

# Mobile phones:

A parent's guide to  
safe and sensible use

For many people, young and old, using a mobile phone is a routine part of daily life. The mobile phone has become so common that it is easy to forget what a sophisticated and powerful piece of technology it is. A person who carries a mobile phone can be contacted almost anywhere and at any time.

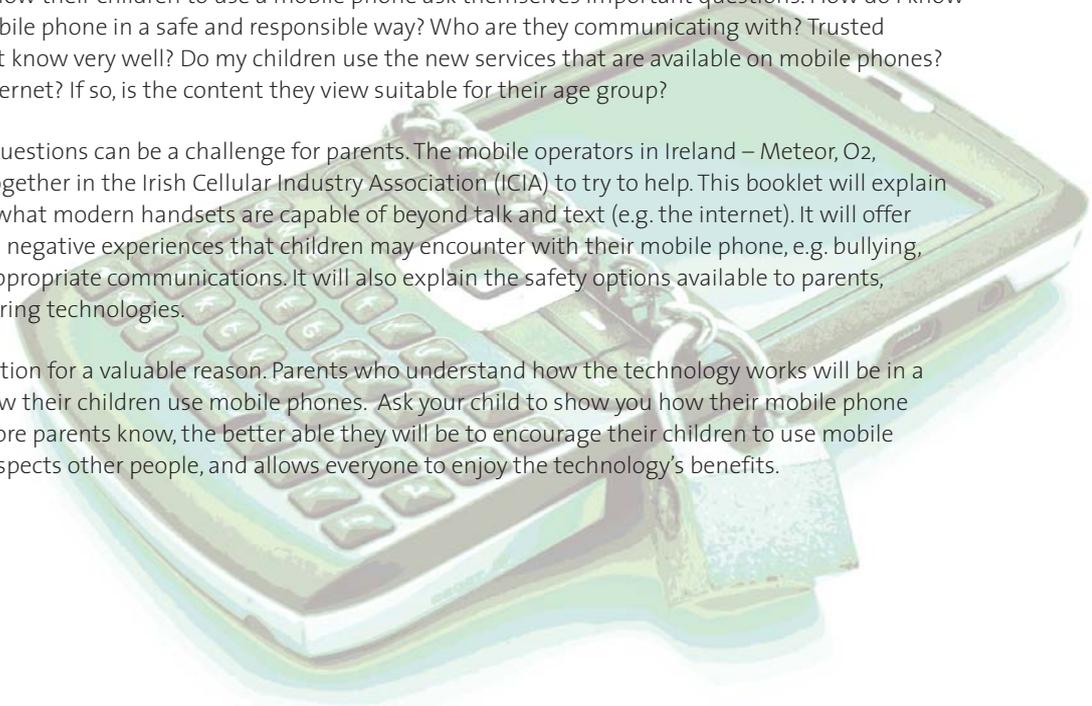
# The Mobile phone: what you should know?

Children are keen users of the mobile phone. Used wisely, a mobile phone can benefit children. It can be a fun way for them to stay in touch with friends after school, for example. It can also benefit parents, who can check that their children are safe when outside the home.

However, many parents who allow their children to use a mobile phone ask themselves important questions. How do I know my children are using their mobile phone in a safe and responsible way? Who are they communicating with? Trusted friends? Or someone they don't know very well? Do my children use the new services that are available on mobile phones? Are they surfing the mobile internet? If so, is the content they view suitable for their age group?

Finding the answers to these questions can be a challenge for parents. The mobile operators in Ireland – Meteor, O2, Vodafone and 3 – have come together in the Irish Cellular Industry Association (ICIA) to try to help. This booklet will explain how mobile phones work and what modern handsets are capable of beyond talk and text (e.g. the internet). It will offer parents advice for dealing with negative experiences that children may encounter with their mobile phone, e.g. bullying, spam, and where to report inappropriate communications. It will also explain the safety options available to parents, including 'dual access' and filtering technologies.

The booklet offers this information for a valuable reason. Parents who understand how the technology works will be in a better position to supervise how their children use mobile phones. Ask your child to show you how their mobile phone works if you are unsure. The more parents know, the better able they will be to encourage their children to use mobile phones in a way that is safe, respects other people, and allows everyone to enjoy the technology's benefits.



