

## Staying in Touch: A Parent's Guide to Mobile Phones

### More than just talk – Top Tips

- Make sure that your child is aware that the use of cameras, and therefore camera phones, may be prohibited, for example in sports centre changing rooms.
- It is best to seek another person's permission before taking a photograph.
- If anyone else's use of a camera phone makes your child feel uncomfortable, they should tell someone.
- If you or your child receive a picture you feel might be inappropriate or malicious, contact Vodafone Customer Care on 191 immediately. They will advise you if the matter should be taken further.
- If the picture has been downloaded through the mobile Internet contact Vodafone Customer Care or the Internet Watch Foundation ([www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk))



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### Downloading content on mobiles – Top Tips

- Discuss with your child what services they use on their mobile, for example they might download ringtones, wallpaper or games directly from their mobile.
- Find out whether they share any downloaded content with friends.
- Discuss with your child the types of content you would be unhappy for them to download, receive or share with others.
- Stress the importance of not responding to any messages from strangers, or messages that are funny, or offer to sell products cheaply. These are invariably, 'too good to be true'.
- Make sure any phones which have had the Content Control bar lifted are kept away from children.
- You can reapply the content control bar by calling Vodafone Customer Care on 191, visiting a Vodafone retail store or on-line at [www.vodafone.co.uk](http://www.vodafone.co.uk).

### Downloading content – Chat Top Tips

- Discuss with your child their use of Chat rooms, and inquire whether they are simply communicating with friends they know in the real world, or whether they are making contact with strangers who they meet on-line.
- Make sure you are happy about the kinds of Chat rooms your child is visiting, and encourage them to use Chat rooms appropriate for their age. Some Chat rooms are only suitable for adults, as they can contain sexually explicit messages and links to inappropriate websites.
- Emphasise to your child the importance when using a Chat room of never giving out any personal information such as their phone number, email address or any other information that could identify where they live or go to school.
- Discourage your child from meeting up with people they have come into contact with using Chat services. If your child does want to meet someone who they have chatted to on-line, we suggest that a parent or appropriate adult should always go along too. It is safest to arrange this meeting in a public place.
- If your child receives persistent calls or messages from a stranger you should report it to the police, taking a note of the number and saving the message or picture on your mobile.

### Downloading content – Games Top Tips

- Become familiar with the types of games your child plays on their mobile phone; ask them to show you their favourite game.
- Agree with them the types of games you are happy for them to download and play.
- Check that their mobile phone has 'Content Control' applied.
- If you permit your child to use 'active' games that may involve communication with strangers while they are playing, ensure they are familiar with Safe Chatting rules.

### Premium rate services – Top Tips

- Read the small print before you access the service.
- Encourage your child to always seek permission before accessing a premium rate service from their mobile, a home landline, or via their PC.
- Make your child aware of the cost implications of using premium rate services.
- Encourage your child to always check how much the call will cost before accessing premium rate services, and to be aware that charges can soon mount up very quickly.
- You can bar access to premium rate lines on any mobile for which you have administrative rights, i.e. if the phone is registered in your name. You can contact Vodafone Customer Service on 191 to request this.
- If you use adult premium rate services remember to ensure your phone is locked and kept in a safe place to prevent children accessing adult content by mistake.
- Check what services your child is using. Services with adult content should always carry a warning and declaration that users must be 18 years and over.
- Send a 'STOP' text message to cancel the services you do not wish to receive.

## Bullying – Top Tips

- If you suspect your child is being ‘groomed’ by someone on-line either on the Internet or their mobile phone, contact your local police station, local social services department or the NSPCC Help line on 0808 800 5000 for help and advice.
- Stress to your child the importance of being careful about who they give their mobile number to, and to never give it to strangers.
- If you are concerned that your child might be receiving bullying calls or messages, or they appear distressed, it is important you ask them directly if this is the case.
- Stress the importance of never replying to a text or picture message they did not wish to receive, and to tell you about it.
- Always keep the message or picture - you may need this information when you contact the police.
- If your child is reluctant to confide in you, encourage them to talk to someone they can trust, or contact an organisation such as ChildLine (08001111 /[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).
- You can also contact organisations such as ParentLine Plus or NFPI ([www.nfpi.org](http://www.nfpi.org)) for advice.

## Malicious communications – Top Tips

- If you or your child has suspicions about someone sending malicious communications, simply don’t talk to them or reply to them. Use voicemail to filter you calls.
- If you or your child receives a picture you feel is illegal, particularly if someone may be in danger, contact your local police station and Vodafone Customer Care on 191.
- If the picture has been downloaded through the Internet, contact Vodafone Customer Care or the Internet Watch Foundation ([www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)).
- If they are receiving threatening calls or messages, you should note the times and dates, and save any messages on to the mobile phone and contact your local police station.
- Make sure your child understands that some pictures, text messages or phone calls may be distressing to others and advise them only to send messages that they would be happy to receive themselves.

## Nuisance communications and Spam – Top Tips

- Discuss with your child the possibility of receiving unsolicited messages or Spam on their mobiles and the importance of not responding to them, especially if it suggests they have won a prize that can be claimed by dialling a given number.
- Customers have to agree to receive promotional material so be careful that you or your child does not accidentally agree to an ongoing service. If this does happen, you can simply send a reply text saying ‘STOP’ and the company supplying the information will be obliged by law to stop.
- Encourage your child to tell you, or a trusted adult, such as teacher, about any messages or content that makes them feel uncomfortable that they receive on their mobile phone.
- In order to help protect people’s privacy, at Vodafone, we ask customers to agree to ‘opt in’ to receive promotional messages from us.

## Mobiles and health – Top Tips

- Encourage your child to keep their mobile calls short, or use text instead, so that the phone is not near to the head for long periods of time.
- Consider using a hands free kit to distance the phone from the head and body.
- More information on mobile phones and health can be found on the following websites:

International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection:

<http://www.icnirp.de/>

World Health Organisation: <http://www.who.int/>

National Radiological Protection Board: <http://www.nrpb.org/>

## Mobile phone theft – Top Tips

- Note down the phone number, the phone make and mobile and the IMEI number of the mobile phone. Keep this information safe in case the phone is stolen.
- Advise your child to keep the phone out of sight in public places, ideally, in a secure bag or pocket.
- Advise your child not to resist handing over their mobile if they are threatened by an individual or group to do so, as their safety is much more important.
- Advise your child not to hand over their phone if approached by a stranger to make an urgent call, as it is likely to be a trick to steal it. However, if the person becomes threatening advise your child not to resist handing it over, in this circumstance.
- If your child’s mobile is stolen, report it to Vodafone Customer Services on 191 and your local police. It is important to do this as soon as possible, as you are responsible for the cost of its use until the theft is reported, after which Vodafone will stop the number being used until a new SIM card is issued to you.
- Always use your phone security PIN number or code to unlock your phone. Refer to your phone manual for more information.

## Location-based services – Top Tips

- If you intend to use a child tracking location service for your child, it is important that you discuss how it works and make sure your child is willing to consent to its use.
- Make sure your child understands that he/she should never accept a phone from anyone (known or unknown) without your agreement, because it is possible that it may be pre-installed with passive location services.
- Make sure that your child understands that they should never agree to be located by anyone other than their parents or carers.
- Stress the importance to your child of never giving out his or her telephone number to someone they do not know.
- Let your child know that it is very important that if they receive any text message requesting their consent to be located, to tell you, or a trusted adult, such as a teacher immediately.