



## Sexting

### 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 are the risks of sexting?

#### Parents

It's important to talk to your child about the risks of sexting and let them know they can come to you if someone's pressuring them to send or share nudes, or if they're worried about something. Some of the risks of sexting or sending and sharing nudes for children and young people are:

1. Losing control of the images, videos or messages and how they're shared. Once something's shared online it's public and can be saved or copied by others.
2. Blackmail, bullying and harm. Young people can have their photos, messages or videos shared without their consent or be bullied about them. This can lead to them feeling difficult emotions like distress or embarrassment and shame.

### What to do if an incident involving 'sexting' comes to your attention

**Report it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.**

If your child has been sending, sharing or receiving sexual messages, photos or videos, you may feel upset, angry or confused. It's natural to feel like this. Your children may also feel anxious talking about what's happened, but there are ways you can reassure them.

#### You can help by:

- Working with the schools DSL to ensure everyone involved is safe.
- Trying not to shout at them, or make them feel like it's their fault. They're probably worried and need your help and advice.
- Reassuring them and offering support – remind them they can always talk to you, another trusted adult in school, or Childline.
- Asking open questions such as "what happened?" rather than asking "why have you done it", as this may stop them from opening up to you.
- Talking to them about how to treat others online and what is and isn't appropriate online behaviour.
- Reminding them that people might not always be who they say they are online, so they should be careful about talking to anyone they don't know.

[https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/sexting-sending-nudes/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMItMW799nM6glV34BQBh3HZgF5EAAYASAAEgJyl\\_D\\_BwE&gclid=aw.ds](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/sexting-sending-nudes/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMItMW799nM6glV34BQBh3HZgF5EAAYASAAEgJyl_D_BwE&gclid=aw.ds)

## **Thomas Telford School E-Safety Policy**

### **Please note the following extract from the school's E-safety Policy (pages 4 and 5):**

If a child is under the age of 18, it is illegal for them to make, possess or distribute any inappropriate explicit imagery of someone under the age of 18 which is 'indecent'.

Young people who share sexual imagery of themselves, or peers are breaking the law. Incidents involving a child producing a sexual imagery will be treated as a safeguarding issue.

Even though the age of sexual consent is 16, the Protection of Children Act 1999, amended Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) means it is against the law for a child to share a sexual image, even if it is with someone who is also under the age of 18.

For the most purposes, if imagery contains a naked young person, topless photos of girls, any sex acts or display of genitals it will be considered indecent. Indecent images may also include overtly sexualised imagery of young people in underwear.

Where the police are notified of a child under the age of 18 who is in possession, of an indecent image or has been sending or taking these type of photos, they are obliged, under the Home Office Counting Rules and National Crime Recording Standards, to record the incident on their crimes system.

If it is disclosed that a Thomas Telford student has received an inappropriate sexually explicit image or video, sent an image or video or shared an image or video the school will take this matter very seriously and appropriate action will be taken, in line with the school procedures.