



Guidance for Schools on Handling Sexting Incidents

Eye PAT have received the following advice from Tim Loughton MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families.

"I have been advised that the mobile telephone or other internet enabled device is the child's personal property. In order for a teacher to confiscate and examine it there must be a school policy setting out that this will happen, of which parents and children must be made aware, CEOP advise that all schools implement such a policy.

In terms of the legal steps to be taken, once a teacher has been made aware of inappropriate images of a child or young person, they should inform the lead for the child protection in the school as the protection of the child or young person is paramount. The school's police liaison officer should also be informed at this stage and they will be able to give more specific advice about the legalities of the situation and removal of the image. The image should not be forwarded to or saved on another device. However, the image should not be deleted until local police have agreed to it.

In line with child protection procedures and with the agreement of local police, the school should ask all of the young people in possession of the image to delete it, If the image has been forwarded outside the school environment contact the appropriate people and request that they follow the same steps. If the image has been uploaded to any website or social networking site, contact the provider of the service to have it removed. All reputable social networking and content hosting sties will have robust terms of service under which the distribution of illegal materials is strictly forbidden. If the school or organisation is unable to contact the providers of any websites hosting the image, they can report them to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk. If the above steps do not resolve the situation, CEOP can be contacted at www.clickceop.police.uk.

The parents of young people involved should be notified of the situation. It would also be advisable to discuss the "digital footprint" of the images and any images like it with the young people involved. The school may also wish to consider in-house counselling for the young people concerned, particularly if they were depicted in the image. The situation may also be an opportunity for the school [to run an education class](#) or assembly to highlight the issue and encourage young people to practice safe and responsible behaviour in their online activity."



The following advice has been received from The Welsh Assembly Government.

- The Schools in particular need to be careful as personal equipment is likely to be involved. It is not recommended that anyone in school should look at a pupil's phone without the parents being there.
- Schools should have a policy for reporting incidents. Many LAs use the flowchart in the [Becta AUPs](#) in context publication. If they are concerned at all, they should contact their LA for advice (they all have a LSCB - local safeguarding children's board) or contact the Police.
- Parents and Teachers should talk about the issues with pupils about the serious consequences of doing this. Preventing it happening is the top priority.
- If a child brings their phone into school with an image someone else has sent them the schools need to follow the 'Dealing with an Incident Flowchart'.
- If these images are published on the web it could need reporting to the [IWF](#) - sexual photographic images of children under 18 are illegal. These are not child pornography pictures as some sites refer to them - they would be classed as child abuse.