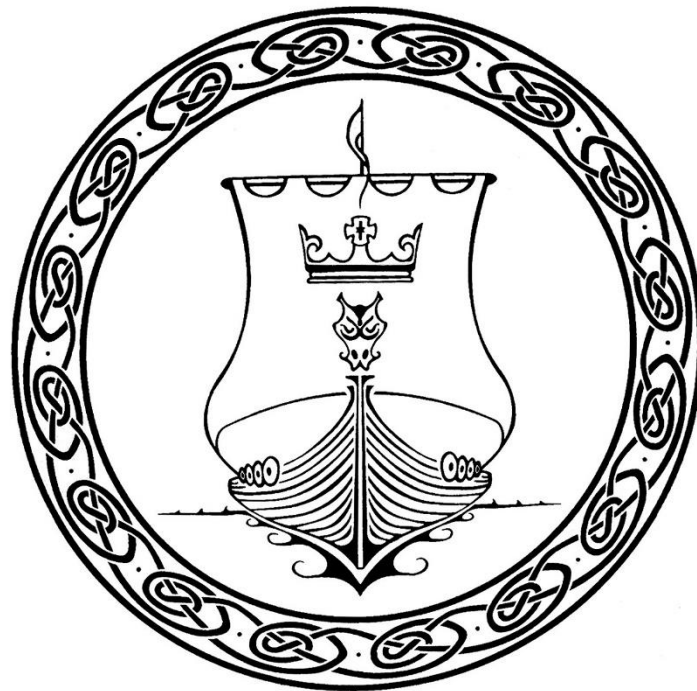




Queen Elizabeth II High School
Policy & Procedures for Dealing with Sexting



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Introduction

The following guidance and procedures were informed by the following documents:

- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges
- 'Sexting' in Schools: Advice and support around self-generated images
- Isle of Man Education Act 2001
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools. July 2022

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. With recent developments of technology we have seen a significant increase in incidents of consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery' between young people. The impact/consequences for victims can be significant. It is important that, as a school we do all we can to respond appropriately to incidents in order to minimise the harm done.

Definitions

There are a number of definitions of sexting but for the purposes of this advice sexting is simply defined as:

Images or videos generated

- **By children under the age of 18, or**
- **of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature.**

Designated Roles:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Mrs Charlotte Clarke

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):

Mr Jason Coole



Steps to take in the case of an Incident

1: Disclosure by a student

Any sexting disclosure should be treated sensitively and must prioritise the safety the student/s.

Always:

- Report the disclosure immediately to the DSL or DDSL. In the event that neither are available, the disclosure should be reported immediately to a member of the SLT or relevant Director of Key Stage.
Inform the student of your need to do this
- A CPOMS incident must be completed by the person to whom the disclosure is made
- If possible secure and turn off any device which may hold the image

Never:

- Ask to view the image
- Ask the student to send the image to you or anyone else
- Ask them to delete the image
- Share information about the alleged incident with other members of staff, students or parents

Any student whose image has been distributed is likely to be very distressed, especially if the image has been circulated widely and they do not know who has shared it, seen it or where it has ended up. They may well require pastoral support during the disclosure or after the event.

2: Dealing with the Disclosure (DSL, DDSL, SLT & DKS only)

Once the DSL or DDSL, SLT or DKS (from here on referred to as DSL) have been alerted they will need to decide what steps to take. They may wish to speak to the student who has made the disclosure. They should do this in the presence of another member of staff.

When the student makes the initial disclosure, the following questions will help the DSL decide upon the best course of action:

- Is the student disclosing about themselves receiving an image, sending an image or sharing an image?
- What sort of image is it? Is it potentially illegal or is it inappropriate?
- Was the image recorded and/or shared with consent?
- Was there an element of coercion?
- Are the school child protection and safeguarding policies and practices being followed?
- How widely has the image been shared and is the device in their possession?
- Is it a school device or a personal device?
- Does the student need immediate support and or protection?
- Are there any other young people involved?
- Do they know where the image has ended up?



3: Establish the Location of the Image

It is highly likely that the image will have been created and potentially shared through mobile devices. It may be that the image is not on one single device: it may be on a website, social media or on a multitude of devices. It may be on personal devices and/or school devices or the school network. It is important to establish the location of the image.

4: Secure the Devices

The Isle of Man Education Act 2001 Section 21B gives any teacher the power to “seize and detain”. This applies to the confiscation of any device suspected of holding indecent images of students.

Once the location of the image has been established, every effort should be made to secure any devices. It may be necessary to engage the help of other staff to achieve this.

Confiscated student devices should be named and placed in the school safe. See section 6 for what to do with confiscated devices. An accurate list of the names of any students should be recorded.

If it is suspected that the image is on the school network, all Network access must be blocked until the image can be removed.

5: Searching Devices

Current Guidance recommends that schools should not search the device if it will cause additional stress to the student/person whose image has been distributed. Therefore no personal devices should be searched unless there are clear safeguarding reasons for doing so. This search must only be carried out by the Head Teacher or someone authorised by them and should be carried out by someone of the same sex.