## top tips



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- **Understanding** how the technology works yourself is the best way of making sure your child uses their mobile phone safely and responsibly
- Make sure your child has **registered** their account with their mobile operator
- **Apply** for dual access to your child's account
- Ask the mobile operator to switch on the internet safeguards on your child's account, e.g. **filtering technologies**
- **Encourage** your child to talk openly with you about any negative experiences they encounter while using their mobile phone. Sometimes a child will hide a negative experience from parents because they fear their mobile phone or internet access will be taken away
- **Report** offensive or illegal calls, messages or images to the Gardaí
- **Advise** your child not to respond to a call or text if they do not recognise the number
- **Take note** of the IMEI number on your child's mobile phone so the operator can disable the handset if it is lost or stolen
- Advise children to **take care** when using their mobile phone in public. A mobile phone is a valuable item and can be a target for theft
- **Text 'STOP'** to end a premium-rate subscription. Contact RegTel if this fails to work
- **Forward** suspected spam messages to your mobile operator's reporting line
- Make your child aware that using a mobile phone in certain places is **inappropriate**, e.g. a cinema or library

### **WHAT'S CHANGED...**

Children today are part of the first generation in Ireland to grow up with the mobile phone. This has created many opportunities that simply weren't possible when their parents were growing up. Staying in touch with friends is easier. Children don't have to call each other's homes any more; they can call their friends directly, wherever they are. There are different ways to communicate, as well: talk, text, email, and social-networking. Children can even play music and videos or surf the web through their mobile phones.

### **WHAT IS GOOD?...**

With so much to do, it is not surprising that mobile phones are so popular among children. Parents, too, have seen benefits from allowing their children to use mobile phones. Organising family life can be more flexible, for example, arranging times to collect children after sports practice or drama class. A mobile phone can also be used for security, to check on children's location and safety when they are outside the home.

### **WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR...**

However, children's use of mobile phones has also raised a number of serious considerations for parents. Among these is age. Mobile phones started to become widely available in Ireland in the mid-1990s. Many of today's parents would have purchased their first mobile phone when they were aged in their 20s, 30s, or older – at an age when they were mature enough to use the technology safely and responsibly. Children who use a mobile phone have in their hands a powerful communications tool, and they cannot always be expected to use it with the same good judgement of an adult.



## **BE ALERT...**

Parents have an important role to play in supervising how their children use their mobile phones. But this can be tricky. Consider the difference between the traditional fixed-line 'house' phone and a mobile phone. One way for parents to monitor their children's use of the 'house' phone is to keep it in the hall, or sitting room, or kitchen – public rooms in the house, where parents can see and hear their children. A mobile phone is small and moveable, and allows communication anywhere it can find a signal. At home, it can easily be used out of sight and earshot of parents. Even if parents are nearby, they still mightn't detect what their children are doing: a mobile phone can be switched to silent so it doesn't make a sound when it receives a call or a text. And, of course, parents can't always be around when children take their mobile phone with them outside the home.

All of this can seem more daunting than it really is, though. This booklet will help, as it will explain options such as 'dual access' that are easy to set up and go a long way towards keeping children safe when they are using their mobile phones.

## **IT'S UP TO YOU...**

Previous generations of children did not have access to a communications tool as powerful as a mobile phone. In this booklet, when we speak of children we generally mean teenagers or those in their late pre-teen years, e.g. 11 or 12 years old. Parents, themselves, must decide if their children should be allowed to use a mobile phone, and if so, what is a suitable age. The ICIA recommends that the younger your children the closer you should supervise how they use their mobile phones.

The best way for parents to guide their children to responsible and safe use of a mobile phone is to understand how the technology works. Most parents will know about talk and text, but the latest mobile handsets are capable of much more: picture messaging, video calls, web surfing, and expensive premium-rate services (e.g. ringtones). If you are unsure how these services work, ask your children or another adult to show you on their handset. This booklet will explain them in a later section, also.

Understanding how the technology works will also help parents understand the issues that can arise when children use mobile phones: bullying, wasting money, communicating with people they shouldn't, and viewing content that is unsuitable for their age group. This booklet offers parents advice on how to deal with such situations.

