

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey jacket and a purple and white patterned scarf, is looking down at a white flip phone she is holding. A blue signal wave graphic, composed of many small 'x' marks, emanates from the phone and spreads across the upper right portion of the image. The background is a blurred green field.

a guide to  
using your mobile  
safely and responsibly

Keeping the Island connected

## Using your mobile safely

A mobile phone is great for staying in touch with your friends and family. The trouble is that they are sometimes used by bullies to make upsetting phone calls, post comments or send nasty or threatening text messages, or picture messages online.

Some messages are sent to the bully's victims and some are sent to other people as a way of spreading malicious stories.

### Tips on using your mobile

- Keep your mobile with you when you're out. You don't want people to be able to see your number if you're not around.
- Leave your name off your voicemail message, so bullies won't be certain who it is they're calling.
- You don't have to reply to any text or picture messages you don't like, but make sure you

show them to someone you trust. If possible, show them to a parent or guardian, but if you don't want to do that, show them to a teacher at school or to your best friend.

- Keep a note of the times and dates of any bullying or abusive messages, and remember to keep the message itself.
- It's not a good idea to send a message to someone when you're upset. Wait until you've calmed down and had time to think.
- Try turning your phone off sometimes. It doesn't have to be on all the time.



Some of the newer mobile phones, including Bluetooth and WiFi enabled phones, can be plugged into computers and used to download pictures and other files. Many phones are also able to access the internet. This means that, like a computer, a mobile can be used to look at websites or take part in chat room conversations. It can also be used to send and receive emails.

You should always take care when using a private chat room, which is a one-to-one chat that is often not moderated and may be used by an adult looking to befriend or meet a young person.

## Tips on staying safe online

- Try to make sure that your online friends are genuine and keep away from chatters who are sometimes dishonest. Have they claimed to be 14 years old one day and 18 years old the next, for example?
- People in chat rooms sometimes ask personal questions. You don't have to give chat friends any information that you're not happy to pass on.
- It's especially important that you don't give out your mobile number or your address or any details about your school or college. You would not share this information with a stranger on the street. It's better to be vague by saying, 'I live in the UK', rather than saying the name of the place you live.
- If you are thinking about posting a picture of yourself, it is important to consider the type of picture and the kind of attention it might attract. Also be aware that photos can easily be copied, changed and used elsewhere, and can potentially stay online for ever.
- There's no need to keep friendships secret. If somebody asks you to keep an online friendship secret, you should tell an adult who you trust straight away.
- You can stop talking to someone in a chat room any time you want to.

# Stopping nuisance and unwanted calls

You may receive nuisance calls and other unwanted calls. In many cases, the calls are simply annoying, but they can also be upsetting and frightening, especially if the calls are in any way threatening. It's important that young people know and understand that you don't have to put up with these calls. They can be stopped and they should be stopped.

## Tips on avoiding nuisance calls

- If you receive a nuisance call, stay calm. Most people who make these sort of calls want to upset you, so showing no emotion might put them off and they won't try to bother you again.
- When answering the phone, just say "Hello". Let callers identify themselves to you before you start talking to them.
- If you receive a malicious call, put the phone down and ignore it for a few minutes before hanging up. This wastes the caller's time and money and can put them off. If your phone rings again, don't say anything when you answer it. A genuine caller will speak first.

- If you have a Bluetooth phone, you may receive unwanted messages from other Bluetooth users who are nearby. If you think you've been sent a message from someone you don't know, it's best not to accept it.
- Remember that you can reject a call if you don't recognise the number that comes up on your handset or if the number has been withheld.
- If you're worried or upset by any call you receive, it might be a good idea to talk to a parent or guardian about it. If you don't want to do that, you should tell a teacher at your school or college.



Mobile phones are valuable things, but they aren't as valuable as personal safety. If you feel threatened in any way, the most important thing is to protect yourself rather than be harmed just for the sake of hanging on to your mobile. If your mobile is stolen, you should contact customer service to get a restriction put on the number. By doing this, nobody will be able to make or receive calls with the missing handset or SIM. You should then report the theft to the police, who will give you a crime reference number. If a phone that has been stolen or lost is later found, it will help the police to identify it if it's been 'property marked' with your postcode. Your local police will have more information about this. It will also help the police if you know the phone's IMEI number. This is a 15-digit serial number that is unique to every mobile phone. It can usually be found on a label behind the battery.

## Tips on keeping you and your mobile safe

- Keep your phone hidden and separate from your other valuable things. An ideal place to keep it is in your inside jacket or coat pocket.
- Never leave your phone where you can't reach it quickly and don't lend it out to strangers or people you don't know very well.
- It's more difficult for someone to grab your phone from you if you hold it firmly when you're making calls.
- Stay alert. Don't become so caught up in talking or texting or playing a game that you aren't aware of what's going on around you.
- Try to keep to well-lit areas when you are out and about. Before using your mobile phone, look around you to make sure it's safe.
- Switch the ring tone off and use a vibrate alert instead. You can also let calls go straight through to your voicemail and ring or text back at a time when you feel safer.
- Your personal safety is much more important than your mobile phone. Remember that you can always get another phone if you need to.

## Using camera phones safely

Many mobile phones now include built-in digital cameras, so people are able to communicate with photos and videos as well as with voice or text. The pictures are often of a high quality and they can be sent to other camera phones or to any email address. Camera phones can also receive photos taken by other people. Camera phones need to be used with a degree of care. It is important that you do not misuse them or allow others to exploit them in any way. Anybody with a camera phone can also use multimedia chat rooms. This is where photos or video clips taken on camera phones are placed on public messageboards. The photos can be viewed by anyone in the chat room. They can also be copied and sent to other people.

If you receive an offensive picture or video message, or have been the direct victim of a potential offence recorded on a camera phone, you should contact the police immediately.

You should also report offensive messages to Manx Telecom.

Try to hold onto the message if you can, as we may be able to trace it.

### Tips on using your camera phone safely

- It is not possible to withhold a number when sending a photo from a mobile, so any photo you send or receive can be traced.
- A photo can be forwarded to other people or posted on the internet. So a picture sent to a small group of your friends might end up being seen by millions of people all over the world.



- A picture could contain something that could help someone find out more about you. Clues to personal information can often be found in the background or can appear by accident.
- Some people might try to take pictures in inappropriate situations or places, such as at the swimming pool or the beach. If you think you've spotted something and feel worried about it, you should tell an adult who you trust straight away.
- You should also tell an adult if you receive a photo or a video that shows someone being hit or hurt in some other way. Taking pictures or filming someone being attacked can be illegal and is a very serious offence. It is also illegal to send this sort of photo or video clip to another person.
- Make sure that you never send a picture that is offensive in any way at all. Sending pictures that are obscene, indecent or menacing may result in you getting into serious trouble.

Remember it is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle. Your concentration and reaction times are seriously impaired and the likelihood of you causing an accident involving another road user or pedestrian is greatly increased. If caught you may receive a driving ban or a custodial sentence. If you receive a call from someone who you know is driving a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle, you should first tell them to call back when safe to do so and then end the call immediately.

If you are experiencing any of the problems in this booklet and need advice or assistance, please call **624 624** or e-mail **[customer@manx-telecom.com](mailto:customer@manx-telecom.com)**

Manx Telecom Limited

Isle of Man Business Park Cooil Road Braddan Isle of Man IM99 1HX

T +44 (0)1624 624624

[www.manxtelecom.com](http://www.manxtelecom.com)