**Sexting session notes**

Many teens believe that anything they want to do with their bodies and their phones is their business. They enjoy the privacy and freedom that cell phones give them from their parents and guardians, but what happens when they use their cell phones to explore their sexuality?

**What is Sexting?**

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages.

They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages

**Why do people Sext?**

Everyone is doing it

As a Joke

Flirting/Trying to impress someone

Think it’s a form of love in a relationship

To feel sexy

To get attention

Being under the influence of alcohol/substances

Celebrities are doing it

Peer Pressure

Responding to sexual messages

Bullied/harassed/intimidated

Blackmailed

**How to respond to requests for naked selfies?**

Sometimes people send photos because they are indirectly made to feel guilty. For example, somebody might say "I sent you a photo, so where's mine?" or say that you "promised" them that you would send a picture. This is wrong. It's also a form of emotional blackmail. You don't owe them anything and they shouldn't try to make you feel guilty. They might threaten to post a sexual image of you online if you don't send more images. This is wrong. It can feel scary or like you're trapped in the situation. But if you're not sure what to do, [talk to an](https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/) adult you trust.

You can also download the app ZIPIT, which has some funny responses.

**What are some of the potential consequences if your pics gets out?**

* You could get into trouble at school
* Angry /upset and shocked parents
* Kicked off sports teams
* Humiliation
* Bullying
* Unwanted attention
* Blackmail
* Emotional distress
* Future career / job issues
* Police intervention

**What to do if your pics get out?**

It is important to say that if someone has shared a naked photo of themselves and it has been put online, it is not their fault and that they need to tell a trusted adult. They could tell you, report it to online at Think U Know, CEOP or call Childline.

**What are the legal implications?**

*It is important to be aware that those involved in ‘sexting’ may be committing a criminal of-fence. Specifically, crimes involving indecent photographs (including pseudo photographs) of a person under 18 years of age fall under Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 and Section 160 Criminal Justice Act 1988. Under this legislation it is a crime to:*

* *take an indecent photograph or allow an indecent photograph to be taken;*
* *to make an indecent photograph (and this includes downloading or opening an image that has been sent);*
* *to distribute or show such an image;*
* *to possess with the intention of distributing images;*
* *to advertise;*
* *to possess such images.*

*While any decision to charge individuals for such offences is a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service, it is unlikely to be considered in the public’s interest to prosecute children. However, children need to be aware that they may be breaking the law. Although unlikely to be prosecuted, children and young people who send or possess the images may be visited by police and on some occasions media equipment could be removed.*

*The key factor to highlight is that the real harm in relation to ‘sexting’ is that those in the photographs may become victims should the images be shown to others .*

***While, in general, the UK has not followed a legislative approach to tackling this issue, However, in 2017 there has been a procecution of a 15yr old boy in Blackpool who is now the youngest person to have a sexual harm prevention order against him.***

**Childline explains the law as follows:**

Having sexual photos or videos on your phone or computer: "If you are under the age of 18, the law sees you as a child. Therefore, if you have any indecent images or videos of somebody who is under the age of 18 you would technically be in possession of an indecent image of a child – even if you are the same age. This is an offence under the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the criminal Justice Act 1988."

Sending sexual photos or videos:

"If you are under 18 and you send, upload or forward indecent images or videos on to your friends or partner, this would be breaking the law, even if they are photos of yourself (‘selfies’)."