## **KNOW THE CODE...**

Although modern handsets can be as powerful as a mini-computer, the majority of children still see the most important functions of a mobile phone as talk and text. Most communication is fun and harmless, the normal conversations that friends have growing up. A mobile phone can also help children feel less isolated when they are away from their friends.

These benefits come only when children feel safe and comfortable while using their mobile phone. Ensuring this is a priority for the ICIA. All Irish mobile operators have signed up to the association's Code of Practice. The code is a set of rules for industry-wide standards and regulation. It sets out rules on issues such as parental controls, malicious communication, internet access, spam and premium-rate services. This booklet will explain each of these services, and will publish some useful contact details of the main support and regulatory authorities at the back.

Change is the only certainty in the world of mobile phones. The ICIA has produced this booklet to keep parents informed on recent changes. The association is committed to updating its safety policies, advice and parental controls as new mobile technologies and services are released.



# Back to basics – how a mobile phone works...

## **PREPAY / POSTPAY**

Irish mobile operators offer two ways to pay for calls, texts and other services.

### *Prepay:*

Customers buy credit in, for example, a newsagent's. They then 'top up' or add the value of the credit to their mobile phone account. These customers pay before they make calls, send texts, or use another mobile service. Children are most likely to have a prepay account.

### *Postpay:*

Customers pay after they have made calls, sent texts, or used another mobile service. Usually, they will have signed a contract with a mobile operator, e.g. for one year, and will receive a bill at the end of each month. Customers have to be at least 18 years old to sign a contract with a mobile operator.



## **SIM CARD**

To send and receive calls or texts a mobile phone needs a SIM card. This is short for Subscriber Identification Module card. The SIM card, in many ways, gives the handset its identity as your mobile phone. When someone calls your number, it is the SIM card that tells the mobile phone to ring. That is because the SIM card carries the information on your mobile phone account, including your number. If you take the SIM card out of your mobile phone it will not ring when someone calls you. If you place your SIM card into another mobile phone, that phone will ring when someone calls your number. Information besides your number can be saved on the SIM card, also: text messages, picture messages, and the phone numbers of your contacts.

## IMEI

Every mobile phone has an identification (or serial) number. This is called the IMEI number. It is short for International Mobile Equipment Identity number. You can find the IMEI number behind the battery in your mobile phone. Another way to find it is to key \*#06# into most handsets. Parents should take a note of the IMEI number on their child's mobile phone. The number is important if your child's mobile phone is lost or stolen. If either of these situations arises, contact the mobile operator straight away and quote the IMEI number. The operator can then disable (or block) the phone from being used on any mobile network in Ireland. Even if you do not know the IMEI number, you should contact the mobile operator anyway. As long as you know your child's mobile phone number, the operator can freeze their account. This means no one can make calls or send texts using your child's mobile account or number.

## VOICE

Voice calls mean you that can speak to a person on your mobile phone. Using a mobile phone, your children can make and receive calls to and from other mobile phones or traditional fixed-line telephones.

## TEXT MESSAGING (SMS)

Sending text messages is hugely popular among children. Text messages are also known as SMS messages or Short Messaging Services. Almost all mobile phones allow you to send text messages. They are similar to writing a short note. In each text message you can key in up to 160 characters (a character is an individual number or letter). When you have finished writing your text message, you can then send it to someone else's mobile phone. Once that person has read the message, they can reply to it by sending a text to your mobile phone. Children send text messages for a number of reasons. The first and most important reason is communication: staying in touch with family and friends. Children can also use text messages to take part in competitions, vote on television programmes, receive information (sports results, for example), or buy ringtones. Parents should be aware that many of these services (sometimes called premium-rate services) are expensive. If not careful, children can spend a lot of money on them in a short time.



## **MEDIA MESSAGING/PICTURE MESSAGING/MMS**

Many mobile phones have an in-built camera. Children can send the photographs they take to other mobile phones using a service called picture messaging. This service is also known as MMS or Multi-Media Messaging Services. Sending an MMS message is usually more expensive than sending a text message.

Some mobile phones can be connected to personal computers (PCs). If your children do this, they can take the photographs and videos on their mobile phone and save them on their PC. Sometimes children publish these images and videos on the internet, often on social-networking websites. The internet is a public place, so parents are advised to check the suitability of any images that their children publish online.

