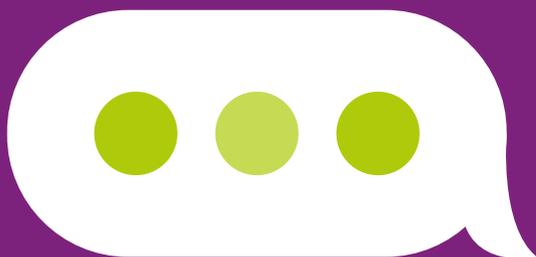# Think Before You Send.

Sexting and Online Bullying

Bullies Out ®

WHAT IS SEXTING?

'Sexting' is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet. It can include sexual chat or requests for pictures/images of a sexual nature.

Young people can share them across any app, site or game, including during a livestream. Many young people also share them on social media channels.

Sexting might seem like a harmless way to flirt or show your boyfriend or girlfriend how much you like them, but although you may trust the person you've sent it to right now, people can change and relationships can break-up.

Once you click send, there's no way to get your pictures and messages back. You are not able to control who it's sent to or where they save it. It's quite possible your ex or friend will delete them after the relationship ends or you have a fight, but what if they don't?

Why do young people Sext?

There are a number of reasons why young people may want to send sexual messages, images or videos to another person.

These include:

> Peer pressure
> Feeling pressured by their partner
> Being blackmailed, threatened or harassed by someone
> To increase their self-esteem
> To prove their sexuality
> To flirt with someone
> Feeling worried about being seen as 'not sexy', or 'shy' if they don't
> Feeling confident about themselves – and wanting to share their confidence and pride with others
> Feeling like they 'owe' their boyfriend or girlfriend and being made to feel guilty if they don't
> Being in love with someone and fully trusting them
> They're in a long distance or online relationship and want to have sexual relationship

If someone keeps pressuring you to share a nude, blocking and reporting them will help keep you (and others) safe. Take a look at the App Information Sheets on our website if you're not sure how to do this.
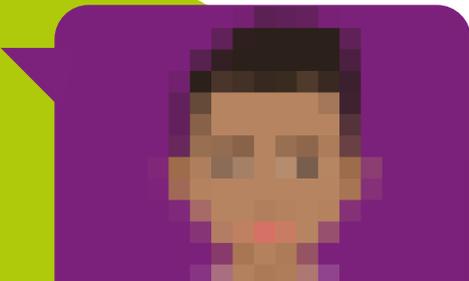
The risks of Sexting

Whether you send or share the photos or video, sexting can cause serious problems, such as:

> Embarrassment if the picture is shown to family, friends, classmates and even strangers

> Bullying or harassment from peers who judge you for sexting

> Trouble at school if you violate a school policy

> Future consequences as the image can follow you for a long time. It may be seen by college admissions officers or even potential employers

> Losing control of the images, videos or messages and how they're shared. Once something is shared online it becomes public and can be saved or copied by others

What can you do if you've shared a 'Sext'?

If you've sent a sext to someone and you're worried about what might happen, take a deep breath, we understand things can get out of hand, even when you didn't mean them to.

There are things you can do:

Ask for the message to be deleted

Explain that you're not comfortable with them keeping the picture and ask them to delete it. Of course, there is no proof they have done so even if they say they have.

Don't reply to threats

If someone trying to threaten or blackmail you, don't reply and don't send more photos. It can be scary, as they may get very nasty but it can help you to keep in control.

Talk to someone you trust

Talking to someone can be really scary, especially If you're being threatened. But it can also help you get support and stay in control. Speak to a trusted adult and let them know what has happened.

Report what has happened

If you're under 18 and you're worried or being threatened you can contact your local Police station or make a report to CEOP (www. ceop.police.uk). Making a report isn't confidential but it does mean that they can help to stop what's happening.

Get help with how you're feeling

Having a nude shared by other people or being threatened is frightening and isn't your fault. If you're struggling to cope or you don't know what to do, talk to us (mentorsonline@bulliesout.com).

SEXTING AND THE LAW

Is Sexting Illegal?

