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| STAFF FACTSHEET |

Financially motivated sexual extortion (‘sextortion’)

What is ‘sextortion’?

Financially motivated sexual extortion (or ‘sextortion’) is a type of online blackmail. An adult (or group of adults) threatens to release nude or semi-nude images of a child unless they pay them money, or do something else to benefit them. It’s a form of child sexual abuse.

Sextortion is often carried out by offenders in organised crime groups and is motivated by profit.

Sometimes adults pose as children, to make contact with the child. They might:

* Groom or coerce the child into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
* Use images that have been stolen from the child, taken through hacking their account
* Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child

Signs to look out for

If a pupil is a victim of sextortion, they might:

* Spend more time online, or more time offline – they might try to avoid mobile phones, laptops and tablets entirely, for example. This might be reported by their parents/carers
* Complain of being tired because they were online all night, or have their phone going off a lot
* Have stronger emotional responses or outbursts to being online – they may get unusually angry, upset or distant after checking their phone or using a computer/tablet
* Be secretive about their use of the internet or a device – they may refuse to hand their phone in if asked to do so by a staff member, or refuse to say what they get up to online
* Show signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts. They might also show signs of hopelessness

What to do if you think a pupil is a victim

* If you feel comfortable, you could ask the pupil if there’s anything worrying them that they want to talk about
* Report your concerns as soon as possible to our designated safeguarding lead [insert the name(s) of your school’s DSL(s)]. Do this even if the pupil hasn’t made a disclosure to you

If a pupil discloses to you:

Do:

* Reassure them that it’s not their fault, and that they will receive support
* Explain to the pupil that you will need to report it to our DSL, or deputy, so they can help
* Talk to our DSL as soon as possible. Our DSL will investigate and report what’s happened to the police
* Tell the pupil about Childline’s Report Remove service – this helps young people to confidentially report sexual images/videos of themselves, remove them from the internet, and access specialist support (https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/)

Don’t:

* Blame the pupil – criminals use sophisticated methods to trick young people
* Ask leading questions
* Ask to see any messages, videos or images on the pupil’s phone
* Promise confidentiality
* Delete or ask the pupil to delete any images, messages or videos, since they can be used by the police as evidence

Sources

This factsheet was produced by[The Key Safeguarding](https://safeguarding.thekeysupport.com/benefits/)**: thekeysupport.com/safeguarding**

* With thanks to education expert Aaron King for his help with this content
* NSPCC, [Young people’s experiences of online sexual extortion or ‘sextortion’](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2024/young-people-experiences-online-sexual-extortion)
* Childline, [Report Remove](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/)