

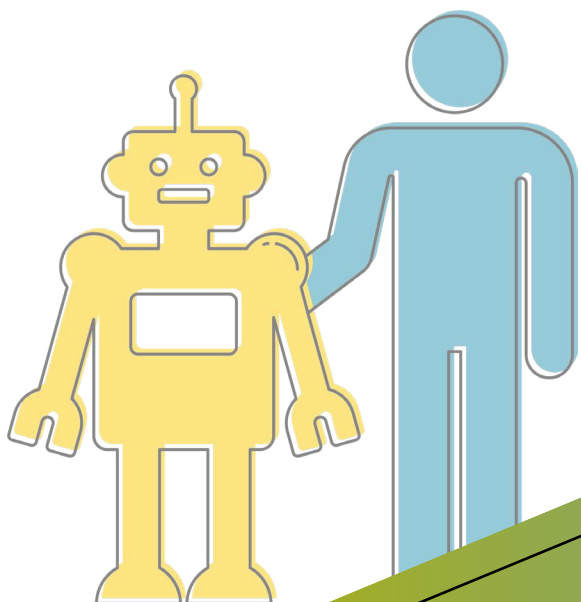
# WHAT IS SEXTORTION?

Sextortion is a term often used for 'financially motivated sexual extortion'. It is a form of blackmail where victims are tricked into sending intimate pictures and videos and then threatened these will be shared publicly unless the victim pays up. Any person is vulnerable to this scam, but especially teenagers amongst whom intimate image-sharing is increasingly normalised.

## How does the sextortion of children work?

A perpetrator will typically:

- 1) **Pose as another child or young person, i.e. perpetrators will pose as teenage girls if contacting boys.**
- 2) **Connect with a child via social media or online gaming.**
- 3) **Encourage them to switch to a platform with video, often encrypted.**
- 4) **Start a conversation which quickly turns sexual.**
- 5) **Encourage them to put on their video camera.**
- 6) **Make excuses why their own camera isn't working or even use pre-recorded video.**
- 7) **Encourage the child to remove their clothing or perform sexual activity.**
- 8) **Record this activity.**
- 9) **Blackmail the child.**



## What can a parent do to protect their child from sextortion and the harms it causes?

- Have a conversation. Let your child know that this is happening to thousands of children in the UK. Explain to them how sextortion works and how they can try to protect themselves by using security settings, checking out the communication with a trusted adult and avoiding sending identifiable images or videos.
- Let them know that you love them and will always support them no matter what. Reassure them that if they ever get in trouble online, they can come to you.
- Talk to your child about what they do online (including gaming). Find out who they're connecting with. Ensure they have age-appropriate monitoring and security settings.
- Be aware of how you talk about other young people who are exploited. If you use blaming or judgemental language, your child will get the message they can't come to you if it happens to them.
- Express empathy for any child or adult who experiences online exploitation or scams. Make it clear that the person to blame is the perpetrator.
- Make sure they know where to go for confidential information and support, including support with mental health and suicidal thoughts.

## If you discover your child is being sextorted...

- Don't pay any money.
- Don't engage further with the perpetrator.
- Don't delete any of the messages, photos or video content that have been shared between your child and the perpetrator. They may be used as evidence.
- Contact the Police on 101 to report the crime.
- Use the [Report Remove tool](#) to flag the content and ensure it is removed from as many platforms as possible if the perpetrator has shared them. You will be kept informed at every stage of your report. Your child will be supported by a Childline counsellor who will help them deal with the emotional impact.

### Further Reading:

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sextortion/>

[Sextortion - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)