Air Tags Policy

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Guidance on the Use of Tracking Tags such as Apple AirTags on School Trips

Purpose of This Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to outline the Lighthouse MAT's position on the use of tracking tags such as Apple AirTags on children during school trips. While we understand that parents may have concerns about their child's safety, the use of such devices raises significant safeguarding, privacy, and security concerns. As such, the use of tracking tags on school trips is not permitted.

Key Concerns

1. Privacy and Data Protection

- Tracking devices can raise significant privacy concerns as they can track a child's location without their informed consent.
- Academies have a duty to protect all children's personal data, and the use of tracking devices could compromise this responsibility.

2. Safeguarding Risks

- Tracking devices can inadvertently reveal the real-time location of a group of children, which poses a significant risk—especially for pupils under protection orders, in foster care, or with specific safeguarding needs.
- If lost or misplaced, a tracking device could be misused, potentially putting a child at risk. Parents using tracking devices to post the exact location of a class or group of children on social media platforms, places the safety of all the children and staff at risk and specific children who may be fleeing Domestic Violence or who may be subject to court orders.

3. Disruption to School Trip Management

- Teachers and staff are responsible for the supervision and safety of all pupils during trips. The use of tracking devices may create unnecessary confusion and interfere with established safety protocols.
- Academy staff undertake extensive safety preparation and planning prior to trips. This includes robust risk assessment and contingency planning which would enable them to respond to any unforeseen circumstances while away from school.

4. Other Implications

- If a pupil is carrying a tracking device, teachers or other pupils might receive alerts, creating confusion or concern.
- If a tracking device beeps unexpectedly, it could cause unnecessary panic during a school trip.
- There's a risk of unauthorised individuals detecting or following a tracking device, making it a potential security and safeguarding issue.

Academy Policy on Tracking Devices

- In line with this school guidance, personal tracking devices such as AirTags are not permitted on school trips.
- Parents should trust the school's supervision and safeguarding policies, which are designed to always ensure children's safety.
- If parents have specific concerns about their child's wellbeing on a school trip, they should communicate these directly with the school prior to the trip.
- Any tracking device found in use on a school trip will be removed and returned to parents at the end of the trip.

Alternative Safety Measures

- Schools will continue to implement rigorous safeguarding procedures, including appropriate staff to pupil ratio, regular headcounts, buddy systems, and designated meeting points.
- Staff will always be available to support and supervise pupils throughout the trip.
- Parents will be provided with clear contact information should they need to reach the school during the trip.

By implementing this guidance, we aim to maintain a safe, secure, and well-organised environment for all children during school trips. We appreciate the cooperation of parents and guardians in ensuring that school outings remain a positive and safe experience for all pupils.