

Correspondence: Telephones, Mobile 'Phones and Letters

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter applies to all forms of communication, including telephone, mobile 'phones, letters and electronic communication including emails, instant messaging, 'chat', texting.

Also see **Internet Security Procedure**

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1. Telephones

This applies to all phones including mobiles

Consideration should be given during the placement planning as to whether the child will be allowed a mobile, its safe use etc. Arrangements for the access to and use of telephones (including mobile 'phones) by children should be set out in writing, for example, in a Children's Guide or a **Placement Plan** for an individual child.

In certain circumstances, children may have their access to telephones reduced or stopped where it is necessary to do so to protect the child or another person's well-being, to protect property from being damaged or an offence from being committed.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances (see next paragraph), a decision to provide/reduce access or stop a child from using a telephone should be taken by the social worker in consultation with the carers and Supervising Social Worker (where the child is placed in foster care). Before taking such a decision, the social worker should be mindful of the list of Non Approved Sanctions contained in **Section 4.3 of Behaviour Management Guidance**.

The exceptional circumstances are that there is a risk of harm, damage to property or an offence being committed and that staff/carers believe it is necessary to immediately confiscate or reduce a child's access to a 'phone to prevent the harm, damage to property or offence from occurring.

If such exceptional action is taken, the child's social worker (and Supervising Social Worker if the child is in foster care) must be notified within 1 working day.

If a child is prevented from having access to a telephone, or access is reduced, it is deemed to be a Sanction, and must be recorded as such.

See **Sanctions Procedure**.

2. Sending and Receiving Letters

Children must be supported and encouraged to send and receive letters to family members and friends. The Child's social worker may take the decision to monitor any letters received, where there are any concerns regarding the content. This will be detailed within the Child's **Placement Plan**.

Restrictions may only be placed upon the sending or receipt of letters with the authorisation of the social worker in consultation with carers (and Supervising Social Workers where children are placed in foster care),

Such restrictions can only be placed upon a child where it is necessary to do so to safeguard or promote the child's welfare, to protect another person from harm, injury or to protect property from being damaged.

If restrictions are placed upon a child sending or receiving letters, it is a Sanction and must be recorded as such.

See **Sanctions Procedure**.

3. Electronic Communication

See **E-Safety Children Exposed to Abuse through Digital Media**.