

Dear Parent / Guardian

Re: Personal Safety

West Area Police have had a recent increase in theft type offences, included in the victims are school age children. We continue work hard to tackle crime and bring offenders to justice. A key area that can support the efforts is educating young people around personal safety in a bid to prevent them becoming victims.

We would kindly ask those that care for children to please have conversations about personal safety with them about how they can best look after themselves and their property whilst out on their own to help prevent them becoming victims of crime.

Main points we would ask you to discuss are:

Personal Property

We appreciate most young people possess smart phones, Airpods and other digital items, try and keep their use to a minimum whilst out in public. If they have to make calls, ideally make the call before they leave the house or school. Keep their items in bags or pockets, do not carry them in their hands. Bicycles are often attractive to thieves, so make sure they are property marked and locked up when not in use.

Avoid traveling alone.

If your young person is going out, be it to or home from school, or elsewhere, they should try and travel with a friend. If this isn't possible, then avoid walking through secluded areas, stick to the well lit main roads. If they feel like they are being followed go to the nearest local place of safety, this may be somewhere like a shop, library or even head back to school. If this isn't possible keep walking and always call 999 on their mobile to ask for help, make sure they are aware of the road they are on to assist police getting to them quickly.

Pay attention to surroundings.

Be aware of where they are, who is nearby. If they must make a call or send messages, make it short, don't spend prolonged periods of time looking at devices. If they are listening to music keep it at a level that they can still hear what's going on around them.

What to do if you are a victim

In the unfortunate event that your young person is a victim of street robbery our advice is stay calm and hand over whatever items are being requested, as items are replaceable. Try and remember as much about the person as possible to support the police to try and locate the person such as Ethnicity, Accent, Hair, Clothing, Distinctive Marks and Features. Call 999 as soon as practicably possible, please ask them not to wait until they get home.

To help protect property, items can be registered on www.immobilise.com. This website allows you to register all manner of items including bicycles and electrical items like Smart Phones and Wireless headphones. In the unfortunate event they do get stolen they can be listed as such on the website. If a suspect is stopped the database can be checked by police to see who the items are shown as registered to.

www.fearless.org is another website that young people can use to report crime. It is linked with Crimestoppers, so the same principles of being able to report incidents anonymously apply.

We'd like to thank you for your support in keeping our young people safe and if you have any issues or questions, or would further advice on crime prevention please contact .

Kind regards

Hillingdon Police.