

ALL HALLOWS RC HIGH SCHOOL

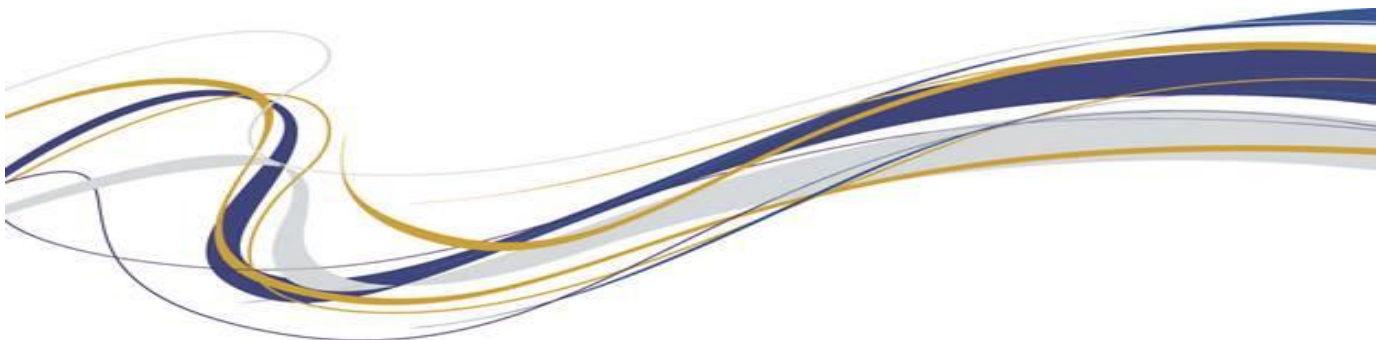


ANTI-SEXTING POLICY

Committee responsible for review: Welfare Committee

Reviewed: February 2019

Date of next review: February 2020



We aim for All Hallows RC High School to be a Catholic school to which children wish to come, to which parents wish to send their children, and where teachers wish to teach.

Our Mission is to offer a high quality Catholic education for all, in an environment where Gospel Values are central to teaching and learning, and in which the unique value of each person is recognised and respected.

ANTI-SEXTING POLICY

Anti-sexting forms part of the Safeguarding Policy but there are also references to anti-sexting in both the Behaviour and the online-safeguarding policy.

Definition: the term 'sexting' is a derivation of 'texting' but relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content. It is officially known as 'Youth Produced Sexual Imagery'. These are created and sent via electronic communication devices such as mobile telephones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. It is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children. The sexual offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18.

Aim: All Hallows RC High School will not tolerate 'sexting', it is inappropriate and illegal amongst young people and can have extremely damaging and long-lasting consequences. This policy has been created in order to provide a guide for both staff and pupils as to how the school will proceed and what steps will be taken should an incident of sexting be reported or suspected.

Legal Implications for pupils

Sexting potentially breaches several civil laws concerned with the creation, possession and distribution of child pornography and indecent images. These are images which show partial (where breasts or genitals are exposed) or full nudity and/or feature sexual acts being performed. It is illegal for pupils to make and/or share images such as these, even if they are images of themselves, which have been taken personally or with consent. Pupils who engage in sexting (to any extent) are at risk of receiving a police caution and/or being placed on a register for sexual offenders for a period of several years (which can have serious ramifications in adulthood with regards to employment, travel etc). Sexting can also (in some cases) be viewed as a crime under the Malicious Communications Act.

School policies

Sexting is therefore identified as unacceptable behaviour in the school Behaviour Policy and the possession of pornography is prohibited in school. The misuse of IT, such as sexting, inappropriate comments on social networking, being the object of cyber-bullying and online grooming are all potential welfare concerns and identified as such in our Safeguarding Policy.

Our duty

As staff, we have a responsibility to work with parents and carers in ensuring that all pupils are fully aware of the dangers and possible repercussions of sexting. In school, this information will be communicated to pupils during PD lessons, tutor time, in assemblies and through parental information.

Sexting incidents are often complicated as they potentially involve a large number of pupils and those involved could be victims or perpetrators or both. Depending on the specific circumstances and gravity, the incident will be investigated on the discipline-safeguarding continuum:

If an incident of sexting is reported or suspected at All Hallows RC High School:

- If “sexting” is reported by the victim or deemed to be a CP matter, then it must be treated as a disclosure of a CP matter and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will report the incident to the BRIDGE .
- If deemed to be a disciplinary issue or a potential crime, it must be reported to the relevant PPL.
- Parents and carers will be notified and the incident will be reported to the BRIDGE team or the police, as appropriate.
- Pupils will be sanctioned in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. Sexting is a serious offence and dependent on motive, intent, pressure or coercion, those involved may be issued with fixed term or, in extreme cases, even permanent exclusion. Pupils may also be required to attend workshops to ensure that they understand legality, consequences and to work through specific scenarios.
- Pupils may also be subject to interview by the Police and confiscation of their electronic devices.

Guidance for staff if you suspect that an offence has been committed:

- If you suspect that “sexting” has taken place or you become aware of indecent images circulating in school or a pupil refers an incident of “sexting” to you, then you must refer it straight away to the relevant PPL or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who are authorised by the Headteacher to investigate such matters.
- Although all staff are by law permitted to search pupils without their consent if they have a reasonable suspicion that they may have prohibited items in their possession, such as pornography, you may put yourself at risk of allegations by attempting to deal with this issue or by viewing indecent images yourself, so this is an investigation that should be carried out by PPLs or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **DO NOT** search, copy, print images that do come to your attention. Switch off or put in flight mode so phone cannot be remotely wiped, secure phone and seek advice. Staff do not want to inadvertently implicate themselves simply by viewing such material.
- If you are in any doubt whatsoever, seek immediate advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Done) and refer the issue on.

Searching, screening and confiscation at school (DfE, January 2018)

Staff may lawfully search electronic devices, without consent or parental permission, if there is a suspicion that the pupil has a device prohibited by school rules, or the staff member has good reason to suspect the device may be used to:

- cause harm,
- disrupt teaching,
- break school rules,
- commit an offence,
- cause personal injury, or
- damage property.

Any data, files or images that are believed to be illegal must be passed to the police as soon as practicable, including pornographic images of children, without deleting them.

Any data, files or images that are not believed to be unlawful, may be deleted or kept as evidence of a breach of the school’s behaviour policy.