

Where to go for more information

Contact the academy

If you have any questions or concerns about Cyber bullying or Sexting and what it means for your child, please do not hesitate to contact the academy and speak to Helen Jackson, Head of Student Support and Family Services, on 01977 622850.

See our policies

You will find more details e-safety in our safeguarding policy, available on our website.

We also have a service for pupils to contact us with any concerns:

SafetyNet@delacyacademy.org.uk

External sources

The following sources may also be useful for further information:

Call ChildLine at any time on 0800 1111

nspcc.org.uk/sexting.

www.childline.org.uk/zipit

De Lacy Academy

Cyber bullying & Sexting

What is cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying can include:

- sending cruel and threatening messages or material
- putting embarrassing photos of people on the web
- creating fake profiles that are mean or hurtful
- sending unwanted messages online, teasing and making fun of others.

A cyber bully can be someone you know or a stranger

What is sexting?

'Sexting' is the exchange of self-generated sexually explicit images or messages, through picture messages or webcams over the internet. This include inappropriate images and nude 'selfies'.

How common is sexting?

'Sexting' is an increasingly common activity among children and young people, where they share inappropriate or explicit images online or through mobile phones. It can also refer to written messages.

Most young people do not see 'sexting' as a problem and are reluctant to talk to adults about it because they are afraid of being judged or having their phones taken away. Sending pictures and inappropriate content has become normal teenage behaviour.

How can I keep my child safe?

It may feel awkward but, as a parent, it's important to explain to your child the risks of 'sexting', how to stay safe and that they can talk to you if something ever makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

When you give your child their first mobile phone, outline your expectations and explain the rules of having the phone. Monitor how younger children can use their phone – for example, set up controls so that only you can authorise the apps that your child downloads.

The most important way to keep your child safe is to discuss the dangers of sexting and to be supportive if problems do occur.

You can also set up parental controls on your child's phone to block access to certain sites or monitor your child's activities.

[ChildLine](#) has also produced a free app for young people called [Zipit](#), which is designed to provide them with witty images to send in response to a request for explicit images, and advice on how to stay safe.

Tell your child what can happen when things go wrong. Don't accuse your child of 'sexting', but do explain the dangers.

What are the dangers of sexting?

Young people may see 'sexting' as harmless activity but there are risks. Taking, sharing or receiving an image, even voluntarily, is a criminal offence under the category of creating, sending and receiving indecent images.

It may be common but 'sexting' is illegal. By sending an explicit image, a young person is producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission. The Police need to become involved in sexting cases where creating and/or distributing sexual images with minors constitutes the production and/or distribution of child pornography. It's easy to send a photo or message but the sender has no control about how it's passed on.

When images are stored or shared online they become public. They can be deleted on social media or may only last a few seconds on apps like Snapchat, but images can still be saved or copied by others.

These images may never be completely removed and could be found in the future, for example when applying for jobs or university.

Young people may think 'sexting' is harmless but it can leave them vulnerable to:

Blackmail

An offender may threaten to share the pictures with the child's family and friends unless the child sends money or more images. This is also known as "revenge porn" and is a criminal offence.

Bullying/Cyber bullying

If images are shared with their peers or in school, the child may be [bullied](#).

Unwanted attention

Images posted online can attract the attention of sex offenders, who know how to search for, collect and modify images.

Emotional distress

Children can feel embarrassed and humiliated. If they are very distressed this could lead to suicide or [self-harm](#).

What to do if your child has been affected by sexting

If you find out that your child has been 'sexting', they are likely to be anxious about talking to you. Where possible, give yourself time to process this information and remember your child will be closely watching your reactions.

- Try to remain calm and supportive.
- Reassure your child that they are not alone.
- Listen and offer support – if there is a problem your child will be feeling bad and needs your help, support and advice, not criticism.
- Try not to shout or make your child feel like it is their fault.
- Don't ask questions like "why have you done it", as your child will feel embarrassed and guilty.
- Ask your child what they want to happen – this will depend on the situation but take immediate steps where possible; and reassure your child that the issue will be addressed even if you need a little time to work out the best course of action for the long term.
- Agree a set of actions to address the issue, such as reporting the abuse or getting additional counselling.
- If you have a trusted friend it may be helpful to discuss this with them.
- Call the NSPCC helpline to talk to one of our trained counsellors.
- Tell your child they can phone ChildLine for additional support.

If a child has lost control of a sexual image, ask them to get in touch with ChildLine. Together, ChildLine and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) will try to get the image removed. ChildLine is a confidential service, but to make a report on a child's behalf to the IWF we need to confirm who the child is and their date of birth.

What should I do if my child is being bullied online?

Contact school and inform them of what has taken place. Where possible, take screenshots as evidence. Find someone you trust to speak to including ChildLine.