

## Sexting

### Teenagers

Sexting refers to the sending of sexual messages, photos or videos using a mobile phone. It can also refer to posting this type of material online. Involvement in sexting, or exposure to inappropriate imagery, is a very real risk for teenagers. The following tips can help guide teens in the choices they make when using mobile phones, web cams and sending messages.

- Talk with your teen about sexting and the social and legal consequences it can have.
- Sexting can have legal consequences if the images taken and shared are of minors. Even if all participants are willing, teens may be breaking the law if they take and share naked or sexual images of themselves or others who are minors. This is because sexting images may be considered child pornography.
- Sexting can have social consequences. For example, if images are forwarded on from the intended recipient, which has been the case following relationship break-ups, the social ramifications can be devastating for teens. Images may end up being viewed by many people through mobiles and posting of images online.
- Remind your teen to delete any sexual content they receive from others and to avoid forwarding this type of content.
- Remind your teen to consider the feelings of others when taking photos and distributing any content by mobile phone or online.
- Learn how to use your teen's mobile phone and talk with them about what they can and can't do with it.
- If you are concerned that a sexting incident may be a criminal matter, contact your local police.
- If your teen is exposed to inappropriate content or involved in creating such content talk with them about it. If necessary seek professional support, including support through the Cybersmart Online Helpline at <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx>. The Cybersmart Online Helpline provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people. Your teen's school may also be able to provide guidance or support.

### More information

The Cybersmart program provides a range of cybersafety materials for parents and their children. For more information, resources, advice and tips, visit the Cybersmart website at [www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au). Encourage your children and teens to take a look around the website. If you have young children, you may like to explore it together to help them understand how to protect themselves against online risks and make the most of their experiences online.