This depends on what the image is or what the chat involves and who it is sent between. However, it is a crime to possess, take, make, distribute or show anyone an indecent or abuse image of a child or young person under 18 years of age. Always remember that, while the age of consent is 16, the relevant age in relation to indecent images is 18.

What if a child (under 18 years of age) takes a sexually explicit image of themselves?

If you're under 18 it is **against the law** to make and possess a sexually explicit image (naked or semi naked) or video of yourself. You are committing a further offence if you then share that image or video with another person and the person who receives the image or video will also be liable for an offence of possessing the image.

It is also against the law for anyone to save or share that image or video of you. Even if it's a selfie or they're under 18 too. It is also against the law to save or share a nude or sexual video of anyone else who is under 18 if one is sent to you.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, most matters are usually dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances by members of your local Police force.
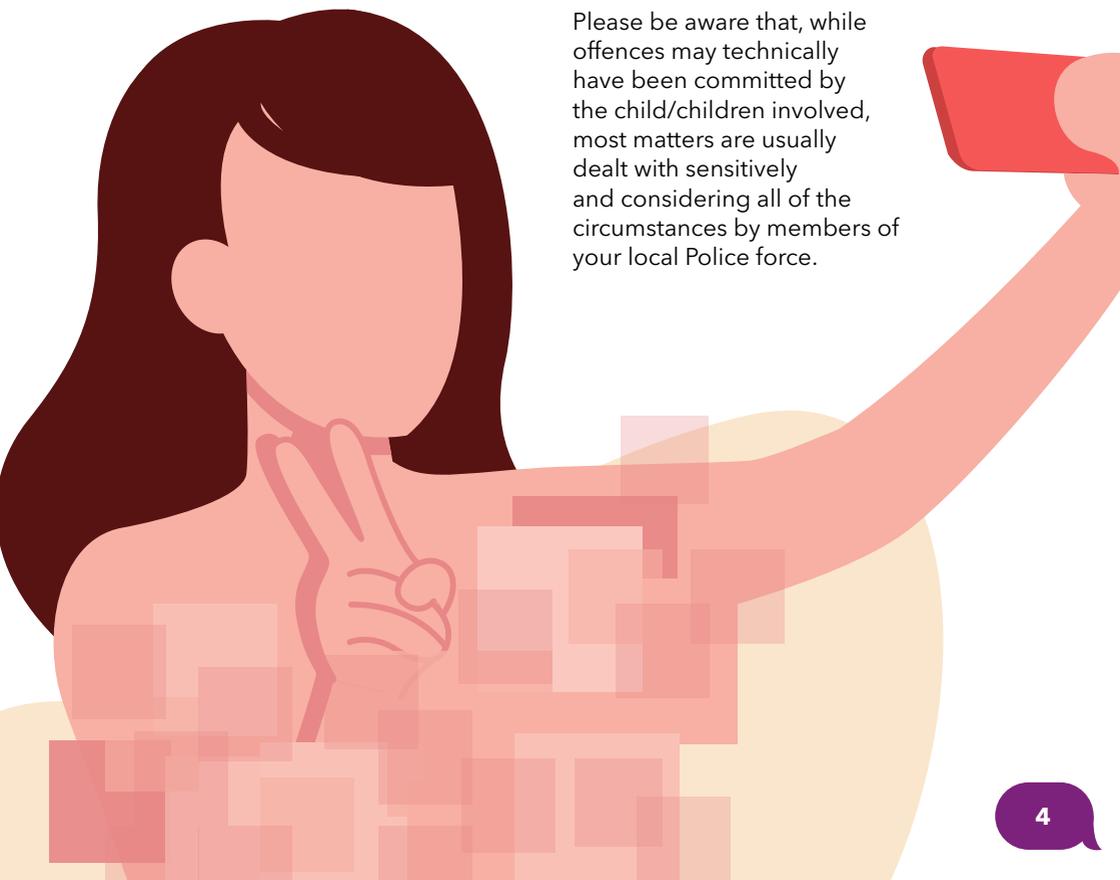
RECOGNISING ONLINE BULLYING

Online bullying is bullying via electronic means. This could be via the internet, phone, laptop, computer, tablet, or online gaming.

