Unit of work
Middle secondary ages 14–15

**Sexting–the consequences**



Sexting—the consequences

Middle secondary lesson plans

Introduction to the lesson plans

These lesson plans introduce the concept of sexting and explore the potential social, emotional and legal consequences of sexting and how to manage sexting related issues.

Four lesson plans have been developed for use with middle secondary students. It is recommended that the first lesson plan be delivered to all students as it explores what sexting is and the key issues.

1. What is sexting and what are the key issues (45-60 minutes)
2. Sexting and ethics (45-60 minutes)
3. Romantic relationships and sexting (45-60 minutes)
4. Sexting—the legal consequences (45-60 minutes)

Background: what is sexting?

Sexting is the sending of provocative or sexual images or messages generally using a mobile phone. Sexting can have serious social and legal consequences for students.

Some teens do it for fun, to flirt, to gain popularity or in response to peer pressure, particularly within romantic relationships.

Sexting can have serious unforeseen consequences for young people. For example, a 16 year old girl sent a topless photo of herself to her boyfriend. After their relationship ended he posted the photo on a social networking site that could be accessed by their friends, family and teachers. This affected the way others viewed her and her relationships with family, school staff, friendships and the wider peer group.

Sexting images may also be used by others to cyberbully a young person. Images of a sexual nature may attract ill-intentioned individuals including adults seeking young people for sexual purposes.

Importantly sexting may also be considered a criminal offence, even if all parties are willing participants. Sexual images of young people under the age of 18 may be considered child pornography and carry charges related to the creation and distribution of child pornography, even if the participants are willing.

There is currently no reportable research into Australian teen sexting behaviour. Focus group research of American teen’s mobile phone use by the Pew Research Centre revealed that only four per cent of teens surveyed reported sending a ‘sext’ while 15 per cent reported having received a ‘sext’. Most teenagers are aware of the issue but are not involved in it. The same study showed that 47% of teenagers regretted sending some of the messages they had sent. (Lenhart, A., Ling, R., Campbell, S. & Purcell, K. 2010. *Teens and Mobile Phones* Retrieved on 21 December 2010 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones/Chapter-5.aspx?view=all>).

Code of Conduct for classroom discussion and activities

The following rules may help to keep discussions relevant during this sensitive topic. Alternatively, adapt these tips to create your own classroom discussion rules for use.

* explain to the students that any discussion during the lessons on sexting is to stay within the confines of the classroom so that everyone can feel secure in sharing their questions and ideas;
* any personal stories shared must not include actual names or be identifiable by others in the class;
* students are to use specified terms such as genitals and sexual act;
* students must remain respectful of each other and share ideas in a mature and positive way; and
* if there are known issues within the school you may need to specify that these not be shared to minimise the potential for bullying of vulnerable students.

Lesson plan one

**Sexting: the main issues**

Introduction

This lesson defines sexting and introduces the social and legal consequences of sexting.

Two activities are provided which can be used interchangeably. Activity one uses a Power-Point presentation as an introduction to class or small group discussions. Activity two uses either a video or web page as an introduction to class or small group discussions.

Materials

You will need:

1. either individual computers with internet access for students to view video materials on, or an Interactive Whiteboard or projector connected to the Internet to enable the video to be shown to the group; and
2. either an Interactive whiteboard/projector for the Power-Point presentation, or printed handouts of the slides.
3. Cybersmart Sexting Power-Point presentation dowloadable from <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher%20resources/Upper%20secondary.aspx>

Aims

This lesson plan aims to help students to:

* understand what sexting is; and
* understand the key social and legal issues that can arise from sexting.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

* identify what sexting is; and
* identify the potential social and legal consequences of sexting.

Time: 45—60 minutes

Topic Starter (5 mins)

Brainstorm what students think sexting is and give examples (without using the identity of anybody within the school). Using examples from the media can be a useful and safe starter. Write down all ideas without rejecting any and briefly consider potential consequences.

Activity one:

This activity uses a Power-Point presentation and includes notes for the teacher.

