

# DIGITAL



DO'S

&

DON'TS



Keeping Yourself Out of Trouble



The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, which includes all its schools, churches, buildings, properties, and programs, follows state and federal law as well as the rules of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops when it comes to sex abuse and inappropriate activity such as sexting. When your teachers, parents, priests, or other teens or children voice concerns to the Diocese about these issues, we report the information to the appropriate authorities. If you come to any trusted adult, we can promise you that we will do everything we can to help you and to maintain your privacy and dignity, but we will not guarantee secrecy. If something bad or inappropriate has happened, we will report it to the proper civil and church authorities so that you can get the help that you need. Not reporting inappropriate activity could result in criminal charges and delay help and/or intervention.

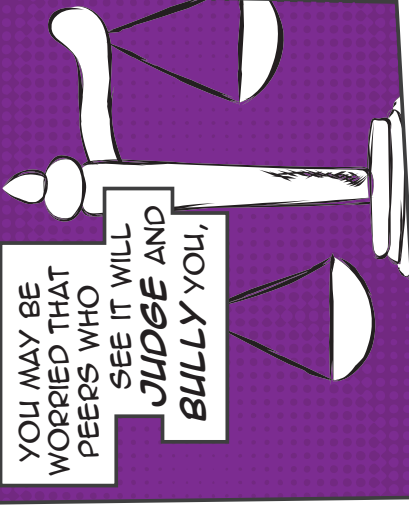




NO MATTER WHY YOU DECIDED TO SEXT, YOU PROBABLY THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD **STAY PRIVATE**.

NOW YOUR **PHOTO** OR **VIDEO** IS OUT THERE.

AND YOU **DON'T** KNOW WHAT TO DO.



**ONLY IT DIDN'T.**

YOU MAY FEEL LIKE THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO ESCAPE THIS SITUATION.

**BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE!**

WHILE YOU CAN'T GET YOUR IMAGE BACK, YOU CAN TAKE STEPS TO:

- ★ GET IT REMOVED FROM WEBSITES.
- ★ HELP STOP IT FROM SPREADING.
- ★ GET EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.
- ★ DEAL WITH BULLIES.

# TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION AND YOUR LIFE AGAIN.

## USE THESE TIPS

### REPORT

This is one of the best ways to stop your image from spreading if it is on a website/app or being shared without your consent.

#### REPORT IT:

- **To the website or app.** Trustworthy websites/apps work hard to keep off sexual images of minors and will remove them if notified. You can also report anyone who is posting or sharing images of you. For more information about reporting to popular websites/apps, visit [https://needhelpnow.ca/removing\\_pictures](https://needhelpnow.ca/removing_pictures).
- **To CyberTipline.org.** This tipline can connect you with the experts best suited to work on your case. They may contact the website or the police, or reach out to you for more details. You can report without sharing your name and can even make a report for a friend if they need help.
- **To the police.** They can help stop your image from spreading by working with websites/apps and talking to the people sharing it. You should know if the police get involved, you could face some consequences, too. It's illegal to share sexual images of minors even if they are of you. You may not be charged with a crime, but you may have to attend classes or complete community service.
- **To a teacher.** If your pictures are being shared around school, your teachers and school administrators can help stop it by making clear there are consequences for sharing them.

### GET SUPPORT

One of the worst things about a sexting incident is feeling like you're facing everything alone. But you have people who care for you and want to help. Talk to them!

- **Your friends** can stand up for you by refusing to forward the image and making it clear that it's not cool to share the image or bully you.
- **A trusted adult** can offer advice, help you report, and help you deal with other complicated things. It could be your mom, dad, an aunt, a school counselor, or anyone you trust and are comfortable talking to.
- **Teachers** can remind your classmates and peers about your school's rules and codes on bullying and help put a stop to any bullying behavior.
- If you feel that your school is ignoring the bullying, ask your **mom, dad, or guardian** for help. They can champion your case at your school, with your teachers, and other adults.

### DON'T GIVE UP

Having a nude or sexual image of yourself floating around is scary. It can make you feel vulnerable and isolated. But remember, **other teens have been in the same situation you are – and they have beaten it.**

The people who have taken advantage of you want you to feel powerless. **But you are not powerless.** You are strong. You can take charge of your situation and take back control of your life.

### What if I'm being blackmailed?

Blackmail is when someone tries to threaten or scare you into doing something. For example, teens may share sexual images with people they trust, only to have those people turn on them. They may threaten to send the images to teens' families unless the teens share more images.

