



theASCENT Mobile Phone Policy for Residential Weekends

Purpose

This policy outlines the expectations and rules regarding mobile phone usage for participants and volunteer team members during residential weekends organised by **theASCENT**. The policy aims to support an environment of community, reflection, and digital detox in line with the Christian ethos of presence, respect, and attentiveness to God and others.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All participants attending residential weekends
- All volunteer team members and leaders involved in the delivery of the residential

Policy for Teenage Participants

1. Digital Detox

- To promote deeper community engagement and personal reflection, all teenage participants will take part in a "digital detox" during the residential weekend.
- Participants are required to hand in their mobile phones to the designated team leader on **Saturday morning**, following breakfast and morning prayer.
- Mobile phones will be securely stored by the team in a locked and supervised location.

2. Return of Phones

- Phones will be returned to participants at **bedtime on Saturday night** to enable contact with family if needed before sleep.

3. During Digital Detox

- Participants will not have access to their phones during group sessions, free time, meals, or other activities.
- Emergency contact between participants and families will be facilitated through the theASCENT leadership team, whose phone numbers will be made available in advance to parents/guardians.

4. Exceptions

- If there is a specific pastoral or welfare need requiring alternative arrangements for phone access, this must be discussed with and agreed upon by the Logistics Lead prior to the weekend.

Policy for Volunteer Team Members

1. Responsible Use

- Volunteer team members are permitted to retain their personal mobile phones during the residential weekend to assist with the safe running of the event and to respond to any emergencies.

2. Usage Guidelines

- Mobile phones must only be used:

- In case of emergency
- For official event communication between team members if necessary
- To facilitate the organisation of the residential (e.g., logistics, safeguarding needs)
- Phones should not be used for personal browsing, social media, or non-urgent communication during sessions or in public spaces where participants are present.

3. Visibility

- Team members are asked to model the behaviour expected from participants by keeping their phone use discrete and appropriate.
- Wherever possible, calls or messages should be handled away from participants, in a private area.

Safeguarding

- The use of mobile phones to take photographs or video recordings is **strictly prohibited** unless expressly authorised by the residential weekend leader and in line with the ASCENT's Safeguarding and policy.
- Any concerns arising from phone use must be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on site.

Breaches of Policy

- If a participant does not hand in their phone on the detox day, a leader will meet with them to reflect on why the guideline matters for them and for the group. If the guideline continues to be broken, we may contact parents to ensure consistent support and accountability.
 - Volunteers who fail to adhere to this policy may be subject to a review of their role at future events.
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theASCENT reserves the right to amend or update this policy as necessary in order to maintain a safe and supportive environment.

Policy Review Date: 1st October 2026

Approved by: theASCENT Leadership Team

Last updated: 30th September 2025