## **VIDEO CALLING**

When you make a voice call you can hear the person you called but you cannot see them. A video call is different. You can hear and see the person while on a video call.

## **SKYPE**

Another popular service is called Skype. It allows people to make free voice calls or to send text messages over the internet. Most people connect to Skype through the internet on a PC. They can also use a Skype-enabled mobile phone.

## **DATA SERVICES**

Making voice calls and sending text messages are children's most common uses of a mobile phone. However, modern handsets are capable of a lot more. These other uses are usually called data services. Some examples include SMS, MMS, email, surfing the internet, and downloading music.

## **3G**

Mobile phones are not connected to a fixed-line or wire like traditional telephones. Instead, they are connected through a wireless signal to a mobile network. As the technology around mobile phones has advanced, the network has improved and is capable of carrying more information. This is part of the reason why mobile phones offer more than talk and text, and can now connect to the internet. One new (or next generation) technology is called 3G. 3G Mobile phones can send and receive greater amounts of information than other more basic mobile phones. Because the mobile phone does not connect to the network using a wire, you will not see any physical difference. But it is worthwhile for parents to check if their child is using a 3G phone because of the extra services it allows. If your child is using their mobile phone to make video calls, for example, they will be using a 3G phone. 3G also opens up wider access to the internet. If your child has recently bought a new mobile phone there is a good chance it could be a 3G phone.

# Communicating today...

Many children access the internet on a PC every day. Online, they can look up information for homework, be entertained, and chat to friends on instant messaging or social-networking services. More and more, children are accessing the internet through their mobile phones, especially if they own a 3G phone. Because 3G creates a fast connection, children can do more things on the mobile internet, for example, watch videos or update their social-networking website. In general, the safety rules that parents apply to their children's use of the internet on a PC should apply to their use of the mobile internet.

## **EMAIL/WEBMAIL**

Email is short for electronic mail. It allows you to write, send and receive messages across the internet. Instead of calling a number, you reach people through their email address. Each email address contains a symbol – @ – known as the 'at' sign, e.g. johnsmith@icia.ie. To send an email you will usually use a computer program such as Microsoft Outlook.

Mobile operators offer email accounts to all users which are either directly accessible via the mobile phones or through the operators' websites. Many other email services are also available on the internet. Such services are called webmail. Examples of webmail include Hotmail, Yahoo mail and Gmail and these can also be accessed on the Mobile phone.

## **SOCIAL-NETWORKING**

In recent years, a popular activity for children online has been social-networking. Communication and community are at the heart of social-networking. Children create a webpage, called a profile, to describe who they are and what they are interested in. They then communicate with friends or other people online who share their interests and hobbies. Some famous social-networking websites are Bebo, MySpace and Facebook.

Depending on their operator and handset, children can access social-networking websites through the mobile internet. Some operators allow customers simply to browse (view) the websites. Other operators allow customers to change information on their profile and communicate through selected social-networking websites.



The internet is a public place. Parents should discourage their children from publishing personal information online. It's important, also, that children are wary of communicating online with anyone they do not know and trust in real life.

## **BLUETOOTH**

Mobile phones connect to each other across their operator's network. When your children make a voice call or send a text message, their mobile phone connects to the operator's network.

Other technologies allow mobile phones to connect to each other, too. Bluetooth is one of these. If your child's mobile phone has Bluetooth they can switch it on and make a private connection to a friend's phone (provided it has Bluetooth as well). They can then swap information, e.g. pictures or videos, across this private connection. Bluetooth is popular among children because establishing the connection is easy. It is also free.

Bluetooth can be used only when two mobile phones are physically close to each other, in the same room or building. This is unlike a connection through operators' networks. On such networks, mobile phones can connect to each other almost anywhere in the country (a child in Dublin can ring a friend in Cork, for example) or even the world.

Bluetooth can be switched on or off. Children are advised to switch off Bluetooth when they are not using it. If it is left on, other people nearby can try to connect to their mobile phone and send them unwanted messages.



# PLAYING, PERSONALISING & PREMIUM RATES

## **GAMES**

Mobile phones can be used to play video games. Many of these games are short and simple. However, as mobile phones grow in power, with larger colour screens, more sophisticated games are being released.