If you're being blackmailed, you may feel helpless or guilty. You may think you don't have the right to say "no" because you shared the first image willingly. **WRONG!** Blackmail is illegal and you don't have to take it.

#### YOU SHOULD:

- Stop any communications with blackmailers. They'll try to use your conversations to threaten and manipulate you – don't give them the chance. Even if you have already started communicating with them, it's never too late to stop and report it.
- Block or remove the blackmailer from your contact list. If you decide to deactivate your accounts, contact the websites/apps for help.
- Make a report to the police and CyberTipline.org right away. Seriously. They can help. They may want to see any messages you've received from the blackmailer.

A program of the

NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN**

NetSmartz Workshop



Sending and receiving nude photos or sexually explicit photos of people younger than 18 is child pornography and is a crime. Even if one or both persons sending or receiving the photos also is younger than 18 ...

## IT'S AGAINST THE LAW.

If an inappropriate sexual image of a minor (anyone younger than 18) is circulating, **ANYONE** - no matter how young or old - who sends or receives it may face criminal charges. Some of the consequences include charges of delinquency/truancy, jail, and being required to register nationally as a **sex offender**. When you are required to register nationally as a sex offender, that designation follows you wherever you go, many times for life.

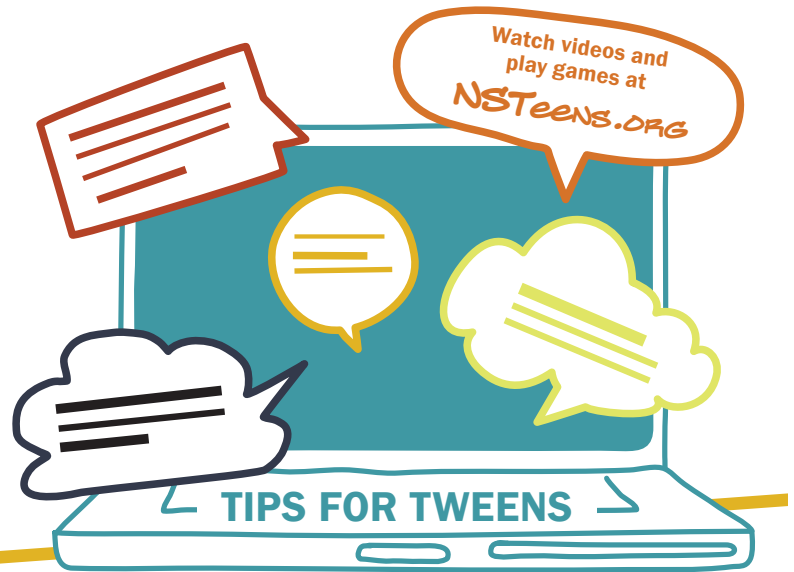
It is against the law to use nude photos to threaten, harass, intimidate, or embarrass someone.

If you have unsolicited sexually explicit material on your phone, tablet, computer, or any other device, this may be evidence of a crime and is subject to mandatory reporting obligations to local authorities which may protect you from criminal prosecution. If you receive an inappropriate text, photo, or video, **tell a trusted adult immediately**.



The photo or video may constitute child pornography, and you will want to protect yourself against any consequences, especially if someone is sending you photos or videos that you do not want and did not ask for.

# YOUR NETSMARTZ



## CYBERBULLYING

**Don't be mean.**  
Gossiping doesn't make you cool.

**Ignore. Block. Tell.**  
Ignore mean or threatening messages, block the sender, and tell a trusted adult who can help you report them.

**Speak up**  
if your friends are cyberbullying someone.

## ONLINE PREDATORS

**Recognize the difference between cute and creepy.**  
An older guy who wants to date someone much younger is just creepy.

**Don't just sit there - REPORT**  
anyone who asks to meet you in person to the police and [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

## SHARING TOO MUCH

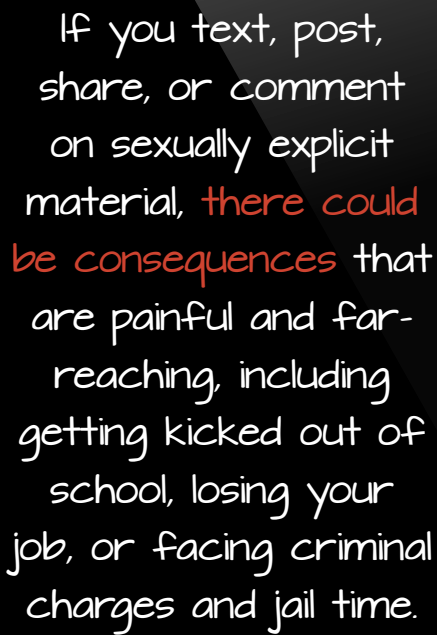
**Avoid TMI.**  
Don't post anything too personal or embarrassing.