Never print out any material for evidence or move any material from one storage device to another.

In the event that it is suspected that the image is on the school network, the DSL will seek advice from the following on how to proceed:

- Police
- DESC Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer Grainne Burns

6: Next Steps Deciding on a Response

There may be a multitude of reasons why a student has engaged in sexting – it may be a romantic/sexual exploration scenario, or it may be due to coercion.

It will not always be appropriate to inform the police; this will depend on the nature of the incident (see Appendix 1 for help with this decision).

If it is suspected that there has been an element of coercion or malicious intent, contact the police. It may be appropriate to contact/refer to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP).

Carry out a risk assessment in relation to the student (see Appendix 2). If it is felt that they are at risk of significant harm it may be necessary to make a referral to Children & Families (MARF).

Consider what support the student/s will need going forward and ensure that this is put in place.



Inform parents/carers about the incident and how it is being managed. This includes the parents/carers of any student whose device has been confiscated. Only share necessary information. Do not share the details of any other students.

If it is established that students from another school have been involved in the incident, then where possible, this should be reported to the DSL of that school.

If the image appears on a website or social network site it should be reported to that site. It may be possible to refer it to Child Lines [Report Remove](#) tool. Parents of the student should be advised of this.

If it has been decided that the police do not need to be contacted, devices can be returned to students via their parents. Do not return devices directly to students. Ask parents to come into school to:

- Collect the device
- Take responsibility for ensuring there are no inappropriate images on the device
- Report any concerns to the school or local police
- Discuss with their child/ward the seriousness and consequences of sharing/storing indecent images of children

If the police are contacted, seek their advice before returning devices to students (via parents).

It is important that incidents are consistently recorded and appropriately logged on SIMS.



