

Re. Message from your Safer Schools Officers: Talk to your child about phone safety

Mobile phones are a great way to stay in contact with family and friends. Many children starting secondary school in September own one or have access to one.

As useful as they are, they can make children vulnerable to thieves who are particularly interested in new models and other valuable items such as cash, airpods and expensive coats. Reducing robbery is our top priority and our officers are working hard to catch those responsible, with activity to prevent it taking place daily.

There are however, a number of things you can do to help reduce your child's risk of becoming a victim and keep safe whilst using their phone. **If you can, talk to them about where and how they use their phone using the following advice:**

Safety when out and about:

- Keep your phone and valuables out of sight in a safe place when travelling to and from school. Be careful when you take your phone out in public places.
- Bus stops, train stations and surrounding areas are common target areas for thieves, who can approach on foot, moped or on a pedal bike or e-scooter.
- Earphones/headphones can distract you, stopping you from seeing or hearing someone approach you from behind.
- Don't confront a thief – it's not worth risking your own safety for possessions that can be replaced.
- Robbery or attempted robbery are serious crimes and should be reported. It's important you seek help straight away by dialing 999 rather than contacting police when you get home. Use a friend's phone or the phone of a trusted adult. This gives us the best chance to catch the suspects, recover any stolen property and ensure your safety.
- If you have information about a robbery and do not want to report it to police, speak to Fearless 100 % anonymously at www.fearless.org. Fearless is the youth service of independent charity Crimestoppers.
- Whether you have a phone or not, memorise or keep a parent/carer's phone number in a separate place in your bag/zippered pocket in case of emergency.

Help protect your child's phone if it's stolen:

- Use your device's security features, apps or PIN locking mechanisms to protect your data and prevent the phone being used.

- Keep a record of the phone's IMEI number (not on your phone!). This is a 15-digit unique number which can be obtained by keying in *#06#. You need this information if the phone is lost or stolen.
- Consider installing a tracker app, available online.

You might find the attached leaflet useful – it's aimed at young people and will be used by our officers in schools.

For more information go to www.fearless.org/campaigns/robbery. For help and advice on staying safe online and how to keep cyber criminals at bay, the Met has some great videos and other resources at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia