

# Safeguarding News

ISSUE 41

FRIDAY 30 November 2018

## Sexting

**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.

**What the law says:** Sexting can be seen as harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is **illegal**, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend;
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age;
- possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

**Why do young people sext?** There are many reasons why a young person may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video or message to someone else.

- joining in because they think that 'everyone is doing it';
- boosting their self-esteem;
- flirting with others and testing their sexual identity;
- exploring their sexual feelings;
- to get attention and connect with new people on social media, they may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent.

### What are the risks of sexting?

1. No control of images and how they're shared – it's easy to send a photo or message but the sender has no control over this once it's been sent.

2. Blackmail, Bullying and Harm – young people may think 'sexting' is harmless, but it can leave them vulnerable to blackmail, bullying, unwanted attention and emotional distress.

## Who else can help?

