



Sexting Policy

Scheme of Delegation	
Approval By:	Xxx Committee / FGB
Staff Lead Reviewer:	
Assigned Governor	Safeguarding
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Dates	
Category (delete as applicable)	A: statutory policy required by educational legislation B: statutory policy required by other legislation impacting directly on schools C: statutory other D: document referenced in statutory guidance NS: non statutory
Communication	
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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.'

www.nspcc.org.uk

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 everyone is doing it.
- boosting their self esteem
- flirting with others and testing their sexual identity
- boosting their self esteem
- 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 is persistent.

www.nspcc.org.uk

What is the legal position on sexting?

It is important to be aware that young people involved in sharing sexual videos and pictures may be committing a criminal offence. Specifically, crimes involving indecent photographs (including pseudo images) of a person under 18 years of age fall under Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 and Section 160 Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Under this legislation it is a crime to:

- take an indecent photograph or allow an indecent photograph to be taken;
- make an indecent photograph (this includes downloading or opening an image that has been sent via email);
- distribute or show such an image;
- possess with the intention of distributing images;

While any decision to charge individuals for such offences is a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service, it is unlikely to be considered in the public interest to prosecute children. However, children need to be aware that they may be breaking the law. Although unlikely to be prosecuted, children and young people who send or possess images may be visited by police and on some occasions media equipment could be removed.

More information on legislation on child abuse images can be found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse/legislation-policy-practice/>

Protocol for dealing with sexting incidents (as outlined in Bucks CC safeguarding toolkit)

Step 1:

If a device is involved - confiscate it and set it to flight mode or, if not possible, switch it off.

Step 2:

Seek advice - report to your designated safeguarding lead via your normal child protection procedures.

Record all incidents of sexting, including both the actions you did take as well as the actions you didn't take and give justifications. In applying judgement to each incident, consider the following:

- Is there a significant age difference between the sender/receiver involved?
- Is there any external coercion involved or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver?
- Do you recognise the child as more vulnerable than usual i.e. at risk?
- Is the image of a severe or extreme nature?
- Is the situation isolated or has the image been more widely distributed?
- Are there other circumstances relating to either sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e. difficult home circumstances?

Context

If any of these circumstances are present, then do escalate or refer the incident using your normal child protection procedures. This includes reporting to the police. If none of these circumstances are present, you may still wish to seek advice from external agencies, whilst managing the situation accordingly within the school. Record the details of the incident, action and resolution.

Further advice can be found in the document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-how-to-respond-to-an-incident-overview>

Advice for young people about sexting can be found at:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safetv/online-mobile-safetv/sexting/>

Advice for parents about sexting can be found at:

www.nspcc.org.uk

Further Information

Department for Education (DfE)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf. London: Department for Education (DfE)

Department for Education (DfE) Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024

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