Work through the PowerPoint presentation with students using the teacher notes throughout to prompt discussion during the presentation.

Below are discussion points to encourage thorough exploration of the issues during or after the presentation.

**Discussion points for Teachers:**

**Opening issues for the small groups can include:**

* Do you think people of your age sext and is it an issue?
* Would you be worried if your naked image was shared with friends, family and teachers?

Present the following issues to students for discussion in small groups. Do they think these are real issues? How would they manage these issues?

1. There are legal implications. Are teens aware that sexting images of minors may be illegal and the police may become involved? This applies even if all participants are willing. This means that even if teens send images of themselves they can get into legal trouble.

Sexting can legally represent the production or distribution of child pornography. Should teens be concerned about potentially distributing child pornography?

1. It can be embarrassing to have private images shared publicly, and can make going to school, home life and general social life awkward.

Sexting images can also be used to bully and ridicule and images are hard to control once they are posted online. Should teens be concerned about how their sexting images might be used?

**Other questions and issues for students:**

1. Why is child pornography illegal? Should it be? Is it reasonable that people under 18 be protected by these laws?

Students should explore the following main ideas:

* 1. to protect children who are in a less powerful position in society;
	2. it changes the way society views children and undermines the protections put in place for children;
	3. consider that some teens may not be capable of making sound judgements about their sexual behaviour; and
	4. the potential for some adults to intentionally exploit children and teens who are vulnerable.
1. What could happen if the police become involved in a sexting incident?

Students should explore the following main ideas:

1. charges could be laid, for example, in 2007, 32 Victorian teenagers were prosecuted as a result of a sexting activity; and
2. there may not always be charges laid but police may issue cautions and the school may apply various sanctions including expulsion.
3. Are the social implications of sexting, such as the image being posted online and shared with others or used for harassment, concerning?

Students should explore the following main ideas:

1. digital reputation can be impacted as image can be shared easily and rapidly;
2. the image may be found by unexpected people including future employers, future boyfriends or girlfriends, or even grandparents or other relatives;
3. the images can be used by others to try to harm the person or their relationships,

**Final points for students:**

1. Discuss any relevant school policies or codes of conduct for students and discuss relevant parts pertaining to mobile phone use. Ask students to consider whether the policy needs to be updated or a new one developed to cover sexting
2. Discuss the student’s responsibility in sexting and creators and viewers. They are responsible for not creating, distributing or viewing sexts to cover themselves legally and ethically.
3. **Reinforce that there is help for students who have been involved in sexting, including through the school’s support services and the Cybersmart Online Helpline at** [**www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx**](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx) **which provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people.**

**Activity two**

1. **Select one of the following four media sources to present to students as a sexting conversation starter.**

**The four suggested sources are:**

1. ***View the video ‘Exposed’*** at [http://www.youtube.com/user/ceop](http://www.youtube.com/user/ceop#p/a/u/0/4ovR3FF_6us). The ten minute video from the UK depicts the story of a girl in her late teens who shares naked images with her boyfriend. The images end up on the web and she is harassed at school. The story shows how quickly images can be shared and control lost. It focuses on the need to retain perspective and hope even when all seems hopeless. It also focuses on the need to take personal responsibility for actions.
2. ***View the video ‘Photograph’*** (needs to be purchased by the school from <http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/2010/06/photograph-a-film-about-sexting-and-cyber-bullying/>). This fifteen minute video depicts the story of a teenage girl who agrees to her boyfriend’s request for a naked image that he subsequently shares with others after they break up. It shows the potential legal and social consequences for young people creating and sharing sexual images.
3. ***Read the case study in the ‘Stories’ section* on the *Say No To Sexting* website at** <http://www.sayno.net.au/stories>. The case study depicts the story of a 13 year old girl who shared a naked photo with her boyfriend. The photo ended up being shared and the girl is harassed at school. The story provides the girls viewpoint, her best friend’s viewpoint and the youth counsellor’s view point with simple tips for how to manage sexting pressure.
4. **View *the video ‘Megan’s Story’ on Think* U *Know* at**<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/megansstory.asp>. The two minute video depicts a teenage girl's experience of sexting an inappropriate image of herself to a boy in her class and the unintended social consequences for her.
5. ***Lead a classroom discussion or work in* small groups to consider the following issues. Teacher guidance is provided under each of the questions.**
	1. **Is sexting a problem? What are the risks involved?**