Some games allow only a single player. Other games allow two or more players. Your child's mobile phone may have come with games already loaded on it. A growing number of games can be downloaded from the mobile internet or are played online. Parents should be aware that downloading games or playing them online can be expensive. Also, some games – those with violent content, in particular – are aimed at a mature audience.

## **PREMIUM-RATE SERVICES**

Many children like to 'personalise' their mobile phone. This can mean adding pictures and sounds to the handset that matches their personality and interests. For example, children can use a short clip of their favourite song as the sound (tone) their mobile phone makes when it rings. This is often called a ringtone. Children can personalise their mobile phone by buying 'content', e.g. ringtones, photographs or logos. They can also sign up (subscribe) to receive interesting information or enter competitions. Such content and information are purchased through premium-rate services (PRS).

Premium-rate services are supplied directly to a customer's mobile phone. An example of how they work is as follows. Your child wants to buy a ringtone. They send a text message to a special number, known as a premium-rate number. The service provider replies by sending the ringtone to your child's mobile phone. The service provider then deducts the cost of the ringtone from the credit in your child's mobile account (assuming they are on prepay). Premium-rate services cost more than a standard rate call or text.

The premium-rate numbers for voice calls, e.g. to answer questions in a quiz, have ten digits (numbers) that start with 1 and 5, e.g. 15XXXXXXXX. The premium-rate numbers for sending a text message have five digit numbers and start with 5, e.g. 5XXXX.

Some premium-rate services are 'age restricted'. This means you have to be at least a certain age to use them – 18 years old, in many cases. They are 'age restricted' because their content is usually aimed at an adult audience. The numbers for such premium-rate services begin with 5 and 9, e.g. 59XXX. The number 59 separates them from other premium-rate services. Providers of age-restricted services must use an age-verification system to block access by children.

The Irish Premium Rate regulator is called RegTel and is responsible for making sure that providers of age-restricted services have in place the correct age-verification systems. Parents can contact RegTel if they are concerned that their children have received content from an age-restricted service. (Contact details are at the back of this booklet.)

If your children are having trouble stopping a premium-rate service provider, from sending them content and charging them, again you can contact RegTel. Some premium-rate services run on a subscription basis. This means your children will not receive the service as a 'one off'. They could have signed up to receive a message every week or every month. The service provider will charge your children for each message they receive. The advertisement for the service has to make it clear that it is a subscription service and state the charge for each message received.

Normally, your children can end a subscription by replying 'STOP' to the sender. If the subscription continues, parents should contact the premium-rate provider directly. If this fails to work, contact RegTel. Your mobile operator will also try to help. However, the mobile operator cannot unsubscribe customers from premium-rate services directly because separate companies run them.

Children can spend a lot of money, quickly, on premium-rate services. Some mobile operators offer a system called 'dual access' for parents who are concerned and want to see what services their children are accessing and how much they are spending. The system can also help parents who are concerned about their children's mobile phone usage in general. Dual access is explained in the next section.



## You can take control

All Irish mobile operators keep records of their customer's accounts. These records include numbers called, or texted, the account's balance, and the services available on the customer's mobile phone. In most cases, Irish mobile operators will reveal the records only to the person who is named on the account (in other words, the owner). This is to protect customers' privacy.

However, when the owner of an account is a child, all operators offer parents a service called 'dual access'. Under this system, the mobile operator will reveal account records to both the child (account owner) and their parents. Dual access provides a way for parents to check the numbers their child has been calling and texting, and to keep an eye on the amount of money their child is spending on credit. It also allows parents to ask the operator to block certain services from their child's mobile phone account, e.g. internet access.

Most children have prepay mobile phone accounts. It is not compulsory to register a prepay account with the mobile operator (give details such as name and address). If an account is not registered, the operator will not know the name of the person using that account and, importantly for parents, will not know their age. To activate dual access, you and your child have to register your details with the account's mobile operator. You will have to go through a number of checks (or validation steps) to set up the service. This is to ensure only parents have access to the child's account and that privacy is protected.

Parents who want to set up a dual access service on their child's account should contact their mobile operator. Contact details for all Irish mobile operators are printed at the back of this booklet.