**Protect your space.**  
Use privacy settings and don't accept just anyone as a friend.

**Don't be that kid**  
who gets suspended for posting something stupid online.

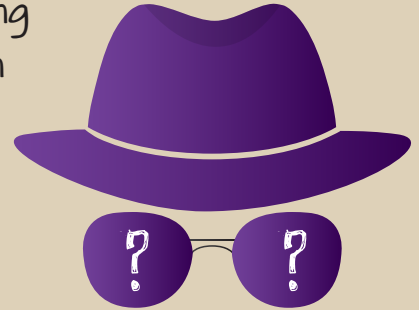
## TRUSTED ADULTS

**Talk to your parents or guardians**  
about what you're doing online. They're not as bad as you think.

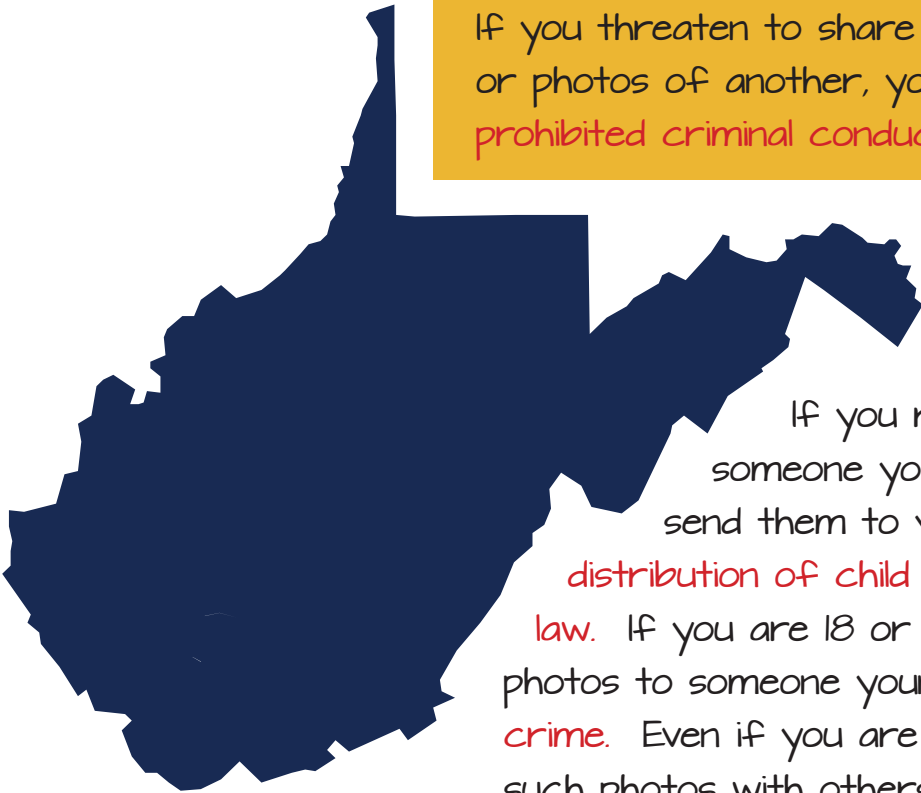


If you text, post, share, or comment on sexually explicit material, **there could be consequences** that are painful and far-reaching, including getting kicked out of school, losing your job, or facing criminal charges and jail time.

People are not always who they seem online. That person that you have never met but you think is a fellow teenager and are chatting or exchanging texts with may be an adult sex offender intent on doing you terrible harm.



Any adult who sends you inappropriate texts, photos, or videos **should be reported immediately**.



If you threaten to share sexually explicit material or photos of another, you are also **engaging in prohibited criminal conduct** under West Virginia law.

If you receive nude photos of someone younger than 18 years old and send them to your friends, that is called **distribution of child pornography and is against the law**. If you are 18 or older and you send nude photos to someone younger than you, **that also is a crime**. Even if you are over 18, threatening to share such photos with others or threatening to post such photos is criminal conduct in West Virginia.



