:

- Record participants.
- Photograph participants.
- Distract staff.

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14. Artificial Intelligence

Staff using AI systems must not upload:

- Children's personal information.
- Medical information.
- Safeguarding records.
- Confidential BCBH documents.

AI may be used to assist with:

- Policy drafting.

- Lesson planning.
- Risk assessment templates.
- Administrative tasks.

The user remains responsible for checking the accuracy of any AI-generated content before use.

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15. Charity-Owned Devices

BCBH equipment should be used wherever possible.

Users must:

- Keep devices secure.
- Report faults immediately.
- Return equipment when requested.
- Use equipment only for authorised purposes.

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16. Parents and Visitors

Parents are welcome to photograph their own children unless advised otherwise.

They should:

- Avoid photographing other children.
- Respect requests not to take photographs.
- Follow instructions from staff.

During school activities, photography must comply with the school's own policies.

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17. Water Activities

Because BCBH delivers watersports:

- Mobile phones should be carried in waterproof pouches when used on safety boats or coach launches.
- Staff should only use phones while on the water where it is safe to do so.
- Coaching and participant supervision must always take priority over phone use.
- Emergency communications must remain available throughout the session.

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18. Reporting Concerns

Anyone concerned about inappropriate phone or electronic device use should report the matter immediately to:

- The Welfare Officer, cwo@bcbh.org.uk
- Chief Executive, paul.k@bcbh.org.uk
- A Trustee, trustees@bcbh.org.uk

Any safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the BCBH Child Safeguarding Policy and, where appropriate, referred to external agencies.