

Dear Headteacher,

As the summer holiday approaches, Kent Police would be grateful for your assistance in notifying parents of a current concern over children using catapults, possibly in response to social media. There has been an increase in the number of reports received relating to animals and wildlife being targeted, injured or damaged by objects fired from catapults.

While carrying a catapult is not a criminal offence, its use may lead to criminal liability depending on the circumstances, for example under:

- Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (intentionally killing or injuring any wild bird);
- Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (causing an animal to suffer);
- Section 1 of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (causing unnecessary suffering to any wild mammal);
- Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 (unlawfully having any offensive weapon in a public place, meaning any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to a person, or intended to do so); and
- Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 (intentionally or recklessly damaging property)

Kent Police would like the following advice to be passed on to parents.

1. Dissuade your children from leaving home with a catapult.
2. Explain to your children that using a catapult to cause damage or harm is a criminal offence.
3. If you wish to dispose of a catapult, contact your local beat officer who will be able to assist (details can be found at www.kent.police.uk).

Please forward this letter accordingly.

We are grateful for your assistance in this matter.

Kind regards,

Kent Police