

Advice for schools: Responding to & managing sexting incidents

Context

With the rise of sexting incidents involving young people, this guidance aims to help schools identify sexting incidents, manage them and escalate appropriately.

For school staff

Remember: The production and distribution of sexting images involving anyone under the age of 18 is illegal and needs very careful management for all those involved.



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 senior person via your normal child protection procedures.

For the Designated Senior Person

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?
- Have these children been involved in a sexting incident before?
- Are there other circumstances relating to either sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e. difficult home circumstances?

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, then manage the situation accordingly within the school and without escalating to external services. Record the details of the incident, action and resolution.



When in doubt or if you need further advice please ring our Professionals Online Safety Helpline on: 0844 381 4772