

Warning from Norfolk Trading Standards – Office Supply Scams

Norfolk Trading Standards have been made aware by Suffolk Trading Standards that a number of Suffolk schools have been targeted by bogus companies attempting to sell them office supplies. It is possible that they may be targeting Norfolk schools as well or could do so in the future.

In this current scam the caller advised the schools that they had placed an order with them for a cartridge for their franking machine and they needed a contact name and fax number to send the order acknowledgement to.

Trading Standards are reminding all schools to be diligent about calls received from cold callers, and to advise all staff that may be receiving these calls to be wary about the information they are asked to supply.

Typically a cold caller could call wanting to discuss any office supplies you might need on a regular basis such as stationary or printing cartridges. The caller will mislead you or your staff into thinking that an order for office supplies has already been placed by either an existing or former staff member and that you need to sign an order form to assist with their record keeping. You will then be sent and invoiced for unwanted and often overpriced stationery, photocopying toner or other office supplies. When you try to return the goods you will be told that you are not able to because you signed the order form or agreed to the goods on the telephone.

To protect your school from this type of scam ensure staff that deal with telephone calls are aware of this advice:

- Don't agree to place an order over the telephone unless you are absolutely sure about the organisation you are dealing with.
- Encourage staff to make a note of any conversations they have with 'cold callers' or persons claiming to have existing contracts with your school.
- Don't take the caller's word for it that you have placed an order previously or that someone in your school has agreed to take an order.
- Insist on seeing written details and a copy of the supplier's full terms and conditions before placing an order.

If you have received cold calls stating you have agreed to receive office stationary or you have receive goods and invoices for items not ordered and you need further advice contact Trading Standards on 0344 800 8020.

You can now get the latest Trading Standards news, information and alerts by signing up to receive our email alerts at www.norfolk.gov.uk/scams or visit www.facebook.com/norfolktradingstandards and 'like' us.