Online bullying is never okay!

ALWAYS TAKE ACTION

Abusive messages

Unwanted content

Impersonisation

ONLINE BULLYING

Online (Cyber) bullying – is any form of bullying that is carried out through the use of electronic media devices, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, or gaming consoles

The Internet is a great place to find information, do things you enjoy online and to talk to friends, family and other people who like the same things as you. Social networking sites, messaging apps and gaming sites can be great fun and a positive experience. But what do you do when things go wrong?

Technology is easily abused and misused and if you are using and accessing these tools, you must ensure you use them safely and respectfully. These technologies are extremely useful and particularly help us to learn, play and connect with others. Problems occur when people do not understand the consequences of using the technologies and fail to use them with respect.

Types of Online Bullying

Online bullying can include:

> Sending threatening or abusive text messages

> Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos

> Excluding someone from online games, friendship groups or activities

> Setting up hate sites about a particular person

> Setting up an abusive poll against someone

> Creating a fake account or stealing someone's identity to embarrass or cause trouble in their name

> Shaming someone online

WHAT MAKES ONLINE-BULLYING DIFFERENT?

It can be harder to escape

Going home to escape playground bullies is no longer possible due to the 24-7 nature of online bullying. The nature of online activity means you can be in contact at any time.

Material can be widely disseminated very quickly

Once a picture is taken with a mobile phone camera, or a message is posted online, it can be forwarded instantly onto dozens of people within the time it takes to press a few buttons. The whole school or community may know a vicious rumour or gossip within minutes.

Potentially, vast numbers of people can witness an online-bullying incident take place. The relatively new phenomenon of something 'going viral' describes the way in which the internet can be used to spread an act of bullying to thousands, even millions of people.

Top Tips to Stay Safe Online

- When using passwords, always make sure they are unusual. Use a combination of letters, lowercase, uppercase, symbols and numbers. Don't use any part of your name or email address and don't use your birth date. Never share your password with anyone.

- If you are using a public computer such as one in a library, computer shop, or even a shared family computer, make sure you sign out of any online service you are using before leaving the computer so that you can protect your privacy.

- If someone is bullying you online, keep the evidence – save or copy any photos, videos, texts, e-mails or posts that worry or upset you so you can show then to someone you trust and get their advice and support.

- You can report and block someone who is bullying you online. Take a look at the App Information Sheets on our website for more information on how to do this (under the downloads section).

- It is easy to set up fake profiles or lie online so make sure you know who you are talking to. Check they are who they say they are. If you're not sure ask for help.

- Never share private photos or videos of yourself, even if you really like the other person and they ask you to.

- Make sure you have your social media profiles set to the highest possible privacy settings. If you are not sure how to do this ask someone to help you. Sites do have a habit of changing their privacy settings without telling us so keep an eye on them.

- Be mindful of how much information you share about yourself online. Keep personal details safe. You would not choose to share that information to a stranger in the street so why would you do it online.

- If you have made friends with someone online and you want to meet up with them, always take an adult family member with you. Remember people can lie about who they are – it is always better to be safe than sorry.
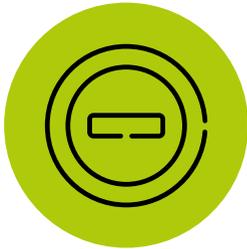
TAKING ACTION

The most important thing to do if you're being bullied online is to **take a screenshot**.

Windows: PrintScrn Button
Mac: Cmd + Shift + 3

Android: Vol Down + Power
IOS: Home + Sleep

The easiest way to stop someone bothering you online is to block their account from contacting you. **Remember not to retaliate**.

Most social networks will allow you to report offensive material. After taking a screenshot, you should **report it** to the service provider.

DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

Online bullying is never okay!

Be Kind Online

Being bullied online can have a detrimental effect on a person. It can affect a person's self-esteem, confidence and social skills. In many cases people who have been bullied have had to leave school, work and social networks to escape their bullying.

Try to consider the impact your words may have and think twice before posting. Remember, cruel words, nasty texts, messages and emails are all weapons – and weapons can hurt and kill.

