



SEXTORTION & IMAGE-BASED ABUSE:

A PARENT'S PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Sextortion is when someone tricks, threatens or blackmails a child using intimate images or videos. It is not your child's fault. Help and support are available.

Here's what parents need to know.

- 1 IN 7** teens are targeted by online predators before 18 (Thorn (2023))
- 90%** of sextortion victims are threatened with image sharing (NCA (2023))
- 24/7** sextortion can happen at any time, anywhere (IWF (2023))
- MOST** victims know the person who blackmails them (NCA (2023))

- WHAT IT IS**
Sextortion is blackmail. Someone threatens to share intimate images or videos.
- HOW IT HAPPENS**
They build trust. They ask for images. Then they threaten or demand more.
- HOW THEY CONTACT**
Social media, gaming, messaging apps, dating sites and hidden/anon apps.
- WHAT THEY WANT**
Money, more images, favours or to keep the secret. They may never stop.
- WHY IT WORKS**
They exploit fear, embarrassment and shame to keep victims silent.
- CONVERSATION**
Talk early. Listen often. Keep it open and judgement-free.



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND

- It can happen to anyone.** Kind, smart and careful kids can still be targeted.
- It is not your child's fault.** The blame lies with the person doing the harm.
- Silence protects the blackmailer.** Talking early reduces harm and stops it escalating.

Your support can make all the difference.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 79%** of sextortion victims are male (NCA (2023))
- 30%** of victims are under 16 (Thorn (2023))
- 50%+** of reports started on social media platforms (IWF (2023))
- UP TO 18 MONTHS** some victims are blackmailed for (NCA (2023))

SAFETY FEATURES & SETTINGS

WHAT EXISTS	WHAT TO DO
Privacy Controls Limit who can contact your child.	Review privacy settings together. >
Blocking & Reporting Block and report users or content.	Limit who can message, comment or follow. >
Disappearing Messages Messages can auto-delete in some apps.	Turn off location sharing where possible. >
Report to Authorities Platforms can pass reports to police.	Check app age ratings and use family tools. >

STEP-BY-STEP: WHAT TO DO

- STAY CALM**
Reacting in anger or panic can make things worse.
- DON'T PAY OR COMPLY**
Paying encourages more demands. It doesn't solve it.
- SAVE THE EVIDENCE**
Take screenshots. Save usernames, messages, dates.
- BLOCK THE PERSON**
Block and report across all platforms and accounts.
- REPORT IT**
Report to the platform and to the police.
- GET SUPPORT**
Talk to someone you trust. You are not alone.

THE RISKS WORTH KNOWING

- Emotional Harm**: Anxiety, shame and depression can follow.
- Image Sharing**: Images may be shared with friends, school or online.
- Ongoing Blackmail**: Demands can continue for months or years.
- Financial Loss**: Victims may be pressured for money or gift cards.
- Damage to Reputation**: Photos or videos can affect school, friendships and future.
- Escalation**: Threats of self-harm or violence can be used to control.

THE 10-MINUTE CONVERSATION

- ? What apps do you use to chat or game?
- ? Do you know anyone online that you haven't met in real life?
- ? Would you tell me if someone asked for nudes or personal pics?
- ? Do you know you can come to me, no matter what?

TRUST OVER SURVEILLANCE
Connection, not control, keeps kids safe.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

- STAY CALM & GATHER EVIDENCE**
 - Don't delete anything.
 - Take screenshots of chats, profiles and threats.
 - Note dates, times and any payment requests.
 - Keep the evidence safe.
- REPORT & SEEK HELP**
 - Report to the platform immediately.
 - Report to CEOP: report.ceop.police.uk
 - Call Childline: 0800 1111 (free, 24/7)
 - Get help from your school if needed.

★ You did the right thing. Help is available.