Potential for:

* photos or videos to be passed-on or shared—how do we control who sees our image once it is sent, whose responsibility is it to control it:—the sender or the receiver?;
* teasing, bullying, peer issues if others get hold of the image;
* legal consequences if sexting is reported to the police (both the creator and the people who share it can be in trouble;
* damage of digital reputation; and
* who can help if sexting has already occurred?
	1. **Are the outcomes depicted in the video/story viewed realistic?**

Are the social or legal outcomes depicted real concerns or unlikely to happen? Without going into personal details or school-related incidents, have students heard of incidents that have resulted in poor social or legal consequences?

* 1. **What impact could sexting have on the reputation of the person in the photo—and does this matter?**

What would you think if you saw a naked or sexual image of a friend/young relative? Would it change the way you view them? Would you think less of them?

How would this be for you if it were your photograph?

There is potential to analyse high profile celebrity cases or current issues and examine the consequences of these cases

* 1. **What do you think are the potential short and long-term impacts on relationships?**

Potential to ruin a romantic relationship (if people have accessed the photo from a boyfriend or girlfriend’s phone could you trust them again?).

Potential impact on friendships (could you view a friend the same way after seeing an explicit photo of them).

What if a family member sees it (would they trust their child again?).

What would your wider peer group or teachers think? Does that matter?

* 1. **What do you think about sharing naked or sexual images in a relationship if both parties agree they won’t share them?**

Discuss the impact of pressure and power in relationships. Is it okay to ask someone for a naked or sexual image? Do people feel okay about turning down these requests or could it put the relationship at risk? What happens if the relationship ends badly? Who is responsible for what happens with the image, the creator or the people that send them on or all parties?

* 1. **How could you help a friend who has been asked to send an explicit photo or video, or has already sent or been involved in creating one?**

Is there a trusted adult at school or home that you could seek out for help? Remember the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 and the Cybersmart Online Helpline at [www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx) provide free, confidential online counselling for children and young people.

Lesson plan two

Sexting and ethics

Introduction

If possible use Lesson plan one with students first as an introduction to sexting and the main issues.

This lesson plan looks at ethical behaviour and peer pressure in relation to sexting. One activity is provided to prompt student consideration of ethics in relation to participation in sexting activities, as a creator of a sexting image, or as a viewer of sexting images, and strategies to manage peer pressure around sexting.

The activity presents sexting scenarios that prompt students to consider strategies they could use to manage pressure to sext or view sexts for themselves and peers.

Resources for this lesson include:

* a link to a video to prompt student discussion; and
* handouts with sexting scenarios to prompt student exploration of issues.

Materials

You will need:

1. either individual computers with internet access for students to view video materials on, or an Interactive Whiteboard or projector connected to the Internet to enable the video to be shown to the group;
2. copies of the handouts provided within this Lesson Plan for small group work.

Time: 45—60 minutes

Aims

This lesson aims to help students to:

* evaluate potential actions in terms of their possible consequences;
* identify peer pressure in relation to sexting; and
* develop strategies to help peers manage sexting.

Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

* identify strategies to manage peer pressure in relation to sexting;
* identify strategies to help friends manage peer pressure in relation to sexting; and
* develop an understanding of social issues and responsibility as digital citizens.

Code of Conduct for classroom discussion and activities

The following rules may help to keep discussions relevant during this sensitive topic. Alternatively, adapt these tips to create your own classroom discussion rules for use.

