

Keeping children safe online

Advice for libraries

Sending nudes or sexting is when someone shares a sexual message, nude or semi-nude with another person. They can be sent through any device and app, game or social media site. They can be sent as an image, video or part of a livestream. Young people may send nudes for many reasons, for example, peer pressure, blackmail, to increase their self-esteem or because they feel like they 'owe' it to a partner and more.

Since lockdown, young people have relied more on social media sites to communicate with peers and may have sent nudes to explore having a sexual relationship.

Sending Sexual Images, Videos and Messages

What the law says

It's illegal to send, store or take sexual images or videos of a child under 18, even if the person who took or shared the image is a child. This includes:

- Sharing an explicit image or video of a child
- Having, downloading or storing an explicit image or video of a child, even if it was taken with the child's permission
- Sending sexual messages to a child
- A child taking an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend



The risks, and how children might feel

- Young people who send sexual images and videos may feel pressured into doing this by their peers or someone they're in a relationship with
- As soon as an image is sent, they lose control of it
- The young person involved may be bullied, blackmailed or harassed about photos/videos or they may be shared (perhaps without their consent)
 - 'Sextortion' or 'revenge porn' is a form of blackmail where the young person is coerced or exploited using the threat of sexual images or videos of them being shared
- If a young person sends or receives explicit content from an adult they may (unknowingly) be being groomed

Children may feel:

- Worried
- Embarrassed
- Distressed
- Ashamed
- Okay

So, you should be:

- Non-judgemental
- Supportive
- Reassuring

If a child has seen or shared explicit messages, images or videos

What to do:

- Make sure you know and follow your library's safeguarding procedures
- Familiarise yourself with the Youth Libraries Group [Safe Place for Children guidelines](#)
- Inform your line manager, supervisor or a senior staff member **immediately**
- Contact your local safeguarding board
- You can also call the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**
- [Contact CEOP](#) to report grooming or inappropriate sexual content and behaviour online

Resources available:

- Visit NSPCC Learning for [advice on sexting for people who work with children](#)
- CEOP's [Thinkuknow](#) also offers useful video resources on sexting
- Children under 18 can access Childline's advice on [sexting](#) and [online safety](#)
- Young people can use IWF and Childline's [Report Remove](#) tool to report nude images or videos of themselves to be taken down from the internet
- The [Zipit app](#) helps young people feeling under pressure to send nude images by offering them funny comebacks they can use instead
- [So You Got Naked Online](#) offers children, young people and parents advice and strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents