



Once you send a **SEXT**, you can't control who gets it next.

"Thirty-nine percent of teens have sent sexually suggestive text messages to other teens, and twenty percent have sent nude or semi-nude pictures or video of themselves."

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008.



SEXTING is an important topic that parents should be talking about with teens.

You don't hand your kids keys to the car without having them first learn the rules of the road. So why give them a mobile phone, computer or social networking site and expect them to understand what behavior is and isn't acceptable?



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Your child may be in danger and committing a crime.



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WHAT IS **SEXTING**?

SEXTING is illegal. It is the act of sending indecent or sexually explicit images or photographs, primarily between mobile phones. Sexting has recently become very popular among teens and tweens.

THE LAW

In Arizona, it is a crime for a juvenile to intentionally use any electronic communication device to transmit, display, circulate or possess indecent or sexual images of a minor.

THE CONSEQUENCES

SEXTING is a petty offense which carries a fine of up to \$300 if the image is sent or shown to only one other person. If the image is sent to more than one other person, it is a class 3 misdemeanor, which carries a penalty of up to 30 days incarceration, a \$500 fine, and can also include counseling, community service hours, and probation conditions.

A second or third offense is a more serious crime which has more serious penalties and includes significant additional incarceration.

DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR A '**SEXTING**' TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

- Have you ever received a sexual message or naked photo on your phone or computer?
- Has anyone ever asked or tried to pressure you to send a nude or sexual photo of yourself?
- What do you think about kids sending 'sexy' messages or images to other kids?
- What do you think could happen if you receive, send or forward a sexual text message or naked photo with your cell phone?
- Do you think it is likely that photos sent to one person will be seen by others?

TIPS FOR PARENTS TO PREVENT **SEXTING**

Have you looked at your child's cell phone or social networking site lately? A growing number of teens are messaging sexually explicit and naked or semi-naked photos of themselves to their friends. Not only could this ruin their reputation, it could land them in legal trouble.

Talk with your kids about appropriate and responsible ways to use technology.

Discuss the legal and social consequences of sexting. Explain how "personal information" can be unscrupulously passed around, and how sharing too much information on the internet can damage their future or ruin their reputation.

Teach your teens that just because a photo is deleted on their mobile phone, it doesn't mean that it isn't archived elsewhere and kept forever.

Talk to your child about peer pressure. Some youth feel forced by romantic partners or 'love interests' to send inappropriate images.

Limit your child's opportunities to 'sext' by establishing and enforcing a phone curfew, or have your service provider disable some functions of the phone, such as the camera or picture messaging.

Monitor your child's phone and social networking sites.

Use a service such as My Mobile Watch Dog or Mobile Nanny which monitors your child's cell phone use.

Check out some of the websites that provide information and safety tips for parents and teens, such as: www.connectsafely.org; www.safeteens.com; kidsafetyberspace.com or www.netsmartz.org

SAFETY TIPS FOR TEENS

SEXTING IS ILLEGAL. Don't take or send nude or suggestive photos of yourself or anyone else. Taking, sending or forwarding a sexual picture of someone underage, even if it's you, is a crime and could cause you to be prosecuted.

- Never take photos of yourself that you wouldn't want everyone to see. What you send could easily end up on myspace, facebook or elsewhere on the internet.
- If a sexting photo arrives on your phone, do not send it to anyone else. Doing so is a crime.
- If you receive a nude or suggestive photo of a minor and keep it on your computer, you could also be guilty of sexting.
- Report any inappropriate photos or messages you receive on your cell or computer to an adult you trust. Get your parents and teachers involved immediately. If the photos keep coming, you and your parents will need to report this to law enforcement.
- Don't freak out if an adult decides to talk with the parents of the others involved — that could be the very best way to keep all of you from getting into serious trouble.

"Tips to Prevent Sexting, Safety Tips, and Discussion Starters" reprinted with permission from ConnectSafely.org and NetSmartz.org