

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 a 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 young people 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.

A private chat is a one-to-one chat which may be used by an adult pretending to be a child to gain the confidence of other young people. If you are invited from a public forum into a private one-to-one chat, it's important to remember that people online may not be who they say they are. We are not able to monitor private chat sessions.

If your child receives an offensive picture or video message, or has 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 O2. Try to hold onto the message if you can, as we may be able to trace it.



See page 27.

Talking points

A few things you might like to discuss with your children about using camera phones:

- 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.