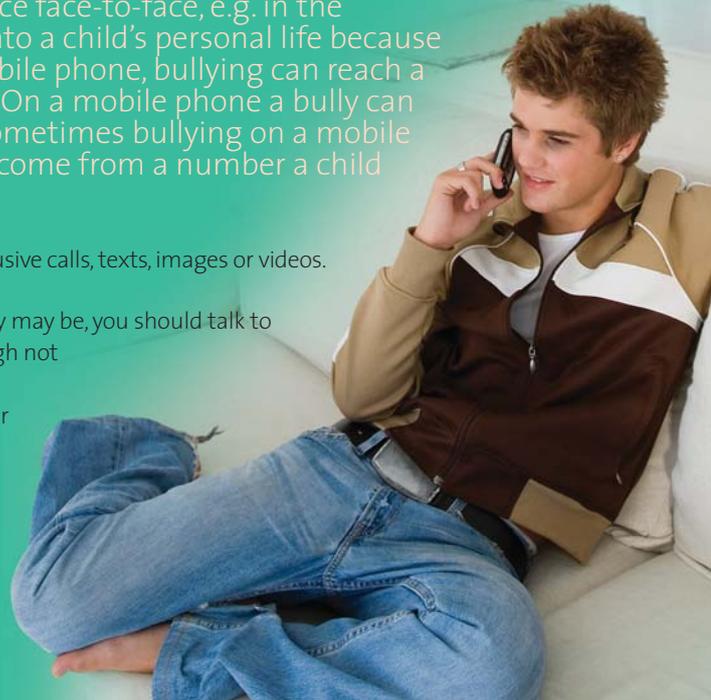
# How you can help keep your child safe

## BULLYING AND MALICIOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Bullying, in any form, is upsetting for a child. Unfortunately, new communications technologies have opened up new ways for people to be bullied. Before the internet and the mobile phone, most bullying among children took place face-to-face, e.g. in the schoolyard. New forms of bullying can reach deeper into a child's personal life because bullying may not take place face-to-face. Across a mobile phone, bullying can reach a child at home, or at sports practice, almost anywhere. On a mobile phone a bully can reach and harass a child directly, wherever they are. Sometimes bullying on a mobile phone is anonymous if the abusive calls or messages come from a number a child does not recognise.

Such bullying is called cyber-bullying. On a mobile phone it can involve abusive calls, texts, images or videos.

If you are aware that your child is being bullied, or are concerned that they may be, you should talk to them openly and with sensitivity. Bullying on a mobile phone often, though not always, signals that the child is being bullied face-to-face as well. Parents should take the steps they consider most appropriate if they discover their child is being bullied. All Irish mobile operators have policies which condemn bullying or malicious communications on mobile phones. Serious bullying can sometimes be a criminal offence. If your child has received threatening messages, you should contact the Gardaí. All mobile operators work in co-operation with the Gardaí in cases where bullying has been reported.



Some children hide that they are being cyber-bullied because they fear parents will take away their internet access or mobile phone. In such situations, parents can find it difficult to detect that their child is being bullied because the internet and mobile phone are direct and private ways of communicating. There are some common signs you can look out for, however. If your child has been a keen user of their mobile phone but suddenly stops using it, or keeps it switched off most of the time, it could be a sign of bullying. Also, if your child suddenly tries to change their number or claims their mobile phone has been lost – and wants a new number for their new handset – it could also be a sign that something is wrong.

Remember, also, that parents need to act responsibly if they discover that their child is bullying someone else. Some parents register their child's mobile phone in their own name. If you have done this, and threatening or abusive communications are sent from that mobile phone, you may be subject to any investigations of the calls or messages.

**Below are some tips and advice you can give your child if they receive bullying or malicious communications:**

- Only give their mobile phone number to people they trust. Do not publish their number in a public forum such as the internet, where anyone can see it
- Do not reply to abusive or rude text, picture or video messages. Also, do not forward any such messages as they could be assisting a bully or breaking the law
- They should keep a note of the dates and times of any abusive messages and calls, save the messages to their mobile phone, and always tell a parent or a trusted adult such as a teacher
- Do not send messages to someone when they are angry or upset. Wait until they have calmed down and have had time to think
- Request that their operator provide them with a new mobile phone number if they are being bullied or harassed. The operator can where appropriate provide the new number free of charge

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# THEFT

A mobile phone is a valuable item, which can make it a target for theft. All mobile users should treat their handset with care. Do not leave it lying around where it could get lost or be picked up by someone else. Be aware of who's around you when using it in public, and do not display it too prominently.

