

## What to do if you are worried a child or young person has shared an image online

*Technology is a wonderful tool that has brought many benefits to our lives and it is now vital to our education system and in our daily lives. Alongside these benefits there are also many disadvantages and it is also a platform that can be grossly misused. Children of primary school age are technologically advanced and are sometimes more knowledgeable than adults about using online social media platforms and messaging apps which allow them to post photos and express their views.*

*It's helpful to have a clear understanding of what you can do if a child or young person in your care loses control of an image before it happens. You might want to talk to the children in your care about who they would talk to if they were worried about something online. There is always something that can be done once an image or video is posted online.*

### Top Tips:

- Have an open conversation with children and young people in your care about what messaging services they use and discuss the potential risks involved.
- Discuss the risks that come alongside the appeal of "Disappearing" videos, photos, and messages. Remind young people that something they believe will vanish can still be saved by the recipient for nefarious (wicked or criminal) purposes. Ensure they have someone to confide in, such as a trusted adult if an instance of bullying or harassment occurs.
- Make sure a young person understands the dangers of sharing any group links or QR codes externally. This is not necessarily restricted to strangers, but also anyone who might have the intent to bully or harass.
- Remind children and young people that they should not accept any calls or messages from someone they do not know, as well as joining group chats including people they don't know.

- Talk to the children about using 2 Factor Authentication, this is an extra layer of protection which will help keep their WhatsApp account secure. This means that even if a password is guessed, an unauthorised user should not be able to gain access.
- Explain why it's important not to share any personal information (address, date of birth, etc.) over messaging platforms.
- Encourage children and young people to only talk to people they know from their offline life, ask them to talk to you before adding anyone they haven't met yet.
- As WhatsApp is encrypted, if a child is sent an illegal image, they should NOT forward it on or screen shot the image, but instead report the URL to the [Internet Watch Foundation \(IWF\)](#).

**Here are some practical steps you can use if a child tells you that they have lost control of an image:**

- Support the child in your care by helping them understand what's happened. Thank them for telling you and calmly explain that there are some steps you can take together to ask for the image to be removed
- Encourage the child to seek support from Childline, who can explain the process to them. Adults can speak to the NSPCC Adults Helpline for support.
- Childline and the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation) have released an online tool to help children and young people regain control of any nude image of themselves online.
- Try to gather a list of where the image has appeared or who has received it.
- Adults can make an online report to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) or contact the local police force for support if they have concerns a child is being groomed or sexually abused online.
- Adults can also report the URL of images for removal directly to the Internet Watch Foundation.
- Always save the URL instead of the image. It is important not to copy or send the image to anyone, even the police – the image will constitute an indecent image of a child and should not be shared or saved.
- Young people can upload their own image or URL to the Internet Watch Foundation's Portal via their Childline account for removal.
- **If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, you should call 999 (emergency number).**