* Explain to the students that any discussion during the lessons on sexting is to be regarded as private so that everyone can feel secure in sharing their questions and ideas.
* Any personal stories shared must not include actual names or be identifiable by others in the class.
* Students are to use specified terms such as genitals and sexual act.
* Students must remain respectful of each other and share ideas in a mature and positive way.
* If there are known issues within the school you may need to specify that these not be shared to minimise the potential for bullying of vulnerable students.

Topic Starter (5 mins)

Explain to students that this lesson aims to generate ideas about actions that the class can take to deal with peer pressure in relation to sexting and make their own independent decisions. Ask the students to consider the following issues:

* what types of pressures exist for both girls and boys to participate in sexting as creators and distributors;
* do these pressures affect attitudes to and decisions about sexting?;
* is this a real issue at this age or has it been blown out of proportion/exaggerated?; and
* are there ways around this pressure without being picked on or ostracised as a result?

Activity

1. Print out the sexting scenario handouts and divide the class into pairs or small groups of no more than four students.
2. Give each group one or two scenarios and prompt them to talk through the questions listed.
3. Ask students to consider:
	1. what they would do as individuals, friends, peers or siblings;
	2. what other supports they could draw on to help if they or others are involved in such incidents;
	3. the complexity and emotions involved in the issues; and
	4. alternative options for managing issues.
4. Ask students to present their ideas to the class and the reasons for their ideas. Allow a few minutes of discussion for each scenario examine alternative ways of managing the scenario and the positive and negative aspects of the suggested ideas.
5. If you don’t feel your students will be comfortable presenting to the class you can ask them to present to one of the other groups or you can lead the classroom discussion seeking specific input from groups.

Hand Out—Sexting Scenario: Chelsea

**Scenario—Chelsea**

A girl in Chelsea’s friendship group at school, but not a close friend, is sexting her boyfriend. Everyone knows about it and is talking about it. The image has been sent to many people in the school. The girl doesn’t seem to know everyone is aware of what she is doing.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. What should Chelsea do?
2. Should we get involved in other people’s issues? Do we have a moral responsibility?
3. What are the pros and cons of getting involved?
4. Is Chelsea part of the problem if she doesn’t get involved and speak up? If so, in what way is not saying anything continuing a risky situation?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out—Sexting Scenario: Alex

**Scenario—Alex**

Alex sent a sext to Sam but then they had a fight and broke up. Sam is now threatening to send the sext around the school if they don’t agree to go out again.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. If you were Alex’s friend what would you advise him/her to do?
2. To what extent is Alex responsible for what is happening?
3. Was it okay for Sam to threaten Alex with the photo?
4. Can you think of any adults or services Alex might feel comfortable seeking help from?
5. Could peers help in any way?
6. What would be the best way of managing this for Alex? Think of supports he/she can lean on, who might help.

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out—Sexting Scenario: Jack

**Scenario—Jack**

Jack’s friends want to show him explicit photos of girls from the school on their mobiles. He is uncomfortable with this but wants to be part of the group.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. How can Jack be part of the group and say no?
2. Is it okay for these boys to look at these photos if the girls have posed for them?
3. How do you know who was meant to receive the photos?
4. Could the girls have controlled who would see their photos?
5. Is it different if the naked photos are taken without the girls knowing about it?
6. Are there legal issues involved in viewing these photos if the girls were happy for the images to be shared?
7. What impact might the sharing of a person’s image have on them now and later in their lives?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out - Sexting Scenario: Bec

**Scenario—Bec**

Bec receives a semi-nude explicit photo from a boy she likes with a request for her to send him one. Bec wonders if it will be OK to send one of herself.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. What would your advice to Bec be as a friend?
2. What would your advice to Bec be if she was your sister?
3. Why would the boy have sent the picture? What are some possible positive and negative reasons?
4. How does Bec know whether to trust this boy or not? How do people know who to trust with intimate images and information?
5. What are the potential consequences of Bec sharing the image?
6. How can Bec manage risk to herself while still engaging with the boy if she wants to?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out - Sexting Scenario: Dave

**Scenario—Dave**

Dave’s younger brother Chris allowed his friend to take a funny nude photo of him at school camp and now it has been texted to many of his friends. He has told Dave and is very upset. Chris is terrified that their parents will find out or his teachers.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. How can Dave help Chris?
2. What support can Dave get for Chris to help with his fears and sadness?
3. What trusted adults or services could Chris and Dave talk to for help?
4. Should Dave tell their parents? What else can he do to help?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out - Sexting Scenario: Tran

**Scenario—Tran**

16 year old Tran finds out that his older sister, who is 17, is sexting her boyfriend.

