



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parents/Carers

At the beginning of a new school year and with this being very current in the national news, I feel it is timely to flag up issues surrounding 'sexting'.

'Sexting' is an increasingly common activity among young people where they share inappropriate or explicit images online or through mobile phones. It can also refer to written messages.

At school we take this very seriously due to the devastating impact it can have on both the distributor and the receiver. PSHE lessons cover this topic at various times in your child's education. This topic is further included in aspects of the assembly programme to reinforce the messages.

As a parent, it is important to understand the risks so that you can talk to your child about how to stay safe and what to do if your child ever feels scared or uncomfortable about images on mobile phones.

Young people may see 'sexting' as a harmless activity but there are risks. Taking, sharing or receiving an image, even voluntarily, can have a long-lasting negative impact.

'Sexting' may be increasingly common but 'sexting' is illegal. By sending an explicit image a young person is producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission. This can seriously affect your child's future career choice. If there is police involvement it may be flagged up by any DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) undertaken for certain jobs and professions.

It is very easy to send a photo or message but the sender has no control about how that image is passed on. When images are stored or shared online they become public. They can be deleted on social media or may only last a few seconds on apps like Snapchat, but images can still be saved or copied by others. These images may never be completely removed and could be found in the future, for example, when applying for jobs or university.

The following links provide parents with further information about guiding children about this increasingly common activity among young people.

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/>

http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/2011_sexting.html

<http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/pages/sexting.aspx>

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Johnson
Principal