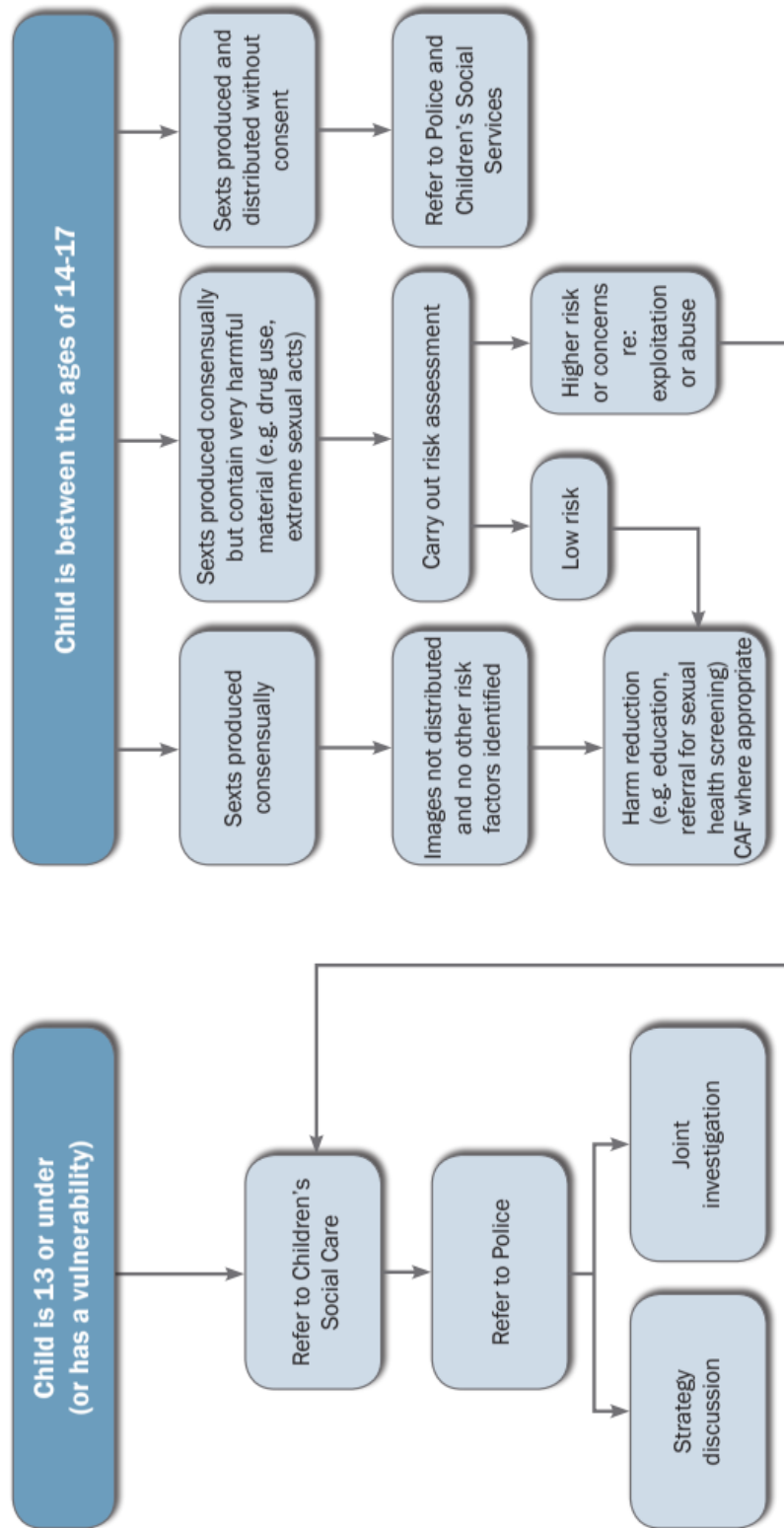
Appendix 1

Guidance on Reaction to Incidents.

The following has been taken from: [‘Sexting’ in schools: advice and support around self generated images](#)

Sexting – Response process for professionals

This flowchart (adapted from ‘Medway Local Authority Response Process for Professionals’) will help you to make a decision about the actions you need to take.





The following questions will help when considering responses and required support for students when dealing with incidents of sexting:

- **the age and the developmental appropriateness of their actions:** is the activity appropriate for their age group or is it extreme behaviour? Teenagers will experiment – but what about a younger child? Are you concerned that the behaviour is outside the norms?
- **their background or context:** have they suffered abuse? Are they a looked after child or a vulnerable child? Have they been involved in the criminal justice system? Could their actions have been influenced by the behaviour of influential adults?
- **whether the child was willing or coerced:** were they subjected to sexual coercion or bullying, or was the incident willingly entered into? Were adults involved?
- **the nature of image that was shared:** how provocative or explicit was it? Does it break the law, i.e. is it a child sex abuse image?
- **the level of dissemination:** how widely was the image shared and with whom? How was it passed around?
- **participant intent/motive:** was it simply a 'romantic' gesture? Or was there intent to harm another? What other motive might there be? Was there sexual attention seeking?
- **the wellbeing of those involved:** depending on the answers to some of the questions above, you should risk-assess the situation in order to work out whether you need to escalate the issue to protect those involved.
- **whether protection, education or counselling is required** related to the level of risk. Does what may be a silly juvenile incident warrant a criminal record?
- **urgency and timing:** again relevant to the level of risk - for example, an incident taking place last thing on a Friday may escalate over the weekend
- **involvement of other schools:** do you need to contact the senior management team at another school if the sexting involves, or has disseminated to, pupils there?



Appendix 2: Risk Assessment Tool for Young Person Engaged in Potentially Harmful Sexting

Indicator of risk or harm	Factors to be considered	Concern Yes/No	Comments
Age	Sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator that there are risks to the welfare of children, whether boy or girl, and possibly others. This is particularly relevant if one of the parties is pre-pubertal. Children under 13 cannot lawfully give consent to sexual activity and there is a presumption that they will be referred to children's social services.		
Level of maturity and understanding	Is the child/young person competent to consent to the understanding of the child sexual activity? Is there a relationship of trust? A legal definition is provided at s27 Sexual Offences Act 2003.		
Living circumstances or background	Has a Logging of Concern, CWCN or CP referral ever been made on any party? Do cultural or religious beliefs have an impact on their circumstances and/or sharing information?		
Coercion or Bribery	Has the child been encouraged to exchange sex for favours or other inducements such as supply of alcohol or substances? Is there evidence of persuasion, emotional blackmail, threats or use of pornography?		
Familial Child Sex Offences	At this stage of the assessment is any family member considered to be "a risk to children" or have convictions for sexual offences? Does the sexual partner fall within any of the following categories beyond the normal family relationships? Step-parent, foster parent, step sibling who live in the same household or have been regularly involved in caring for the child; or care workers such as nannies or au pairs if they live with or regularly care for the child.		
Behaviour of the child	Is the child withdrawn or anxious? Is there a pattern of 'casual' sexual relationships with different partners? Are there more than two other persons involved in the sexual activity		
The misuse of substances or alcohol as a disinhibitor	The child or young person may be unaware or reluctant alcohol as a disinhibitor to acknowledge that alcohol or substances may be offered to facilitate sexual activity with them. The young person's own behaviour in misusing substances or alcohol may place the young person at increased risk of harm, as they may be unable to give informed consent.		
Secrecy	Has the sexual partner attempted to secure secrecy beyond what might be considered usual in a normal teenage relationship? Advice may need to be sought from a sexual health expert.		
Power Imbalance	Is the relationship reasonably equal and consensual? Power imbalances can occur in many different forms including threats and aggression. Is there an age differential greater than 3 years?		
Disability impeding Choice	Disabled children and young people are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. However, disabled children and young people have a right to a private life, which should be respected. The Sexual Offences Act provides an offence of sexual activity against persons with a mental disorder impeding choice. See Home Office/Mencap guidance.		

Date of Last Review: February 2024 by Mr Coole

Date of Next Review: February 2026

