

# Mobile Technology Advice

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Please find some helpful tips and advice in the form of common questions and answers which may help you in discussing issues of personal safety and the law using mobile technology with your son or daughter. Please note - all Highland schools will also have a policy on using mobile phones in the school and this should be adhered to.

Owning a mobile phone for the first time can be very exciting and be seen as a step towards independence and greater connectivity to the online world, communication with friends and family. As newer mobile phones or 'smart phones' become highly developed and internet accessible, they are more akin to a powerful personal handheld computer which is constantly online.

## **What can I do to keep my child safe?**

We would ask you to think about the same kinds of risks you would talk about with your child if you had purchased a mini online computer with integrated webcam capable of video chat and video recording. Remind them of the future consequences of pictures, video clips or text messages that can be widely distributed without permission or knowledge only to re-surface embarrassingly at a later date!

In purchasing a mobile phone, discuss firstly what your family boundaries might be, financially, app purchases, insurance, theft and appropriate usage. This also may include not sharing personal details, their number or email address with strangers or posting it on social networking site profiles. To prevent unauthorised use it may be advisable to use a password pin to unlock the phone. Having this in place is recommended practice.

Many types of communication for speaking, texting or video-chatting can work irrespective of phone signal or 'credit' on a phone network. For example, Apple iPhones use a technology called 'Face Time' or 'iMessage' which allows users to interact based on account details or email rather than phone number.

Many other Apps freely available also provide this facility and offer a way to share images such as Snapchat or WhatsApp. Always remind your son/daughter that even images can be saved and shared even if the image 'disappears'. Their phone or device might automatically save images sent to them too and they may be unaware that these images are now in the camera roll.

As new popular Apps / games for phones allow the user to play anyone freely across the globe, it's vital that young people know how to keep safe and not disclose their name, location or personal identifiable information. Advertising their ID on public sites might lead to unwanted contacts.

## **What can I do to keep my child safe?**

Keep lines of communication open with your child to ensure that they are not afraid to tell you if they have received an image, unwanted contact or are being pressurised to send any inappropriate photos of themselves. Remind them to report any images they receive to yourself or an adult they can trust.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) Report Abuse Button is a way of them finding out about how to report concerns too. The CEOP Report Abuse button can be found at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) and on many social networking sites.

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Remind them to switch off the Bluetooth<sup>®</sup>, keeping this switched off keeps the device safe from receiving unsolicited images, videos or having their phone hacked.

Most modern mobiles (iPhones and Android Smart phones) have location settings which may be applied to functions of the phone or apps they use. This may mean that images they take either to keep or share might also contain details of where the user took that image, this information is then stored in the image identifying personal information. For advice on disabling location settings please check the phone instruction manual or contact your network provider.

Discuss with your son or daughter how to turn off this function or when it may be appropriate to have this turned on. For example - some parents may wish, at certain times, for these settings to be kept switched on so that a young person could be located in emergency situations.

Mobile phone theft is often opportunistic and it is wise to remind them that they should not leave their phone in full view unattended. Enable 'Find My Phone' settings which allow them to remotely locate their phone and disable it if stolen. These functions have dramatically reduced mobile phone theft in the UK.

Remind them of **street safety**; it is important to be extra careful when walking, running, crossing roads or riding a bike whilst using music players on mobile phones, browsing the internet, chatting or texting.

Many new smart phones can also be used to store documents using Apps turning their phone into a 'drive'. Remind them they should not be storing documents on their phone that contain their personal details as they would not be secure if the phone were hacked, lost or stolen.

### ***What is the law regarding the distribution of indecent images?***

The future costs for children who find themselves the subject of a Police investigation are potentially severe. If they were to be convicted this may lead to foreign travel, jobs or careers being unavailable to them. They may find themselves charged with offences under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 in relation to making, possession and distribution of indecent images of children or under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 in relation to Indecent Communications.

*Ultimately this may lead to them finding themselves convicted of a serious sexual offence and placed on the Sex Offender's Register.*

### ***What about Bullying and Trolling?***

The use of mobile phones or technology deliberately to upset someone can be very distressing. The audience can be very large and reached rapidly. The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and the scope of bullying using electronic means can be greater than other forms of bullying behaviours.

Bullying using technology may involve recording/videoing events without permission and uploading them to the internet, videoing events on mobile phones. This may also be a good discussion point with your son or daughter. By using their mobile responsibly this also helps to contribute towards being a good role model for siblings or others in online communities.

Trolling – Where anonymous users leave feedback or comments of a much nastier kind is an example of unacceptable behaviours. Often the person leaving such messages is doing so to purposely attract

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negative attention. This kind of contribution to the online world is damaging and unhelpful in terms of responsible use. Always remind your son or daughter to be polite and courteous just as they would in the offline world, if they see such content online that concerns them, be careful not to respond to it but know how to report any abuse.

If your child receives abusive calls or messages, it is important that they do not respond. They should report this to you as their parent or carer or trusted adult / teacher. **It is advised they do not delete or tamper with the message or evidence so that vital evidence is kept.**

***Where can I find further help or advice?***

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) has a dedicated website that is for all children, young people, professionals, parents and carers. [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Childnet International [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) have advice and guidance and a specific section called 'Know it All' advice for Parents and Carers.

Resources and links for Parents and Carers on e-safety issues [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

General mobile phone advice and safety [www.mobilephonesandsafety.co.uk](http://www.mobilephonesandsafety.co.uk)

Also, you may wish to check with your preferred mobile phone service provider. They may have further advice and guidance on specific networks and internet access.

***What should I do if I am concerned about a child?***

Tell someone what your concerns are - speak to a teacher, a doctor, a social worker, a police officer or school nurse. **Phone 01463 703488** For General Enquiries e-mail: [CPAdmin@highland.gov.uk](mailto:CPAdmin@highland.gov.uk)

For information on the work of the Highland Child Protection Committee  
<http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/2-childprotection/>

**This guidance has been developed by the multi-agency Highland E-Safety Group Feb 2015**

The Highland E=Safety Group has a site for news and advice on all matters

[www.highlandesafety.wordpress.com](http://www.highlandesafety.wordpress.com)

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