

CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL
SEXTING POLICY

This policy, which applies to the whole school, and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. This policy is also publicly available on the school website

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher, being responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum, monitoring the weekly lesson plans for all staff, ensuring all planning is appropriately differentiated with relevant, appropriate learning objectives.
- The Headteacher along with the whole school teaching and therapy team review the long-term and medium-term planning and ensure that appropriate targets and strategies are in place. It is intended that the ongoing review and development of the curriculum will support enthusiastic and inspirational teaching. The process of review plays a key role in the continuing professional development of all staff at City of Rochester School.
- The Trustees undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so requires. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: January 2021
Date of Next Review: January 2022
Version No. 1
Policy No 19b:002



Alicja Emmett
Headteacher



Claire Cooper
Chair of Trustees and Safeguarding Trustee

This policy will be reviewed no later than January 2022, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

City of Rochester School will adhere to the guidance issued by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety "Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people" (September 2016).

1. Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages.
They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops – any device that allows you to share media and messages.
Sexting may also be called
 - Trading nudes
 - Dirties
 - Pic for pic
2. There are many reasons why a young person may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video or message to someone else.
 - Joining in because they think that "everyone is doing it";
 - Boosting their self-esteem
 - Flirting with others and testing their sexual identity
 - Exploring their sexual feelings
 - To get attention and connect with new people on social media

City of Rochester School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

- They may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent
 - Exploitation or blackmail
3. The Risks associated with Sexting include:
- It's easy to send a photo or message but the sender has no control about how it's passed on
 - When images are stored or shared online they become public. Some people may think that images and videos only last a few seconds on social media and then they're deleted (such as snapchat) but they can still be saved or copied by others.
 - Images used on social media are also owned in any cases by the media that the child has used, for example anything in the Apple cloud is owned by Apple and anything posted on Facebook is owned by Facebook and will remain within their storage area. These storage areas are open to hacking and frequently are. This means that photos or videos which a young person may have shared privately could still be end up being shared between adults they don't know
 - Young people are therefore at risk of:
 - Blackmail - An offender may threaten to share the pictures with the child's family and friends unless the child sends money or more images.
 - Unwanted attention - Images posted online can attract the attention of sex offenders, who know how to search for, collect and modify images and pose an even greater personal risk to the young person.
 - Bullying - If images are shared with their peers or in school, the child will be humiliated and may be bullied.
 - Emotional distress - Children can feel embarrassed and humiliated. If they're very distressed this could lead to suicide or self-harm.
4. All staff will be trained in e-safety (see our e-safety policy for more information) and will have a role in preventing young people from sexting. All staff will be available and approachable for students to make disclosures about sexting which will then be referred to the DSL for further investigation. Every child is different, so our approach will be based upon their character and our relationship with them.
- We will:
- seek to prevent young people sexting through educating them about the laws and potential consequences of sexting. This may be addressed in e-safety sessions during lessons and specialised e-safety sessions PHSE.
 - Outline our expectations and explain the rules of having a mobile, tablet or smartphone;
 - Ask young people what they feel is acceptable to send to other people then discuss appropriate images and the dangers of inappropriate images (listed above)
 - Make sure young people are comfortable saying no, that they know their body is private and being asked to share explicit images is inappropriate and illegal
 - Explain to young people about the importance of trust and consent in a healthy relationship (sex and relationships policy)
 - Tell young people that it's not OK for someone to make them feel uncomfortable, to pressure them into doing things that they don't want to do. Or to show them things that they're unhappy about
 - Tell young people what can happen if things go wrong through real life examples such as television programmes or news stories as far as possible
 - Ask young people about the "granny rule" would you want your granny to see the image you're sharing?
 - Talk about whether a person who asks for an image from you might also be asking other people for images
 - Discuss revenge sexting after relationships have broken down or a friend has done something as a joke and lost control of the image etc
 - Let young people know that they can speak to us if this ever happens and that disclosures will be treated confidentially and without embarrassment and support will be given. Staff will react calmly and listen to the concerns of the child and explain that they must share the information confidentially with the DSL
 - Provide details of sources of support and coping strategies if the young person finds themselves in an uncomfortable position such as the Zipit App to control the conversation with funny images to prevent further request for pictures or Childline if the situation has got out of control

5. If a child has been affected by sexting
 - If the child has been sending explicit images or videos of themselves, you may feel shocked, upset, angry, confused or disappointed. They're also likely to feel anxious about talking to you
 - Where possible, give yourself time to process the information and remember they'll be watching your reactions
 - Reassure them that they aren't alone
 - Listen and offer support – they're probably upset and need your help and advice, not criticism
 - Do not shout or make them feel like it's their fault
 - Don't ask questions like "why have you done it" as this may stop them from opening up to you
 - Discuss the problem and the wider pressures that they may face, to help them to understand what's happened and understand any wider safeguarding concerns
 - Assure them that you'll do all you can to help and explain that you will seek the support of the DSL
 - Remind them that they can always talk to Childline or another trusted adult if they aren't comfortable talking directly to you

6. If a child has shared an explicit image:-
 - Ask them who initially sent it to them, their age, and if they know whether it's been shared with anyone else
 - Ask the social media site to remove the image or ask them to get in touch with Childline. Together, Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) will try to get the image removed. Alternatively, you can make a report direct to the IWF. Childline is a confidential service, but to make a report on a child's behalf to the IWF they'll need to confirm who the child is and their date of birth. You'll need to provide Childline or IWF with a link to the image. However, after you have sent the link don't keep a copy of the image for evidence as it's illegal to share or store child abuse images
 - Discuss the situation with the DSL for wider safeguarding concerns and agree who will be contacted and when, then contact parents/police/CEOP as appropriate to the case
 - If the image was requested by an adult, contact the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), as this is grooming which is illegal
 - If the image was requested by a school aged student who is not at your educational institutions, contact the DSL at the student's school to raise awareness of potential wider safeguarding issues or circulation of the image in their school
 - Encourage them to delete images from their social media accounts if they have uploaded the image themselves
 - If they are sharing an image which somebody else uploaded, consider asking that person to delete it
 - If the image or video was shared over the web, don't comment on it or share it as this may mean the image is seen more widely

7. If a child has been sent a sexually explicit image:-
 - Ask them if they know the person who sent it and their age
 - If the image was sent by another young person you may want to help your child to speak to the sender in order to stop future messages. If your child agrees, you could also help them to block the sender on social media
 - Look at Net Aware for information and advice about this or contact the O2 and NSPCC online safety helpline on 0808 800 5002
 - If the image was sent by an adult, contact CEOP, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, as this may be part of the grooming process.

8. A young person is breaking the law if they:
 - Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
 - Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it is shared between children of the same age
 - Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created
 - However, as of January 2016, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action isn't in the public interest.
 - Crimes recorded this way are unlikely to appear on future records or checks, unless the young person has been involved in other similar activities which may indicate that they're a risk. Find out more about legislation on child

abuse images at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse/legislation-policy-practice/>

9. Sources of support are:-

- CEOP's thinkuknow gives advice for parents, as well as children and young people of different ages, on staying safe online. Thinkuknow have created short videos to help parents understand why children "sex", how to talk to them about it and what to do if their child is affected.
- Internetmatters.org work to help parents keep their children safe online. They provide free advice on online issues affecting children, including sexting and grooming.
- The UK safer internet centre gives advice and resources for parents and professionals on online safety. Their website has links to games and quizzes for primary and secondary aged children that encourages them to be safe online.
- O2 and NSPCC Help Line: 0808 800 5002
- Zipit app: This app provides children with alternative images to send in response to a request for explicit images. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app/>