

Tips on Talking to your Teen about Sexting

Honest Conversations

Digital Footprint

Legal Implications

Healthy Relationships

Support

Sexting: What is it?

Sexting is the practice of sending, receiving or forwarding on sexually explicit pictures, clips, or texts of yourself or another person using a mobile phone, email or by posting it on the internet. Many older children and teens will be exposed to and/or engage in sexting at some point in their lives. While in most cases children/teens use this as a way of exploring and trying to build relationships, they may not realise the consequences of their actions.

Things you as a Parent can do?

- Try to have open and **honest conversations** with your children about sex and relationships as they are growing up. Remember, if they don't get this information from you they will get it from somewhere else and you have no control over the tone and nature of what they will learn
- **Support** yourself as a parent by finding out about online safety before your child gets older and may be exposed to things, either through their own technology or that of their peers
- Talk about the risks associated with sexting and try to make them aware of their **digital footprint** and how this can stay with them for life
- Talk to them about the **law** in relation to sexting and what it could mean for them. In Ireland it is against the law for anyone to send or receive sexual images of someone under 18. A sexual image is defined as one that shows genitals, or people engaging in sexual activity. This can be classed as possession of and/or distribution of child pornography.
- Talk to them about **healthy relationships** and what this might mean for them.

General Online Safety Tips for your Teen

Discuss the following with your Teen

- Think before they post – once something goes online they will have no control over it
- Advise limiting the sharing of personal information online e.g. name, home address, school, GPS /route tracking etc.
- Not to friend someone unless they know them
- Not to post, like or share anything that can cause hurt to someone else
- **Not to ask for or share naked or semi-naked pictures of themselves or other people**

Supports for you

- This can include anything from engaging in local parenting classes or school internet talks, to accessing websites about parental controls and online safety or finding out about local supports that might be useful to you and your child/teen.
- www.webwise.ie
- www.cybersafeireland.org
- www.hotline.ie
- www.sexualwellbeing.ie
- www.mysexualhealth.ie

