



What is sexting?

Sexting is SENDING or RECEIVING sexually suggestive images. The images can be nudes or show people in various stages of undress.

Three out of four teens own a cell phone and, out of these, 31% report that they've received a sexually explicit image in a text. Many teens feel pressured to engage in more adult behavior, so instead of engaging in physical sexual activities, they feel sexting is a way to stay in control.

But, this is a very dangerous misconception. Research shows that teens who engage in sexting tend to have a greater number of sexual partners than teens who do not. Sexting is also associated with lower self-esteem and risky sexual behavior.



For several years, Microsoft has partnered with the Born This Way Foundation (BTWF) on a variety of online safety-related initiatives. Together, the two groups aim to create a kinder, braver, and safer digital world.

#OwnYourImage

This factsheet was written by the BTWF's Youth Advisory Board to better inform young people about the risks of sexting.

How to avoid getting into a sexting situation

If you're asked for inappropriate pictures of yourself say NO. There's no need to feel pressured to send someone something you don't want to send. That being said, do not ask your boyfriend or girlfriend to send you pictures either.

Think about the consequences

- These pictures or messages never go away. Even if you delete them, use Snapchat, or any other way to try to make sure that the message won't be saved, there are always ways to recover them.
- If you are underage, or the person sending the picture is underage, there can be legal issues if you are found to be in possession of one of these pictures.

Think before you hit Send

Think about your parents, grandparents, teachers, employers, and anyone else you would not want to see this text. Sending these images can ruin your reputation; get you suspended from sports teams, clubs, and other school activities, or lead to legal and disciplinary action.

What to do if someone sexts you

- If the person sending you images is a friend or significant other, delete the image and explain to them the consequences of sending such pictures.
- If the person continues to send you these images, BLOCK THEM. Even if the image was sent via text message, block or "unfriend" them on social media to avoid getting any more messages.
- REPORT sexting! Do not simply delete a picture that someone sends you. Show it to a parent, guardian, or teacher to make sure the situation is handled appropriately.