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# Sexual Bullying FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with very helpful tips and links to websites on sexual bullying and what to do if you or someone you know is affected by sexual bullying.

Sharing photos and videos online is a part of everyday life for a lot of people. It enables people to share experiences and stay connected with friends. It is now easier than ever to send and upload pictures and videos across a multitude of platforms such as, text messages, email, social media and smart phone apps which include Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

The ease of sharing imagery has also brought with it concerns for young people and the producing and sharing of sexual images of themselves. With 69% of 12-15 year olds and 90% of 16-24 year olds owning a smart phone it is easy to understand how 'sexting' can happen and how things can go wrong – even if you didn't mean them too.

Sending a text, picture or video of a sexual nature can be dangerous if shared with the wrong person. What is sometimes not taken into consideration is once the content is sent, you have no control over what happens to it or who views it and the effects can be devastating. If images are shared further it can expose you to risks including bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

## So... What is 'sexting'?

Sexting refers to the sending and receiving of:

- Naked pictures or 'nudes'
- 'Underwear shots'
- Sexual or 'dirty pics'
- Rude text messages or videos
- Pic for pic



## Why do people 'sext'?

- Joining in because 'everyone does it'
- To boost self-esteem
- Flirting with others and testing sexual identity
- To explore sexual feelings
- To get attention and connect with new people on social media
- Might find it difficult to say no to someone who asks them for an explicit pic especially if the person is persistent

## Sexual bullying

Unfortunately smart phones, online messages and social media have made it very easy for bullies to target individuals. Bullies might use such technology to forward on inappropriate texts, pictures or videos. If you yourself have never been bullied than chances are you know of someone who has. Unwanted sexual comments, gestures, suggestions, advances or threats are all forms of sexual bullying. Sexual bullying can happen to any gender and is not limited to people of the same age.

## What should I do if someone asks for a sexual picture or video?

Sometimes people send photos because they are indirectly made to feel guilty. For example, somebody might say "I sent you a photo, so where's mine?" or say that you "promised" them that you would send a picture. This is wrong. It's also a form of emotional blackmail. You don't owe them anything and they shouldn't try to make you feel guilty. If you're asking your boyfriend or girlfriend for a naked photo, think about how much trust they'll need to give you and how much pressure you'll be putting on them.

## What to do if you have already sent a sexual picture or video?

When sexting goes badly, it can make you feel ashamed, guilty, embarrassed or anxious. But there are things you can do to make the situation better and prevent it from happening again.

Try having an honest conversation with the person you sent the image to. Ask them to delete it. The quicker you're able to do this the better. You can't control what someone will do with an image, but having an honest conversation can help to make sure they won't pass it on.

The sooner you talk to somebody about the situation the better. This could be your mum, dad, carer or a school teacher. Your school will have ways of dealing with these sorts of problems and can confiscate mobiles if they believe they have sexual images on them.

## What to do if you receive a sexual image?

If you've been sent a sexual image or video, don't pass it on or share it with anyone. Think about how that person might feel if somebody else saw it. Think about how you'd feel if it was a picture of you.

People aren't always honest about who they are online. If you've received a sexual message (including things like an email, text message, picture message, sexual photo or voicemail) or one that makes you uncomfortable, try talking to an adult you trust. Telling them about the message you were sent can help the situation. This is really important if you're under 18 or the other person is much older than you.

You can also report them using the CEOP reporting website and block them from contacting you again. This will stop them from sending you more inappropriate pictures.

## Is sexting illegal?

Sexting can be seen as harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of anyone under the age of 18 is illegal, even if the person doing it is aged under 18 themselves. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend – even if it's a selfie
- 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.

## VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

[www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/)

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/)

[www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/sexting](http://www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/sexting)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609874/6\\_2939\\_SP\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_In\\_Schools\\_FINAL\\_Update\\_Jan17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

[www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app/](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app/)

