

SEXTING AND CYBER-SAFETY: protecting your child online



Mobile phones are a part of day-to-day life for most children and young adults, and the lines can blur between communication that is appropriate and that which puts them at risk. 'Sexting' – sending provocative images via text message – is a growing trend you need to be aware of to protect your child.

Studies show that many parents don't always understand what their children are doing online. With the growth in smartphone technology and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, it's time to get up to speed with your kids' tech habits.

Photos were once the domain of the family photo album, but the proliferation of digital photography, mobile phone cameras, social networking sites and blogs now means images can quickly travel across cyber-space and be viewed by thousands of people.

Sharing photos between friends is fun, and sending provocative photos might seem innocent and flirtatious. However, sexting can leave your child at risk of public humiliation, social isolation and cyber-bullying.

Images can be uploaded onto social networking sites where they can be easily shared or passed around.

It's important for you to monitor your child's online activities, including websites they visit, who they are communicating with, their online 'friends' and the information they are publishing.

Your child may not understand the repercussions of sharing images and information online, and the digital footprint they leave behind, which can never be erased.

Talking to your child about the risk of sexting and their online communication is a good start, but it's also important to understand the technology you're dealing with.

Social networking websites can often be confusing and difficult to navigate, and your child may use jargon which can be difficult to decipher.

Educate yourself about how websites like Facebook and Twitter work, and also monitor your child's communication on blogs and in chat rooms.

The message to young people is – don't send or publish images of yourself and don't distribute any sent to you.

The Parent Line can help you with the tools needed to talk openly with your child about cyber-safety. It's a parenting advice line, which is staffed by highly trained and experienced counsellors: 1300 1300 52.

Tips for parents:

- Talk to your child about the consequences of sexting.
- Monitor your child's online presence, especially social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.
- Warn your child about cyber predators, and explain that images can end up in the wrong hands.
- Give your child clear rules on what they can and can't do with their mobile phone, and monitor text messages.
- Encourage your child to be open about receiving provocative images and cyber-bullying.
- Never allow your child to meet up with new online friends without your supervision.
- Remind your child that there are key pieces of information they should never share online, including addresses, photos and video footage.

Understanding teenglish: what are your kids really saying?

A

- **AAK** alive and kicking
- **AFK** away from the keyboard
- **A/S/L** or **ASL** age/sex/location (asking for personal information)

B

- **b4** before
- **BBL** be back later
- **BBS** be back soon
- **b/f** boyfriend (also shown as **bf**, **B/F**, or **BF**)
- **BFN** bye for now
- **BRB** be right back
- **BTW** by the way
- **BCNU** I'll be seeing you
- **BBF** best bud forever
- **BFF** best friend forever

C

- **CU** see you – also known as **cya**
- **CUL8R** see you later
- **CUOL** see you online
- **CYA** see ya

D

- **DIKU** do I know you?
- **DWT** driving while texting
- **DEGT** don't even go there (I don't want to talk about it)
- **DW** don't worry

E

- **EM** email
- **EZ** easy
- **Eva** ever

F

- **F2F** face to face
- **FOCL** falling off chair laughing
- **FTW** for the win
- **FITB** fill in the blanks
- **FUD** fear, uncertainty and doubt

G

- **GAL** get a life
- **g/f** girlfriend (also shown as **gf**, **G/F**, or **GF**)
- **GTR** got to run
- **GR8** great
- **GGOH** gotta get out of here
- **G2G** got to go

H

- **H&K** hugs and kisses
- **HAGD** have a good day
- **HB** hurry back
- **Huggles** hugs
- **H8** hate

I

- **IDK** I don't know
- **ILU** or **ILY** I love you
- **I<3U** I love you
- **IMHO** in my humble opinion
- **IDTS** I don't think so
- **IRL** in real life

K

- **k**, **K**, or **kk** OK
- **KIT** keep in touch
- **KTHXBAl** ok, thanks, bye

L

- **LMIRL** let's meet in real life
- **LOL** laughing out loud
- **LTNS** long time no see
- **LY** I love ya
- **LYL** love you lots
- **L8** late
- **LTG** learn to google
- **LMAO** laughing my ass off

M

- **M8** mate

N

- **NP** no problem
- **NT** no thanks
- **N1** no one
- **NE1** anyone
- **NM** never mind
- **NRN** not right now

O

- **OJ** or **OK** only joking or only kidding
- **OMG** oh my gosh
- **OF** old fart
- **OL** the Old Lady (mum)
- **OM** the Old Man (dad)
- **OTW** on the way

P

- **P911** my parents are in the room
- **PIR** parents in room
- **PLZ** please
- **POS** parents are looking over my shoulder
- **POTS** parents over the shoulder
- **PPL** people
- **Peeps** people

Q

- **QT** cutie

R

- **ROFL** rolling on floor, laughing
- **RL** real life
- **RSN** real soon now

S

- **SPST** same place, same time
- **SYL** see you later
- **Sum1** someone
- **SO** significant other

T

- **TC** take care
- **THX** thanks!
- **TTYL** talk to you later
- **TY** thank you
- **TYVM** thank you very much
- **TMI** too much information
- **TNT** till next time
- **TPTB** the powers that be
- **TYT** take your time

U

- **UW** you're welcome
- **US** you suck
- **UV** unpleasant visual
- **UY** up yours

W

- **WEU** what's eating you?
- **WTGP?** want to go private? (go to a private chat room)
- **WIIFM** what's in it for me?

1

- **121** one to one
- **143** I love you
- **1432** I love you too
- **182** I hate you

2

- **2GB2BT** too good to be true

3

- **303** mum

4

- **420** marijuana
- **459** I love you
- **4EAE** for ever and ever

5

- **5FS** five finger salute

8

- **831** I love you
- **86** out of, over, to get rid of, or kicked out

9

- **9** parent is watching
- **99** parent is no longer watching

Symbols

- **<3** heart/love
- **?^** hook up?