

Sexting



What is sexting ?

Sexting (often called nudes) is the act of sending or receiving sexually explicit content such as a text, video or an image. This often happens via digital devices such as mobile phones and tablets.

61%

of secondary school children state that they have seen a 'sext'

How sexting occurs

Sexting often takes place on social media networks such as Snapchat and the images can be shared between people in relationships, friendships or strangers. Sexting most commonly happens between two people in a relationship, but is also considered a method of flirting if the participants are not yet in a relationship.

Whilst sadly there are cases reported where young people have been forced in to sexting through grooming, harassment or peer pressure, a majority of sexting cases involve young people who have sent sexually explicit pictures or videos of themselves without any pressure on them at all.

In all cases of sexting it is essential that your child is aware of its potential consequences.

How it makes your child feel

If your child has sent any sexually explicit content and is in control of who sees it, or wasn't pressurised into sending it, some say it can make them feel more confident, it can boost self-esteem and make them feel sexy. These are often their motivations for sharing.

However, often those sending images/videos lose control of it – usually when the recipient shares the content without the sender's permission. This may be intentionally or unintentionally – but the impact can be devastating.

Whether they've been blackmailed or pressurised into sexting, or the image had been shared without your child's permission, it can leave your child feeling embarrassed, ashamed and humiliated.

87% young people knew or understood that sexting breaks the law

Jargon Buster

Revenge porn:

Distributing sexually explicit content of someone without their consent

Grooming:

Building a relationship with someone for the purpose of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children who are being groomed are often asked to send explicit images or videos of themselves

Nude or Nude selfie:

A common term that young people use to describe sexting

Porn:

A term used to describe 'porn' without needing to say the word



What to do if your child has received a sexually explicit image/video

Tell your child's school or the police immediately if you discover sexually explicit content of a minor (someone under the age of 18)

Please remember it is an offence to be in possession of any sexually explicit images or videos of a minor (under 18)

DO NOT print, forward or copy the image or show anyone else. *Please note that if you tell your child's school staff do not need to see the content to act on it.*

If you discover explicit images of people over 18 years old on your child's device talk to your child directly, try not to pass too much judgement.

Parental controls you have in place should be revisited to ensure your child isn't easily able to access pornography on their device.

Escalate to your child's school and the police immediately if you have suspicions that your child is being groomed.

Sexts:

The sexually explicit image shared

Shaming:

A term applied, often to females, who have shared explicit images and videos

Cybersex:

The act of using technology to exchange sexual messages with another person online

Boys are often more likely to ask someone to send them a 'sext'

Girls may be more likely to send a 'sext'



What to do if your child has sent sexually explicit content to someone

Talk to your child about the legal implications of sexting, so they are aware that they are breaking the law.

Talk to them about the situation - how it came about, what their motivation was, how it made them feel etc. Let them open up to you and help them to manage it in their own way.

Try not to get angry or pass too much judgement.

Escalate to your child's school and/or the police to see if they can support you in stopping the content from being shared, or shared further.

Sending sexting/nude photos or videos

If you are under 18 and you send, upload or forward indecent images or videos on to friends or boyfriends/girlfriends this would also be breaking the law, even if they are photos of yourself.

Where to go for further information

www.childline.org.uk
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.childnet.com

www.nspcc.org.uk
www.saferinternet.org.uk
www.vodafone.com/contents/parents