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Last Updated: Monday, 19 June 2006, 14:19 GMT 15:19 UK

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Children hit by World Cup fraud

A mother has said her 12-year-old son has been left "bitterly disappointed" after his school fell foul of a World Cup ticket scam.

Phillip Hollows, of Elsham, Lincs, was one of 25 pupils due to watch Portugal and Iran play in the tournament as part of a trip from Caistor Grammar School.



Pupils had been looking forward to the match since December

But the youngsters could not watch the match as it is believed their tickets had been sold on the black market.

About 400 pupils from across the UK have been caught up in the scam.

The pupils left Caistor on Friday and were due to watch the match in Frankfurt on Saturday afternoon.

“ It is a terrible thing to do to anybody but to do it to children is really cruel ”

Siobhan Hollows, mother

But mother Siobhan Hollows said teachers were informed just before the match that the tickets had been sold on the black market.

Travel company Activ4, which arranged the trip, said the issue was made apparent when their bank discovered "fraudulent activity" and police in both the UK and Germany were investigating the case.

Mrs Hollows, 35, described the "fraud" as a "heartless act".

Trip ruined

She said that pupils had been looking forward to the £430-a-head trip since December.

"All of the pupils have been left bitterly disappointed by what has happened. It is a terrible thing to do to anybody but to do it to children is really cruel.

"It had been Phillip's dream to see the World Cup, he had even been doing odd jobs to save up some spending money.

"They had been working themselves up about the match since Christmas, it's just so out of the blue," she said.

It is believed that the price of the tickets will be refunded, but Mrs Hollows said that was not the point.

"Getting the money back will not make up for Phillip missing

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out on the match," she added. "It has ruined the whole trip."

In a statement, travel company Activ4 said they were "outraged by this callous act of fraud" and would continue to offer the police their full co-operation.

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