If your child's mobile phone is stolen, or lost, you should contact the mobile operator immediately. The operator can block calls being made from your child's account. If you have taken note of the IMEI number, the operator can disable the handset from being used on any Irish network. It is a good idea to register the IMEI number with the operator when you buy your child a new mobile phone, as this will make it easier for the operator to disable the handset if it is stolen or lost. At the very least, take a note of the IMEI number yourself and keep it safe. The Irish mobile operators keep a database of all stolen mobile phones.

# SPAM

Sometimes children can receive unsolicited commercial messages trying to sell or advertise something. Such commercial messages are known as 'spam'. On a mobile phone, spam is usually in the form of an unwanted text message, picture message or email. Some spam messages can end up being very expensive for a child if they are not careful. For example, a child could receive a spam message telling them they have won a prize. Next, the spam message will ask them to call a special number to learn what the prize is and where to collect it. Usually, there is no prize and the special number is, in fact, a premium-rate number. Such numbers are more expensive to call than standard numbers.

Some mobile operators have special lines that you can contact if your child receives a spam message. After examining the message, the operator may pass it on to ComReg and the Data Protection Commissioner for further investigation (e.g. to trace the sender of the message).

You can report spam messages to the following numbers free of charge:

- Meteor** forward the message to 50002
- O2** forward the message to 50455
- Vodafone** forward the message to 50005
- 3** forward the message to 50035

## MALICIOUS IMAGES AND VIDEO CLIPS

New communications technologies can bring benefits to society. But not everyone who uses the technologies has good intentions. Bullying is one negative use of the mobile phone. Another is filming and sending malicious images and video clips. 'Happy Slapping' is one such development. 'Happy Slapping' is when a person send video recordings or photographs of a violent incident from their mobile phone. It can be distressing for a child to receive a 'happy slapping' video or photograph. Worse, 'happy slapping' videos or photographs could not exist unless someone is the victim of violence in the real world. Parents should treat the issue of 'happy slapping' very seriously. If your child receives a 'happy slapping' message, or has been the victim of violence that was recorded as a 'happy slapping' incident, you should immediately contact the Gardaí. Also, you should inform your child that it is illegal for people who receive such a message to forward it on to someone else.

## ILLEGAL IMAGES AND VIDEO CLIPS

Digital technologies have been used to create and distribute videos and images of child abuse and pornography. These are illegal. If you suspect that any image or video you or your child has received is illegal, report it immediately to the Gardaí and report it online at **www.hotline.ie**. Hotline.ie is a secure and confidential online service provided by the ISPAI (Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland). Where appropriate, Hotline.ie will work with the Gardaí to investigate the images or video clips.

The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 makes it illegal for anyone to produce, forward, publish, send or possess any child pornography in Ireland. Each mobile operator's website has information on how to report illegal images and videos. Links to this information can also be found on **www.hotline.ie**.



# How you can help keep your child safe

Mobile phones are becoming more powerful and sophisticated. A few years ago, your child's mobile phone was probably capable of little more than talk and text. Today, many mobile phones are almost like mini-computers. And like a PC, such mobile phones allow access to the internet.

If you are not sure, you should check if your child's mobile phone can connect to the internet. This is important because the internet allows people to access all kinds of information on almost any topic imaginable. Some of this information – if it's educational, for example – can benefit children. But the internet hosts a lot of information and content that is not suitable for children. Many parents lay ground rules for how their children use the internet on a PC, e.g. restricting the websites they can visit or setting limits for how long they can spend online. Parents are advised to lay similar ground rules for their child's use of the mobile internet, particularly if they have a 3G mobile that allows near to full internet access.

All mobile operators offer internet safeguards to prevent children from accessing unsuitable content, e.g. filtering (or blocking) technologies. For the safeguards to work, it is important to register your child's age with the mobile operator.