When discussing the scenario think about these things:

1. Should Tran be concerned about his sister?
2. What can Tran say to his sister about this?
3. Should he tell his parents? If not, why?
4. At what age are people old enough to make good decisions about their intimate behaviour? Is 17 old enough?
5. What would you do if it was your brother or sister?
6. How would your parents react?
7. Who else could Tran tell if things do get out of hand?
8. What could be the consequences for Tran’s sister?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

Hand Out - Sexting Scenario: Yasmin

**Scenario—Yasmin**

Some of the students at Yasmin’s school make fun of her because she is quiet and shy. Someone sends her pornographic photos and links to pornogrpahic web sites to embarrass her. She feels humiliated. Soon, she is sent photos, links and sexy jokes most days. She is afraid to tell her parents because they are very strict and will think it is her fault.

When discussing the scenario think of the following:

1. What should she do?
2. If you knew this was happening to Yasmin, what could you do?
3. How might Yasmin’s parents react if she seeks help from them?
4. How could you help out a friend? Who could you go to?
5. Is this bullying or harassment or should she get over it? Should she report it to someone at the school?
6. How would you feel in this situation—being sent texts every day with people watching for your reaction?
7. Should somebody step up and help Yasmin and how can they do this without becoming a target of the bullies?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reason

Hand Out - Sexting Scenario: Carl

**Scenario—Carl**

Carl sends Toby a naked picture sext of his girlfriend Ava. Toby says ‘Hey sicko that’s not cool she’s 15, I don’t want to be a sex offender. I’m deleting.’

When discussing the scenario think of the following:

1. Did Toby do the right thing? What are your reasons?
2. What would Carl’s reaction be? Is Toby taking a risk by responding like he did?
3. How could Toby make sure Carl didn’t send the naked picture sext to anyone else?
4. What has Carl done to Ava’s digital reputation?
5. Would Ava have realised the potential consequences of having this photograph taken?

In your group:

* discuss the scenario and consider the questions listed; and
* write your answers and reasons.

***Lesson plan three.***

***Romantic relationships and sexting***

Introduction

It is recommended that one of the activities from lesson plan one be used prior to teaching this lesson as an introduction to sexting and the main issues.

This lesson focuses on the role of sexting in romantic relationships.

This lesson has one activity which focuses on issues around sexting, pressure and romantic relationships.

Resources for this lesson include:

* a link to a video to prompt student discussion; and
* Discussion sheet to prompt student exploration of issues.

Materials

You will need:

1. either individual computers with internet access for students to view video materials on, or an Interactive Whiteboard or projector connected to the Internet to enable the video to be shown to the group;
2. copies of the Discussion sheet provided within this Lesson Plan for small group work.

Time: 45—60 minutes

Aims

This lesson aims to help students to:

* understand that boys and girls may sext for different reasons;
* consider what a healthy adolescent romantic relationship looks like;
* critically analyse media representations of male and female relationships and pressure to conform.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

* recognise the signs of unfair pressure in a romantic relationship;
* identify strategies to help them act assertively within relationships; and
* identify and question media representations of male and female sexuality and relationships.

Code of Conduct for classroom discussion and activities

The following rules may help to keep discussions relevant during this sensitive topic. Alternatively, adapt these tips to create your own classroom discussion rules for use.