Think twice before you post anything online because once it's out there you can't take it back. It is very easy for any comments or posts you make online to be taken out of context and these could be damaging to you in the long term. Your digital footprints can affect your life both online and offline.

Digital Footprint

When we walk across mud, snow or sand we leave footprints that are visible. The same applies when we use the Internet – we leave a digital footprint trail. Every click, every post, every submit leaves a trace.

You are responsible for the information you put online. Once it is on the World Wide Web it is potentially there forever. Even if you delete a post, remove a picture or a comment they will still be present on a server somewhere. Be very careful that the information you are storing or sharing is legal and not abusive in anyway.

Increasingly, colleges, universities and potential employers will search the Internet to see what they can find out about you. If you have been using the Internet for a while and have not protected yourself or been careful about how you are portraying yourself online, that is a whole lot of information they can find out about you. On the flip side, if you have used the Internet in a positive way this can be helpful. First impressions are important so when posting online think – would I be happy for my parents/guardians to see this. If the answer is 'no' then don't post it.

The **5 P's** for a **POSITIVE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT**
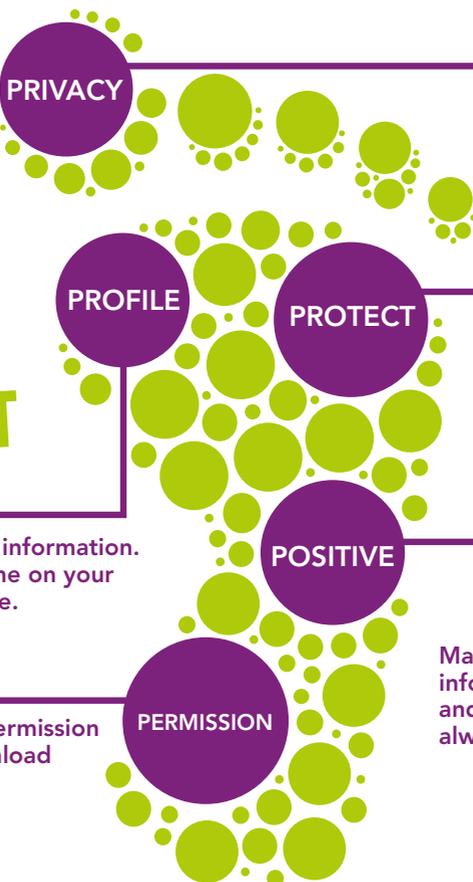
PRIVACY
Keep your personal details and passwords secure.

PROFILE
Do not share personal information. Only use your first name on your profile and when online.

PROTECT
Always keep evidence of any negative behaviour. Never retaliate. Tell someone.

POSITIVE
Make sure the information you like and share online is always positive.

PERMISSION
Make sure you have permission to view, share or download information online.

GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT ACTION

Always talk to someone you trust.

BulliesOut e-mentors are also available and can provide help, information, guidance and support. **Just email mentorsonline@bulliesout.com**

Online bullying is never okay!

Parent

Teacher

Friend

PLAY YOUR PART

If you see online bullying, speak up!

Always think before you post. Would you say it face to face?

Never share abusive messages, images or videos.

BE CAREFUL

ONCE IT'S SAID - THE WEB IS FED!

SAY NO TO ONLINE BULLYING
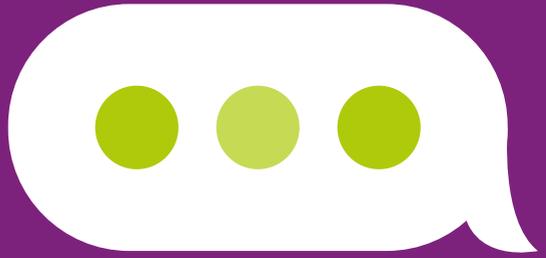
Bullies Out

www.bulliesout.com

WORDS CAN
HURT *or* HEAL
WHAT DID YOURS
DO TODAY?

Remember...
**If you can't
be kind,
be quiet!**

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e: **mentorsonline@bulliesout.com**