**3rd Hove (St Leonard’s) Scout Group Mobile Phone Policy**

**8th August 2022 to be reviewed 8th August 2023**

It is the policy of 3rd Hove (St Leonard’s) Scout Group that all young people should not be bringing mobile phones to weekly meetings, camps, or other Scouting activities. If a young person has to bring a mobile phone with them for any reason, then it should remain stored away, switched off, throughout a meeting, camp, or other activity. The reasons for this policy are as follow:

1) Activities which the young people take part in will often involve actions that could damage mobile devices, such as devices falling onto the ground or getting wet. **The 3rd Hove Scout Group cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage to any mobile phone**, so use of unnecessary electronic devices is strongly advised against.

2) The Scout Association has strict procedures for contacting parents, carers, emergency contacts, and where necessary, the emergency services, should the need arise during a Scouting activity.

Use of a mobile phone by a young person could compromise these procedures, potentially leading to misinformation being given out. It could also lead to scenarios where leaders may be unaware of an arising situation entirely.

3) Now that most phones have cameras and internet access, there is a potential that actions taken by young people, however innocent the intent, could lead to Child Protection and Safeguarding issues. This is particularly true if photographs are taken without consent or are inappropriate and then subsequently broadcast on social networks.

4) Mobile phones can provide a source of distraction for young people, which can interfere with the activities they are taking part in, as well as interrupting those activities for all young people and Leaders.

If a young person, for whatever reason, does need to use a phone during a weekly meeting, scouting activity, or camp, then this should be discussed with a section leader, who will decide on a case-by-case basis the best course of action to take, which may include escalating the case to the Group Scout Leader to make a decision.

Any young person found to be using a mobile phone during a weekly meeting, camp, or other Scouting activity, outside of any agreed circumstances, may be withdrawn from that activity and parents or carers may be asked to collect them immediately.

If the need should arise for a young person to have to use a mobile phone, for example, to contact a parent or carer, the section leaders will have a designated phone for this, as well as the relevant contact information or, if the young person has a mobile phone stored away, then they may be permitted to use it in such a situation.

If the need should arise for a parent or carer to contact a young person during Scouting activities, then an ‘on call’ phone number will be made available prior to the activity taking place, in line with the Scout Association’s ‘InTouch’ policy.

Penny Marjoram

Group Scout Leader