

Sexting: how to respond to an incident

An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges



This document provides a brief overview for frontline staff of how to respond to incidents involving 'sexting'.

All such incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in line with your school's safeguarding policies.

The DSL should be familiar with the full 2016 guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), ***Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People***, and should **not** refer to this document instead of the full guidance.

What is 'sexting'?

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCCIS, 2016), 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**. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

'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.

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. This is the responsibility of the DSL.
- **Do not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- **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.

If a 'sexting' incident comes to your attention, report it to your DSL. Your school's safeguarding policies should outline codes of practice to be followed.

For further information

Download the full guidance [Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis) (UKCCIS, 2016) at www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis.