



Acceptable use of ICT policy

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1. Purpose of the policy

Information and communication technology are an embedded part of both work practices and the lives of young people. This policy sets out the approach Ignite Life takes to the use of ICT professionally and personally.

As mobile phones, tablets and laptops may be used during mentoring and Ignite Life work, there may be potential for misuse or unintentional abuse whilst working with young people in our context. Therefore, for the protection of the organisation, young people and staff it is necessary to set out some guidelines for internet use.

2. Key principles:

We encourage CYP not to have mobile phones out during sessions, although depending on needs and circumstances this may not always be the case.

Abuse of the internet whilst working for Ignite Life may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The same behavioural and professional standards are expected of staff and volunteers as are the case with traditional written communications, the telephone and face to face meetings.

Mentors must ensure that their device is secured by a password at all times, that this password is not shared with any other person and that all reasonable care is taken to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information.

Use of computers and the internet at Kingswood HQ are monitored and supervised at all times. Networks used by CYPs are on a separate and restricted network.

3. Acceptable Uses

As a general principle, internet use must be justified to provide staff and mentors with support for work related activities. The following list is not intended to be a definitive list, but sets out broad areas of use that the organisation considers to be acceptable uses of the internet:

- To provide communication within the organisation via email or the organisation website
- To provide communication with other organisations for work purposes
- To distribute electronic copies of documents and bulletins
- To distribute details regarding organisation meetings
- To provide electronic methods of communication
- Any other use that directly supports work related functions
- Carrying out research to support a CYP with a learning project or interest
- Providing a stimulus for discussion or developing an interest which will benefit the CYP
- Researching new potential activities as part of planning with a CYP
- Finding directions to activities and locations linked to work
- Communicating with identified CYPs for safeguarding or wellbeing purposes as agreed with parents/carers

4. Unacceptable Uses

The following uses will be regarded as not acceptable.

For mentors and staff:

Allowing a CYP to have control of or access to a personal device such as a phone or tablet belonging to a mentor

Use for racial, sexual, homophobic or other harassment.

Entering into a commitment on behalf of the organisation (unless you have explicit permission to do this).

Visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material.

Downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties,

Within the time of the sessions making personal communications, contacts, social media updates

Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the organisation, your colleagues and/or our young people on social networking sites, 'blogs' (online journals), 'wikis' and any online publishing format.

Revealing confidential information about the organisation in a personal online posting, upload or transmission - including financial information and information relating to our young people, staff and/or internal discussions other than through agreed and secure channels

For mentees /CYP:

- Sending malicious or abusive messages via text, email or social media
- Use for racial, sexual, homophobic or other harassment.
- Visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material.
- Within the time of the sessions making personal communications, contacts, social media updates

5. Professional expectations online

Netiquette

The following general principles should be adopted:

Be polite. Do not be abusive in messages to others. Use appropriate language. Remember that you are a representative of Ignite Life when you are working for the organisation and also have responsibilities as a professional working with CYP when you are 'off duty'.

Email

Whenever an email on behalf of Ignite Life is sent, it should be from an Ignite Life work email address.

Every user is responsible for all mail originating from their user ID (e-mail address).

Do not send junk mail and chain letters

If you receive e-mail from inside or outside the organisation that you consider to be offensive or harassing, speak to your line manager.

You will need to ensure that your device is secured by a password at all times, that this password is not shared with any other person and that all reasonable care is taken to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information.

Social Networking Sites

Social media applies to blogs, microblogs like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat LinkedIn, videos, social networks, discussion forums, wikis, and other personal webspace. Personal access should not be in view of any young people, and you are reminded to log out or 'lock' the screen immediately upon leaving your mobile phone or PC, even if only for a short while.

General

Do not "speak" for the organisation unless you have express permission to do so, this covers all comments relating to the organisation

Protect yourself from identity theft

If you can be linked to the organisation, act appropriately. This includes photos and status updates

Remember that colleagues, prospective employers, parents and children may see your online information

The organisation policy is that you are not allowed to be 'friends' with young people with whom you worked below the age of 18. Even then you should base your judgement upon their needs and circumstances.

Conclusion

Mobile internet devices can be a useful tool for mentors but should be used securely and under the control and supervision of the mentor. Many of our young people are vulnerable and the internet can be an issue for them. By discouraging its use during our sessions, we may be helping them to develop more balanced lifestyles.

Disciplinary action may be taken against staff and volunteers who contravene these guidelines, in accordance with the mentor Code of Conduct and the Employee Expectations and Discipline policy.

Reviewed: 25th October 2019

To be reviewed: October 2020