

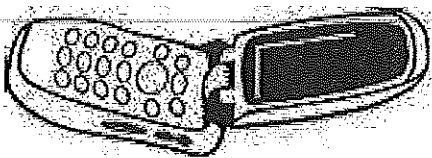
Connecticut State Police  
T I P S  
Topics in Public Safety

## SEXTING and TEENS

Sexting refers to the sending of sexually explicit messages or images via cell phone or other electronic devices. In "sexting," teenagers take nude or sexually explicit photos of themselves and send them via their phones to others.

One in five teens admits that they have sent or received a "sext" message. In some cases, this has resulted in teens being charged with violating child pornography laws.

Parents need to be proactive and have a frank discussion with their children about sexting, even if they don't think their children are doing it. Ask your children what they know about sexting and if they have ever sent or received such a message. Although children are often technically savvy, they may not consider the consequences of sexting and how quickly one image can be spread via cell phone and the Internet.



Parents are encouraged to become tech savvy themselves so that they can keep up with — and monitor — texting technology. Consider having your children "hand-in" their cell phones to you each night to prevent potential sexting activity.

Following are sexting consequences for parents and children to consider together:

- Sexting may result in several felony charges if you are sending images of children under the age of 16.
- Sexting has the potential to incur serious, long-term consequences since a message can last an eternity in cyberspace.
- College admission officers or potential employers could end up seeing sext messages or photos.
- Social repercussions are endless. Sexting can lead to emotional damage, including one's reputation, if an ex-friend sends it to others to make a teen look bad or as a form of revenge. Rumors, harassment and exclusion may follow.
- Once an image is sent, it can never be retrieved. You have lost all control over where that image will travel. Even if the message is sent to one boyfriend or girlfriend, they could easily send it to their friends, who will send to their friends and so on. You probably wouldn't want a sext message to be seen by your parents, your teachers, your friends or the police.
- If someone sends you a naked or sexually explicit photo of an individual under the age of 16, you may want to report it before deleting. If you forward it to others, you would be distributing child pornography, which is a felony in Connecticut.
- Parents should be prepared to implement consequences for sexting, such as loss of cellphone or other privileges.
- Nothing that is sent via cell phone or online should be considered truly private or anonymous.
- If you have concerns about someone distributing child pornography, you can anonymously text a tip to "TIP711" plus your message to CRIMES (274637) or call 1-800-842-0200.



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