Even with filtering and blocking solutions applied on the mobile phone it remains important that parents supervise their child's internet usage. In general, the younger the child the closer a parent should supervise their internet usage.

**top tips**



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**Below are some tips and advice for parents whose children have internet-enabled mobile phones:**

- The internet is a public place and children can never be sure who is reading the information they publish online. They need to be very careful about publishing personal details. Name, address, telephone number, school and location can make a child identifiable in the real world. It can provide information to bullies or lead to contact with people they do not wish to know
- Photographs and information published online are there forever. Children cannot get them back and cannot control how other people will use them. Children should think carefully – and ask a parent's approval – before publishing (uploading) any photographs of themselves
- Do not trust everything they read or are told online. People online can lie. For example, an adult can try to win a child's trust by pretending to be a child themselves
- Children should never arrange a real world meeting with someone they met online without first telling a parent or a trusted adult. And certainly they should never go alone to meet a stranger
- Encourage your children to talk to you if they receive a message that is frightening, threatening, rude or makes them feel uncomfortable. Reassure them they will not get in trouble by telling you about something negative they encountered on the internet or their mobile phone
- Children who use a social-networking website are advised to set their profile to 'private'. This means only 'friends' can view their personal information. However, children should still be careful about publishing personal information online. Even a profile set to 'private' is not 100% secure

# Use Responsibly

Using a mobile phone in certain places is regarded as rude and inconsiderate of other people, for example, in a cinema or library. In other places it is forbidden, as in special areas of a hospital. If the mobile phone has a camera built in, it may even be unlawful to use the camera – for example, in changing rooms or other places where people may be undressed. In general, an announcement will be made or a ‘no mobiles’ sign will be displayed in places where use of a mobile phone is forbidden. Some children may not understand why they are not allowed to use their mobile phone in certain places. Parents should explain to children where and when it is inappropriate for them to use a mobile phone.

## Mobile operator contact details:

### Vodafone Customer Care

Tel: 1907 (Bill paying customers)  
1850 20 87 87 (Ready to Go)  
Fax: +353 (0) 1 203 7778  
Post: Vodafone Customer Care,  
The Ramparts,  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth.  
Email: [care@vodafone.ie](mailto:care@vodafone.ie)  
Web: [www.vodafone.ie](http://www.vodafone.ie)

### 3 Customer Services

Tel: From your 3 mobile 333  
From other phones 083 333 3333  
Fax: +353 1 542 6301  
Post: Hutchison 3G Ireland Ltd,  
PO Box 333,  
Dublin 2.  
Email: [customer.services.ie@3mail.com](mailto:customer.services.ie@3mail.com).  
Web: [www.three.ie](http://www.three.ie)

### Meteor Customer Care

Tel: 1905 (Pay Later and Pay  
As You Go customers)  
Fax: +353 (0) 1 430 7013  
Post: Customer Care,  
Meteor Mobile  
Communications Ltd,  
4030 Kingswood Ave,  
Citywest Business Park,  
Naas Road, Dublin 24.  
Email: [info@meteor.ie](mailto:info@meteor.ie)  
Web: [www.meteor.ie](http://www.meteor.ie)

### O2 Customer Care

Tel: 1909 (Bill paying customers)  
1747 (Speak easy prepay)  
1850 601 747 (from a landline)  
Post: O2 Customer Care Centre,  
Mc Laughlin Road,  
National Technological Park,  
Limerick.  
Email: [Customer.care@o2.com](mailto:Customer.care@o2.com)  
Web: [www.O2.ie](http://www.O2.ie)

## Other useful contacts online:

- Irish Cellular Industry Association: **[www.icia.ie](http://www.icia.ie)**
- ComReg, the Irish commission for communications regulation: **[www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)**
- RegTel, the Irish regulator for premium-rate services: **[www.regtel.ie](http://www.regtel.ie)**
- Website of the Office of Internet Safety: **[www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)**
- Webwise, provides parents, teachers and children with information and advice about potential dangers online: **[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)**
- Irish hotline for public to report child pornography and other illegal content on the internet: **[www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)**
- National Centre for Technology in Education provides advice and support on technology in education: **[www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie)**
- Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland: **[www.ispai.ie](http://www.ispai.ie)**
- An Garda Síochána: **[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)**

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