* Explain to the students that any discussion during the lessons on sexting is to be regarded as private so that everyone can feel secure in sharing their questions and ideas.
* Any personal stories shared must not include actual names or be identifiable by others in the class.
* Students are to use specified terms such as genitals and sexual act.
* Students must remain respectful of each other and share ideas in a mature and positive way.
* If there are known issues within the school you may need to specify that these not be shared to minimise the potential for bullying of vulnerable students.

Topic Starter (5 min)

Introduce the topic by asking the students some of the following questions:

* What are the similarities and differences in how boys and girls view romantic and sexual relationships?
* What expectations in relationships do boys and girls share?
* What can boys and girls do to say no to sexting and protect their reputations?
* How can friends and other students help to stop sexting and support teens who may be suffering bullying or emotional stress after an incident becomes public?

***Activity one***

***Videos and discussion about sexting and relationships***

1. Organise students into pairs or small groups of the same sex.
2. Select one of the media sources to present to students as a conversation starter. The two suggested sources are:
3. ***View the video ‘Photograph’*** (needs to be purchased by the school from <http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/2010/06/photograph-a-film-about-sexting-and-cyber-bullying/>). This fifteen minute video depicts the story of a teenage girl who agrees to her boyfriend’s request for a naked image that he subsequently shares with others after they break up. It shows the potential legal and social consequences for young people creating and sharing sexual images.
4. ***View the video ‘Exposed’*** at [http://www.youtube.com/user/ceop](http://www.youtube.com/user/ceop#p/a/u/0/4ovR3FF_6us). The ten minute video from the UK depicts the story of a girl in her late teens who shares naked images with her boyfriend. The images end up on the web and she is harassed at school. The story shows how quickly images can be shared and control lost. It focuses on the need to retain perspective and hope even when all seems hopeless. It also focuses on the need to take personal responsibility for actions.
5. View the **SXTing** video on ***The Line*** for an animated take on this serious issue. View the video at <http://www.theline.gov.au/follow/2>. The line explores respectful relationships.
6. Hand out the Discussion sheet found at the end of this lesson and ask students to discuss the issues and write down the responses to share with the class.
7. Work through each item with the class and ask a group representative to talk about their group’s views.
8. If you don’t feel your students will be comfortable presenting to the class you can ask them to present to one of the other groups or you can lead the classroom discussion seeking specific input from groups.

***Discussion sheet***

1. What are the characteristics of a good relationship?
2. Is it fair to pressure a boyfriend or girlfriend about anything at all?
3. Is there pressure for girls or boys to provide naked images even if they feel uncomfortable about it?
4. Will they be dumped if they don't?
5. Will it get around the school if they refuse?
6. Will it get around the school if they agree?
7. What effects on girls’ or boys’ reputations can occur if they sext?
8. Can sharing a naked image be good? How about in the long term?
9. How can people say no to sexting so that others will accept their values?
10. How can young men and women in relationships develop a better understanding of how the other person might feel?
11. How can you get support in saying no to friends when they pressure you?

Lesson plan four

Sexting—the legal consequences

Introduction

It is recommended that one of the activities from Lesson plan one be used prior to teaching this lesson as an introduction to sexting and the main issues.

This lesson has one activity which focuses on the potential legal consequences of sexting, and reiterates the potential for serious social consequences.

In the activity students view a media prompt prior to discussion of the potential serious legal and social consequences of sexting.

Resources for this lesson include:

* a link to a video or website to prompt student discussion.

Materials

You will need:

* either individual computers with internet access for students to view video materials on, or an Interactive Whiteboard or projector connected to the Internet to enable the video or website to be shown to the group;

Time: 45—60 minutes

Aims

This lesson aims to help students to:

* understand the legal issues around sexting; and
* understand that it is never okay for minors to create or forward sexting images, even if all parties are happy to participate.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the legal consequences of sexting
* understand the long term impact of sexting on their digital footprint

Code of Conduct for classroom discussion and activities

The following rules may help to keep discussions relevant during this sensitive topic. Alternatively adapt your own classroom discussion rules for use.