## CYBERBULLYING



## ONLINE PREDATORS

**AVOID GOSSIP.** Everyone's bound to get a little excited by those oh-so-dramatic high school scandals, but that doesn't mean you have to text the latest rumor to everyone you know.

**DON'T FEED THE CYBERBULLIES.** Ignore mean or threatening messages. Block the sender and file a report with the website, cell phone service, or police.

**BYSTANDERS ARE GUILTY, TOO.** If your friends are cyberbullying someone and you stay silent, you're just as guilty as they are. Speak up and keep your friends in check.

**RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUTE AND CREEPY.** Think about it – an older guy who wants to date someone younger is just creepy. It's not flattering; it's illegal! So don't friend them and don't meet them offline.

**DON'T JUST SIT THERE – REPORT!** If you or someone you know has been victimized by someone you met online, report them to the police and [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

# GOT NETSMARTZ?



## SHARING TOO MUCH

**INITIATE OPERATION PROFILE CLEAN-UP.** Scrub your page of everything too personal, embarrassing, and illegal. Those pictures of you passed out next to the empty bottles are not going to look so cool when you start applying for college.

**STOP. THINK. PUT YOUR CLOTHES BACK ON!** You know those pictures of you wearing next-to-nothing and making kissy faces or flexing in the mirror? You might think it's sexy, but the law doesn't, so do yourself a favor – don't send them; don't forward them.

**PROTECT YOUR SPACE.** Use privacy settings and don't accept just anyone as a friend. Do some investigating – Who are they? Why would you hang out with them?

## TRUSTED ADULTS



**TALK TO YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS. THEY'RE NOT AS UPTIGHT AS YOU THINK.** Sometimes adults freak out about what you're doing online because you never tell them anything. Keep them in the loop so they know they can trust you.

**NetSmartz Workshop**

A PROGRAM OF THE  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Watch Real-Life Stories videos at [NSTeens.org](http://NSTeens.org)

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**DO NOT** ask someone to send nude photos or videos to you.



**DO NOT** send or ask someone to send nude photos or sexually explicit photos, even if it's your boyfriend or girlfriend and you are convinced that you love them and mean no harm. It is still illegal if the sender and/or receiver is/are younger than 18. People who love you, **DO NOT** ask you to send them nude photos. And sending someone a nude photo of yourself will not make someone love you.



# SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY FOR TEENS

NetSmartz.org/TipSheets

## THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST CAN HELP YOU TAKE STEPS TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFER ONLINE.

### ○ CHECK YOUR COMMENTS AND IMAGES.

Have you posted anything inappropriate or illegal, like threats, nudity, alcohol, or drugs?

### ○ TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT WHAT'S OK TO POST.

Agree that you won't post embarrassing or hurtful comments or images of each other. Be clear that you'll delete – or if needed, report – any posts that are inappropriate, illegal, or threatening or could get you in trouble.

### ○ REVIEW YOUR ACCOUNT SETTINGS.

Go through each option slowly. Always ask yourself – *what is on my profile and who can see it?*

### ○ KNOW YOUR FRIENDS, CONTACTS, AND FOLLOWERS.

These are the people who can see, share, and comment on what you post so you want to be sure you can trust them. Block and report anyone who makes harassing, threatening, or inappropriate comments.

### ○ KEEP AN EYE ON 3RD PARTY APPS.

Some of these apps will give companies access to your personal information. Always read the fine print before deciding to add one.

### ○ DON'T FORGET MOBILE.

When you use mobile devices like smartphones and tablets to post something or check in, you could also be sharing your location. Check your settings to make sure you're only sharing what you want to.

### ○ REPORT.

You have the right to be safe online. If anyone cyberbullies you, make a report to the website or app. If anyone shares or asks you to share sexual messages or images, make a report to [www.CyberTipline.com](http://www.CyberTipline.com).

A program of the

NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
**MISSING &  
EXPLOITED**  
CHILDREN®

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Children. All rights reserved.

**NetSmartz® Workshop**

For more resources visit [NSTEENS.ORG](http://NSTEENS.ORG)



If you are being harassed or bullied online or via text,  
*tell a trusted adult immediately.*

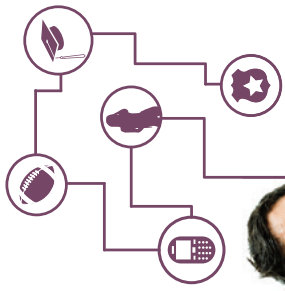
If you are being bullied or threatened or harassed, create a record of the facts and evidence.

