

### Use of Air Tags (or similar) Tracking Devices on Scouting Trips

Air Tags are small electronic devices produced by Apple and are designed to enable people to find lost belongings such as keys and bags. There are devices made by providers other than Apple which operate in a similar manner and these devices are increasingly being used by parents to track their child's whereabouts and we have become aware that some parents have used these on trips and residential visits organised by 123<sup>rd</sup> Manchester Scouts.

We know that your child going on a trip, particularly one where they are sleeping away from home, can cause anxiety and worry for both children and parents. The safety of everyone in our group community is of the utmost importance, and volunteers work hard to ensure that the plans and arrangements for camps and trips always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our scouts. We hope that where you, or your child, have any concerns or worries about a trip or residential visit you feel able to discuss these with the leaders so that we can provide reassurance about the arrangements that are in place. Ultimately, we want you to feel comfortable and confident in the abilities and expertise of staff to keep all children safe.

We need to make you aware of the following potential issues that have been raised regarding Air Tags being sent with scouts on trips and residential visits:

- AirTags are designed for locating lost items, not for continuous, real-time location tracking. When an AirTag is near any smart device (e.g. a phone) for a period of time, it notifies device owners of its presence even if the Air Tag is not connected to those people.



Those people can then attempt to locate the AirTag including by making it emit a noise and in some cases disable it. In one such occurrence with our group participants received alerts that a device was following them which caused unnecessary worry and concern for those young people and disruption for group sleeping when it was making noise late at night.

- On a scout trip it can occasionally be necessary to alter the itinerary at short notice, for example if activities are weather dependent. Where this occurs, it could cause unnecessary worry for parents that their child is not in the expected location and lead them to contact the leaders to request information. This is disruptive for volunteers and takes their attention away from the focus of the trip.

Taking into regard all the information above, our group position is that we **do not recommend** that parents use Air Tags to track their children or belongings on trips and residential visits. However,

where parents do choose to send an Air Tag or similar with their child they do so at their own risk and accept the following conditions:

- volunteers will not take any responsibility for the safekeeping of any Air Tags or ensuring that your child has it on their person.
- Trip updates will only be provided through the normal communication channels. Volunteers **will not** provide updates based on parents tracking their child's location. Should an emergency arise, parents will be notified in accordance with our standard emergency procedures.
- Parents/carers **must not** attempt to physically locate and/or approach the scout party using the Air Tag without the prior consent of the Lead Volunteer.
- Volunteers may need to disable or remove the Air Tag should they feel it is disruptive to the welfare of those on the trip (for example, by making a persistent noise), or if they consider there is an immediate safeguarding risk. If you have any queries about the above, or would like to discuss any concerns about arrangements for trips and residential visits, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jonathan Allerton

Lead Volunteer

Chorlton Scout Group