

Safeguarding Reflection- **Sexting**

NSPCC

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KNOWLEDGE AND
INFORMATION SERVICES

Briefing for schools: sexting October 2017

Schools are in a good position to give children and young people advice around personal safety and to raise awareness about the dangers of sexting.

What is 'sexting'?

Sexting is defined as **the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18**. 'Sexting' **does not** include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

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What is sexting?

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages.

They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages.

Sexting may also be called:

trading nudes
dirties
pic for pic

What the law says

Sexting can be seen as harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age
- possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.



However, as of January 2016 in England and Wales, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

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Why?

Why do young people sext?

There are many reasons why a young person may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video or message to someone else.

- joining in because they think that 'everyone is doing it'
- boosting their self-esteem
- flirting with others and testing their sexual identity
- exploring their sexual feelings
- to get attention and connect with new people on social media
- they may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent

What are the risks of sexting?

No control of images and how they're shared
Blackmail, bullying and harm

https://youtu.be/_lpb3FILnSU

<https://youtu.be/Sz-VOVwF9Uk>

What to do if an incident involving 'sexting' comes to your attention

- **Report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.**
- **Never** view, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal.**
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL.
- **Do not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- **Do not** ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery.
- **Do not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or others
- **Do not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- **Do** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

UKCCIS provide an overview of what teaching and non-teaching staff should do if they become aware of a sexting incident in their guidance [Sexting: how to respond to an incident \(PDF\)](#) (UKCCIS, Oct 2017).