



## DAUNTSEY'S SCHOOL

### POLICY AND PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH SEXTING

In recent years, the issue of Sexting amongst young people has become widespread. It is now recognised by the latest version of KCSIE as a specific safeguarding issue. It is right that Dauntsey's is committed to do all it can to manage such behaviour within our community to the best of our ability and in line with expectations laid down by KCSIE. This policy document defines what sexting is and how it is managed at Dauntsey's.

This document has been created with reference to **KCSIE September 2020** and **UKCCIS Sexting in Schools and Colleges**.

#### **This Policy should be read in conjunction with:**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy  
Policy and Procedures on Peer on Peer Abuse  
Complementary Curriculum and Personal and Social Education Policy  
ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils  
The Use and Abuse of Technology Policy  
Cyber Bullying Policy  
Rules, Rewards and Sanctions

#### **This Policy should also be read with the understanding of the following principles based on the KCSIE Statutory Guidelines for Schools and Colleges September 2020:**

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at Dauntsey's is the responsibility of *all* staff.
- Staff should always consider what is in the best interests of the pupils in our care.
- Prompt action and sharing of information is crucial in order to safeguard the welfare of pupils.
- Staff should be aware that sexting behaviour can put children in danger.
- Staff should be aware that sexting is a type of behaviour in which peer on peer abuse can manifest itself.
- As regarding any safeguarding issue, all members of the community are asked to cultivate an understanding that 'it could happen here' and be prepared to 'think the unthinkable'.

### **Definition of Sexting:**

Many professionals consider sexting to be *'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile devices or over the Internet'*.

### **The Law:**

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is indecent is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18. 'Indecent' is not definitively defined in law, the images are likely to be considered indecent if they depict:

- a naked young person
- a topless girl
- an image which displays genitals
- sex acts including masturbation
- overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear

### **The types of incidents which this document covers are:**

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves, with a peer under the age of 18;
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult;
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 or an adult.

### **Procedures Adopted when an incident of Sexting comes to the School's attention**

The following general principles and guidelines should be followed:

#### **Initial response**

- The response to all incidents should be in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Any direct disclosure by a pupil of an incident of sexting should be taken very seriously.
- Any incident should be referred to the DSL/DDSL without delay.
- The DSL/DDSL should meet with School staff involved and there should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved, if appropriate.
- The DSL/DDSL will use professional judgement to decide if it is necessary to view the imagery to safeguard the pupil/pupils involved but in most cases, imagery should not be viewed (see below).
- Staff should not view any sexual imagery involved but rather try and establish the content through conversation.

- If viewing of any imagery is deemed necessary then this will take place with the following advice in mind: no copying, printing or sharing of the imagery should occur, as this is illegal; ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the Head Master, Head of the Lower School or Second Master who does not need to view the imagery; whenever possible ensure viewing takes place on school or college premises and ideally that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery and the viewing of the imagery should be recorded.

### **Investigation**

- The DSL/DDSL will decide if further information is required to decide on the best response.
- The DSL/DDSL and staff involved should establish whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platform, although this may be difficult to establish.
- The DSL/DDSL will determine if immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services.
- The Housemaster/mistress(HOM) and pastoral team provide relevant facts about the circumstances of the pupil/pupils involved which could influence the decisions of the DSL and DDSL.
- In incidents that involve young people not at Dauntsey's, the DSL or Head Master will decide if there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.

### **Risk Assessment and Referral**

- The DSL/DDSL will assess the risk presented by the incident to the pupil/pupils involved and in conjunction with the Head Master decide whether a referral to the police or Social Services is required, or whether to proceed using the School's pastoral support and disciplinary system or, if required, Early Help from our local network of supporting services as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and then involved in the process, unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the Social Services. Any staff member can make such a referral but should inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made.
- **An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care will always be made if:**
  - **the sexting involves an adult;**
  - **there is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed;**
  - **there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs);**

- **what we know about the imagery suggests that the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent;**
- **the pupils concerned are at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery; for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.**

If none of the above apply then the School may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care, with the clear understanding that it can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light.

Whilst incidents of sexting are likely to be dealt with primarily by House staff, pupils are able to inform any member of staff of their involvement in an incident of sexting. Any staff involved should follow closely the advice given in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy regarding how to respond. Basic principles of listening sensitively, providing reassurance, not asking leading questions and not guaranteeing confidentiality should be remembered.

### ***Recording Process and Outcomes***

- All conversations and meetings to do with any incident should be recorded. Formal written records should be completed immediately or within 24 hours at the latest. Records should include date, time, place, persons involved, nature of disclosure and any relevant details. These should be emailed to the DSL/DDSL immediately and if not being completed by the HOM, a copy also emailed to the HOM. Records of safeguarding incidents are kept by the DSL.
- At any stage of the incident, mobile devices can be confiscated by members of staff but should be done so in accordance with the Protocol for the searching of the possessions of a pupil.
- Mobile devices could also be searched, if required, with permission from the Head Master or DSL/DDSL. But a search of a mobile device should not be done alone or without this permission, and should preferably be carried out by the DSL/DDSL. In some cases, mobile devices may be passed onto the DOFA/Police.
- The DSL/DDSL in conjunction with the HOM will make provision for the deletion of any sexual imagery as appropriate at any stage of the incident.
- The DSL and Pastoral staff will offer ongoing support in the best interests of the pupils in our care.

## **Education:**

Dauntsey's takes a proactive approach to safeguarding issues with its staff and pupils which aims at prevention and education. Our pupils are educated about youth produced sexual imagery and other safeguarding issues through PSHE and talks from external speakers. The learning focuses on:

- what sexting is
- how it is likely to be encountered
- the consequences of sexting, forwarding or providing such images
- issues of legality
- the risk of damage to people's feeling and reputations
- the strategies and skills required to manage the receipt of such images or requests/pressure to provide (or forward) such images. This will include who to tell; what to say; what to do; what not to do and where to get support from within and outside of the School.

Dauntsey's recognises the challenge that young people find in talking about such issues and so learning opportunities should aim to develop confidence in our pupils so that they feel they can communicate about safeguarding issues.

Dauntsey's believes that other preventive learning about issues, such as consent, relationships, online safety and recognising abusive and coercive behaviour, may help to support learning on sexting.

A. L. Jackson  
Deputy Head (Pastoral)

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