List all the information relative to who, what, when, where, how, and why.

This will help those in positions of authority - including the police - to properly address or investigate the matter if required.

# tips to prevent SEXTING TEENS

NetSmartz.org/TipSheets



## THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES

of taking, sending, or forwarding a sexual picture of someone else, even if it's of you. You could get kicked off of sports teams, face humiliation, lose educational opportunities, and even face a police investigation.



## NEVER TAKE

images of yourself that you wouldn't want everyone—your classmates, your teachers, your family, or your employer—to see.



## BEFORE HITTING SEND

remember that you can't control where this image may travel. What you send to a boyfriend or girlfriend could easily end up with their friends, and their friends' friends, and so on...



## IF YOU FORWARD

a sexual picture of someone without their consent, you are violating their trust and exposing them to potential ridicule. It's not up to you to decide who should see their body, so don't forward the image to anyone.



## IF ANYONE PRESSURES

you to send a sexual picture, don't give in and talk to an adult you trust. Remember that anyone who tries to get you to do something you are uncomfortable with is probably not trustworthy.

As you are thinking about what to post or text, ask yourself: if I post or text this, will I keep my dignity or will I lose my dignity? If the answer is that you will lose your dignity, don't do it.



LIVE YOUR DIGITAL LIFE BY

**THE THREE RS:**

**RESPECT**

FOR YOURSELF

**RESPECT**

FOR OTHERS

**RESPONSIBILITY**

FOR YOUR ACTIONS



Every decision you make has consequences

- good or bad. Think very carefully how you use your social media accounts and how you communicate using your phone.

One tweet can change your life.

One text can change your life.

That sounds dramatic, but it's true. Just ask any of the people who have been kicked out of school or lost their jobs or are in prison because of something they texted or posted online.

**Think  
positive**

Imagine the power of using your text or social media platforms in **positive ways**.

Strive to use your platforms to be an inspiration.

Make someone smile or laugh.

Learn something productive and new.

Connect in appropriate ways with family and friends.

**Be positive. Be kind. Help people.**

The power of positive thinking and action will enrich your life in ways you never imagined ...

**embrace it!**

# Middle and High School Internet Safety Rules

## 1. I WILL THINK BEFORE I POST.

I agree not to post information and images that could put me at risk, embarrass me, or damage my future, such as

- o cell & home phone numbers
- o home address
- o sexual messages
- o inappropriate pictures and videos

## 2. I WILL RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE ONLINE.

I will not

- o post anything rude, offensive, or threatening
- o send or forward images and information that might embarrass, hurt, or harass someone
- o take anyone's personal information and use it to damage his or her reputation

## 3. I WILL BE CAREFUL WHEN MEETING ONLINE FRIENDS IN PERSON.

I agree to

- o ask my parent or guardian's permission before going
- o have a parent or guardian accompany me
- o meet in a public place

## 4. I WILL PROTECT MYSELF ONLINE.

If someone makes me feel uncomfortable or if someone is rude or offensive, I will

- o not respond
- o save the evidence
- o tell my parent, guardian, or another trusted adult
- o report to the website, cell phone company, CyberTipline.com, or the police



# PROMISE TO PROTECT



# PLEDGE TO HEAL

SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

This booklet is for informational purposes and is a product of resources provided by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's NetSmartz program ([www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)) and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Safe Environment.

**Important Phone Numbers:**

- Local law enforcement: city police or county sheriff, numbers will vary according to location; if you are in immediate danger, call **911**
- West Virginia State Police Crimes Against Children Unit: **304.293.6400**  
([wvicac@wvsp.gov](mailto:wvicac@wvsp.gov))
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: **800.352.6513**
- Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Office of Safe Environment:  
**304.230.1504**

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is committed to the protection of its children and young people. The Diocese complies with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People by maintaining an Office of Safe Environment.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families/Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513.

To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop's designees at 888.434.6237 (toll free) or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353 or Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, ext. 270. This list of designees may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date designee listing, please visit [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click Diocese, then Offices, then Office of Safe Environment, then How to Report.

You may also call the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504

For more information on the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment, please go to **[www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org)**, then click the "Diocese" tab, then click "Office of Safe Environment" under the "Offices" menu.

To learn more about the Catholic Church's efforts in preventing sexual abuse of children in the United States, please visit <http://www.usccb.org>. Under "Issues and Action," click "Child and Youth Protection" from the drop down menu.



**Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston**  
**Office of Safe Environment**

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