



# ASHLEY HIGH SCHOOL

## Anti-Sexting Policy

This policy was adopted / updated: March 2018

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# Ashley High School

## ANTI-SEXTING POLICY

**Definition:** the term 'sexting' is a derivation of 'texting' but relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and / or written messages with sexually explicit content. These are created and sent via electronic communication devices such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers. They are often 'shared' via social network sites and instant messaging services.

**Aim:** Ashley High School will not tolerate sexting; it is inappropriate and illegal amongst young people and can have extremely damaging and long-lasting consequences. This policy has been created in order to provide a guide for both staff and pupils as to how the school will proceed and what steps will be taken should an incident of sexting be reported or suspected.

**Legal Implications for pupils:** Sexting potentially breaches several civil laws concerned with the creation, possession and distribution of child pornography and indecent images. These images may show partial (where breasts or genitals are exposed) or full nudity and/or feature sexual acts being performed. It is illegal for pupils to make and / or share images such as these, even if they are images of themselves, which have been taken personally or with consent. Pupils who engage in sexting (to any extent) are at risk of receiving a police caution and/or being placed on a register for sexual offenders for a period of several years (which can impact negatively in adulthood with regards to employment, travel etc.) Sexting can also (in some cases) be viewed as a crime under the Malicious Communications Act.

### **School Policies:**

Sexting is therefore identified as unacceptable behaviour in the Behaviour Policy and the possession of pornography is prohibited in school. The misuse of IT, such as sexting, inappropriate comments on Facebook, being the object of cyber – bullying and on-line grooming are all potential welfare concerns and identified as such in our Safeguarding Policy.

At Ashley High School all students are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school. They are forbidden to access the internet or take photos at any time in the school day (this includes break and lunch times).

## **Our Duty:**

As staff, we have a responsibility to work with parents and carers in ensuring that all pupils are fully aware of the dangers and possible repercussions of sexting. In school this information will be communicated to pupils during PHSCE lessons, in assemblies and through workshops held in association with the local Authority, Police and the Halton Safeguarding Team. Sexting incidents are often complicated as they potentially involve a large number of pupils and those involved could be victims or perpetrators or both. Depending on the specific circumstances and gravity, the incident will be investigated on the discipline-safeguarding continuum:

## **What to do if an incident of sexting is reported or suspected at Ashley High School:**

- If it is suspected that an incident of “sexting” has taken place or staff become aware of indecent images circulating in school or a pupil refers an incident of “sexting”, then staff must refer it straight away to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher.
- Although all staff are by law permitted to search pupils without consent if they have reasonable suspicion that they may have prohibited items in their possession, such as pornography, you may put yourself at risk of allegations by attempting to deal with this issue on your own or by viewing indecent images yourself. This is an investigation that should be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and/or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Under no circumstances should any sexting images be forwarded, copied or printed as this could inadvertently implicate you simply by viewing such material.
- If there is any doubt whatsoever, seek immediate advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and refer the issue on.

## **PLEASE NOTE\*\*\*\***

This policy should be read in conjunction with the document ‘Sexting in Schools and Colleges; Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people’ published by the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC). The document can be found by following the link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609874/6\\_2939\\_S\\_P\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_In\\_Schools\\_FINAL\\_Update\\_Jan17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_S_P_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

Other advice can be found by following the link to the NSPCC website below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/>