

Dear Parent / Carer,

Important Message Regarding Children and E-scooters

As a Youth Diversion Officer in the Police Service of Northern Ireland, I am writing in partnership with your child's school ahead of the summer holiday period. We understand that many children and young people enjoy spending more time outdoors during the summer months and may be interested in using e-scooters. Whilst they appear exciting and enjoyable, it is important for parents and carers to understand the legalities and risk of serious injury surrounding them. My aim is simply to help keep our young people **safe, lawful, and out of harm's way**.

The law in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, privately owned e-scooters cannot legally be used on public roads or in public places such as:

- pavements and footpaths
- parks
- cycle paths
- housing estates
- car parks

They are classed as motor vehicles, and would need insurance, registration, and a valid driving licence to be used on a road. ***They may only be used legally on private land with the landowner's permission.***

In practice, this means that, unless you have access to private land and the landowner's permission, your child has ***nowhere they can legally ride an e-scooter in Northern Ireland.***

Police powers and potential consequences

Please be aware that PSNI officers may:

- Stop riders and seize e-scooters that are being used illegally.
- Report the rider to the public prosecution service, which could result in a criminal record and the associated long term negative consequences.

- Where the rider is under 18, parents or guardians may ultimately bear responsibility for any civil liabilities arising from illegal or dangerous use.

Seizure and enforcement are not steps we take lightly. However, they are necessary to keep both riders and the wider community safe.

Safety and injury risk

Alongside the legal issues, we are increasingly concerned about the number and seriousness of injuries linked to e-scooters, particularly among children and teenagers. A recent widely reported incident in Ballymena, where a child sustained head trauma and a broken elbow after being struck by an e-scooter, serves as a stark reminder that even at low speeds, they have the potential to cause significant and life changing injuries. Many e-scooter riders are also not wearing a helmet or protective equipment.

Falls and collisions involving e-scooters can result in:

- broken bones
- head injuries
- long term physical and psychological harm
- injury to pedestrians and other road/pathway users

How you can help

We are asking for your support to help keep children safe and on the right side of the law:

- Before buying an e-scooter please consider carefully whether your child will have lawful access to suitable private land on which to ride it.
- Make sure your child understands that they must not ride the vehicle on roads, pavements, cycle paths or in parks in Northern Ireland.
- If an e-scooter is used on private land, please ensure:
 - Your child always wears a properly fitted helmet and, ideally, other protective equipment.
 - They know how to brake safely, are supervised appropriately, and do not carry passengers.

Our shared aim

By understanding both the **law** and the **risks**, parents and carers can help young people avoid injuries, police involvement, criminal records and long-term consequences.

If you would like more information about e-scooters, safety and the law in Northern Ireland, you can visit the PSNI website (<https://www.psnipolice.uk/safety-and-support/roads-and-driving/e-scooter-scrambler-and-quad-safety>)

Thank you for your support in helping to keep our young people safe.

Yours faithfully,

Siobhan Davies

Youth Diversion Officer

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Police Service of Northern Ireland

