

Children, young people and adults now regularly use mobile devices with the capability to text, phone, access social networks, music, videos & gaming sites, take photographs and record videos.

Most people use these devices responsibly & some consider them an important part of their safety.

For some, there are concerns over safety & security either as victims or perpetrators of misuse.

Pupil/student misuse:

- Staff can confiscate the device as a disciplinary procedure
- Head Teachers & authorised staff are allowed to search pupils/students & their possessions:
 - **With** consent & confiscate items if reasonable
 - **Without** consent and confiscate suspected specified prohibited items (including pornographic images, items used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury or damage to property)
- If inappropriate material is seen on the device, authorised staff can decide whether to:
 - Delete that material
 - Retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline) or
 - Report it to the police (if the material is of such seriousness)

Always:

- Follow statutory requirements when searching
- Help & support all pupils/students involved
- Consult with the DSL/D about whether to deal with the matter through online safety or anti-bullying procedures, or referral to the police
- Inform parents and carers as appropriate

Useful web links & resources:

- [Screening, Searching & Confiscation: advice for schools, DfE 2018](#)
- [Thinkuknow](#)
- [Childnet International Resources](#)
- [NSPCC: Sexting](#)

Did you know?

- The age of criminal responsibility is 10 years

It is a crime to:

- Harass or bully via a text, email or phone call
- Create, possess or distribute indecent images of someone under 18 years even with consent or if they are self-generated

Tips:

- Taking a photograph without consent is an invasion of privacy & may be distressing
- Once photos are sent to another device, social network or website, they become impossible to fully track or delete
- Giving out personal information (including photos) to people you do not know could put children, young people & adults at risk of harm
- Location tracking services allow any individual to identify the location of people & devices

Staff should never:

- Store any personal information about a pupil/student on their personal mobile devices
- Comment about a pupil/student or their family on social media or other public forum
- Seek contact with or respond to requests for contact from a pupil/student or their families via personal phones, text, e-mail or social networking accounts
- Give their personal contact details to a pupil/student including e-mail address, social networking accounts, home or mobile phone numbers

However: if the pupil/student &/or their family are personal friends or relatives, inform your senior manager immediately.

To ensure safe and responsible mobile device use, we should all:

- Respect & protect our own and other people's privacy, identity and whereabouts
- Use our devices responsibly
- Never share other people's personal details without their permission
- Always report illegal, inappropriate, distressing and scary contact
- Have an understanding how to keep ourselves safe online and through mobile devices.