

Safeguarding briefing - Financially motivated sexual extortion: alert for parents

Sextortion involves people being forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand, after an offender has threatened to release nude or semi-nude photos of them. This could be a real photo taken by the victim, or a fake image created of them by the offender. All age groups and genders are being targeted, but a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged between 14-18.

Child victims may report being:

- contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. OR maybe contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person they do know and the communication feels unfamiliar
- quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing an indecent image first
- moved from a chat on social media, an online platform or game to a private messaging app that is an end-to-end encrypted chat platform
- manipulated or pressured into taking nude or semi-nude photos or videos
- told they have been hacked and the offender has access to their images, personal information and contacts (whether this is true or not)
- blackmailed into sending money or meeting another financial demand (such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card) after sharing an image or video, or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated/AI-generated images of the child or young person and making the threat of sharing them wider

Be aware multiple children and young people may be targeted within an education or wider social setting, as it is more likely that a child or young person will accept a friend request or communicate with someone they don't know if they believe they are a 'mutual friend'. If a child or young person has disclosed an incident like this you **MUST REPORT IT**.

Advice to parents

- **Don't pay, do stop contact and block:** you may be tempted to pay, but there is no guarantee that this will stop the threats. As the offender's motive is to get money, once you have shown you can pay, they will likely ask for more and blackmail may continue. If you have paid, don't panic but don't pay anything more. Help your child to stop all communication with the offender and block them on any accounts that they have been contacted on.
- **Avoid deleting anything:** try not to delete anything that could be used as evidence such as messages, images, telephone numbers, and bank account details.
- **Report to the police or CEOP:** call 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm to your child. Or you can use the [CEOP Safety Centre](#) to report any online blackmail attempts.