* Explain to the students that any discussion during the lessons on sexting is to be regarded as private so that every-one can feel secure in sharing their questions and ideas.
* Any personal stories shared must be anonymous.
* Students are to use correct anatomical terms such as genitals and sexual act.
* Students must remain respectful of each other and share ideas in a mature and positive way.

Activity One:

Sexting—serious legal and social consequences

1. Organise students into pairs or small groups of the same sex.
2. Select one of the two media sources to present to students as a conversation starter. If you know of an alternative resource, feel free to use that.

The two suggested sources are:

* 1. *View the video ‘Photograph’* (needs to be purchased by the school from <http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/2010/06/photograph-a-film-about-sexting-and-cyber-bullying/>). Show the police interview to the class.
	2. *Read the ‘Consequences’ sec*tion on the Say No To Sexting website at <http://www.sayno.net.au/consequences.php>, and read the Sexting page on the Kids Helpline website at [http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teen*s/get-info/hot-to*pics/sexting.php](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics/sexting.php).
1. Lead a classroom discussion as a whole group or in small groups covering the following conversation points. Teacher guidance is provided under each of the conversation points.
* Why is sexting images of teens and children under 18 potentially illegal?
	+ naked and sexual images of people under the age of 18 can be deemed child pornography; and
	+ this protects children and teens from abuse by adults and others.
* Is sexting illegal even if it is between a consenting couple and is this right?
	+ yes it can be if any party in the image is under 18; and
	+ remember some kids do things they don’t want to do if they are pressured—the laws are in place to protect them.
* Who can get in trouble? The person sharing it only or also the person creating it?
	+ both parties can get in trouble. The person who takes the photo even if it is of themselves can get in trouble if they share the image with another person. The person viewing it can get in trouble especially if they forward it on.
* What is child pornography? Why is it illegal?
	+ there are a number of legal definitions of child pornography, but it can be any sexualised image or text involving young people (under the age of 18);
	+ it is illegal to protect children who are in a less powerful position in society; and
	+ it changes the way society views children and undermines the protections put in place for children.
* Ask students to consider how they would feel if they knew a naked image of a much younger sibling, cousin or friend was shared by others in a sexual way.
	+ what are the risks to the child?; and
	+ is it good to have laws to protect children?
* What should I do if I receive this type of content?
	+ do not forward it;
	+ tell the person who sent it not to send you any other content of this nature. Make up an excuse if you like—such as ‘my mum found it and freaked out’ or call them on it ‘you could be charged as a sex offender—stop sending me this stuff’;
	+ show the content to a trusted adult such as a parent, school counsellor or teacher who can then help you decide whether to delete it or retain for evidence; and
	+ you can also contact the Cybersmart Online Helpline at http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx which provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people.
* What can happen socially if sexting content is passed on or posted online?
	+ legal consequences as above — more likely to be found out and reported; and
	+ social consequences — broader audience can view the images including potential bullies and people who would like to seek children for sexual purposes.
* Why is sexting an unsafe and risky behaviour?
	+ apart from the legal implications, the posting of these images can attract weirdos and be used by people to bully.
* What about digital reputations? Are you worried about how your digital reputation will be affected if images of you are shared with others and posted online?
	+ consider your family seeing the images;
	+ consider workmates or teachers seeing the images; and
	+ could you view a friend or family member the same if you had seen an overly sexy image of them?
* What should parents and other adults be doing to alert teens to the dangers of sexting? Do they have a role in helping to manage it?
	+ encourage students to consider who they could go to for help if they are worried about a sexting incident;
	+ Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 and the Cybersmart Online Helpline at <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx> provide free and anonymous counselling.

What action can schools take when an incident of sexting occurs?

**School staff**

School staff must not in any way interact with sexting or other indecent images to avoid being charged with an offence themselves and to protect evidence if it is required. They should never forward, copy or print images. If images of minors are found it is advisable for the school to contact police or your education authority to seek advice.

**Students**

If a student has been involved in a sexting incident either as the subject or as someone who has received it or shared it 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. Seek advice from student support services and inform the student’s parents if you have concerns about their mood or behaviour.