

Advice and procedures for schools: Responding to and managing sexting incidents

Context

With the rise in concern regarding sexting by young people, this guidance aims to help schools identify sexting incidents and manage them appropriately.

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: For School Staff

- Seek advice, report the incident to your Designated Senior Person (DSP) or the Headteacher via the normal child protection procedures.



Step 2: For the Designated Senior Person

- DO NOT CONFISCATE the device. DO NOT attempt to view any images. Call the Police and they can confiscate the device if deemed necessary. Call the Child Care Assessment Team for advice.
- Call parents and inform them of the incident and actions. Keep parents informed.



Record all incidents of sexting including both the actions you undertook as well as those actions not undertaken and provide justifications. In applying judgement to each incident, consider the following;

- ✓ Is there a significant age difference between sender and receiver?
- ✓ Is there any external coercion involved or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver?
- ✓ Whether these children have been involved in any sexting incidents before.
- ✓ Are there other circumstances relating to either sender or recipient that might give cause for concern?
- ✓ Is the child more vulnerable than usual?
- ✓ Consider whether the child might be at risk from Child sexual exploitation and complete SERAF referral form?



DO NOT demonise the young people involved. The Police/Child Care Assessment Team will provide appropriate advice as to any required referral of the incident and any subsequent appropriate advice/support for the risky behaviours and vulnerable individuals. Both victim and perpetrator may require support.