

Cotham School

Online Safety Newsletter

Academic Year:
2024/2025

Term: 6
Date: 16/06/2025



Newsletter Topic:

1. What do parents need to know about Sexting?
2. Social Media Focus: Snapchat Stories...



Sexting?

Sexting is when people send or receive sexual messages, photos, or videos—usually through phones, apps, or social media. It often includes nude or partly nude pictures, flirty texts, or explicit videos. Common reasons include flirting, peer pressure, or simply exploring sexuality.



Recognising concerns

Children and young people who are involved in a sexting incident might have:

- shared an image of themselves
- asked for an image from someone else
- received an unsolicited image
- shared an image of someone else

This may have happened with or without the consent of all the people involved.



What do parents need to know?

The Legal Consequences:

Sexting is illegal if you share, make, take, or distribute an indecent image or video of a child under the age of 18. It is an offence under the Protection of Children Act (1978), the Criminal Justice Act (1988), and under section 67 of the Serious Crime Act (2015). **Sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery between children is still illegal**, even if they are in a relationship and any images are shared consensually.

Sometimes Perceived as ‘Banter’:

Many teens view sexting as harmless “banter” or a way to express trust. Though illegal under 18, their motives may be innocent—exploring relationships or sexuality. Yet even consensual sharing can lead to embarrassment, leaks, or emotional harm.

Feelings of Regret:

Even if shared willingly, messages, images, or videos can’t be taken back—leading to regret, shame, or anxiety if leaked.

Loss of Control:

Once shared, photos/videos can spread fast—saved, reshared, or seen by strangers. You lose control the moment it’s sent.

Risks of Exploitation and Pressure:

Sexting risks exploitation—predators may blackmail for more photos, money, or favors. Teens also face pressure to sext to “fit in” or prove affection, leaving them vulnerable to bullying if content is shared.

Advice for parents and careers

Careful use of Language:

Teens often say “nudes” instead of “sexting”, showing how common it feels. Using terms like “inappropriate selfie” can help parents discuss risks more openly and make a chat less awkward.

Practical Safety Measures:

Teach kids to block unwanted messages and use parental controls to limit harmful content.

Long-Term Consequences:

Once a message, image, or video is sent, control is lost. Content intended for one person can spread widely—even accidentally—by others accessing the recipient’s device. This can damage a child’s future reputation, impacting educational, professional, or personal opportunities if shared imagery resurfaces.

Open Communication:

Talk openly with your child about safe sharing online. Understand their curiosity about bodies/sexuality, but emphasize the importance of thinking twice before sharing. Teach them about healthy relationships in a supportive way.

Legal Awareness:

Many teens don’t realize sexting under 18 is illegal—even consensual selfies. Make sure they know the law to stay safe.

Action Steps for Shared Content:

If a sext is shared:

1. Ask the recipient to delete it
2. Report it on the platform
3. Inform the school
4. Contact police/CEOP if pressured or underage



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Social Media: Snapchat

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app developed by Snap Inc. It allows users to send photos, videos, and messages (called “Snaps”) that disappear after being viewed. The app is known for its focus on ephemeral content, creative filters, and augmented reality (AR) features.



Age Requirements: 13+.

Key Features:

- Snaps
- Stories
- Chats
- Filters
- Discover Page
- Snap Maps
- Memories
- Streaks

Safety and Privacy Features:

- View and location sharing control
- Report and block
- Ghost mode - hide location
- Parental control tools
- 24h data deletion
- 2FA security
- AI Moderation
- Safety center resources.

What are: Snapchat Stories....

Stories let users share Snaps—photos or videos—that disappear after 24 hours. They appear in chronological order, creating a narrative or capturing moments. Unlike direct Snaps, Stories are visible to a selected audience and encourage spontaneous sharing. Viewers can reply or react, making interactions more engaging.

Types of Stories:

Snapchat offers different types of Stories to cater to various sharing preferences:

- **My Story (Friends):** A collection of Snaps viewable by friends for 24 hours. Can be made public.
- **Private Story:** Shared only with selected friends, marked with a padlock 🔒. Non-visible to those not included.
- **Shared Stories:** Collaborative Stories between users. You can see who else can view a Shared Story in the Shared Story Profile! Press and hold on the Story and tap “View Profile”.
- **My Story (Public):** Available to a wider audience, potentially featured in Discover. Users 16+ can post publicly. Creators 18+ with large followings may have their Stories recommended.
- **Snap Map Stories:** Public Snaps posted to the Snap Map, viewable on the map or off Snapchat. Automated moderation applies. Selfies, mentions, and Camera Roll/Memories content are excluded. Users 18+ can choose to hide their username. [To post a Snap to Snap Map:](#)
 1. Create a Snap 📸
 2. Select ‘Snap Map’ at the top of the ‘Send To’ screen ✅
 3. Tap the ▶️ button to submit!
- **Community Stories:** Stories shared within Snapchat Communities. Members can contribute and display a community badge on their profile.

How to view them:

1. Swipe right from the camera screen or tap the Stories icon (two overlapping circles) at the bottom right.
2. Friends’ Stories appear at the top—tap their name or profile picture to watch.
3. Tap to advance Snaps, swipe left for the next Story, right to go back, and down to exit.
4. A circular preview around a friend’s profile in the Chat feed means their Story is updated—tap to view.

