



20th June 2016

Dear Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads,

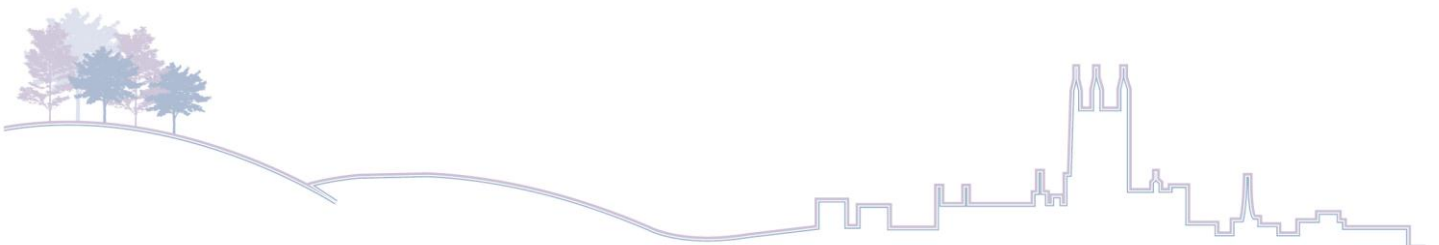
In support of the sexting guidance being circulated by Jane Bee, I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you with the Gloucestershire Constabulary position in relation to decisions on reporting sexting incidents to the Police or not.

Gloucestershire Constabulary supports the National Strategy for Policing Children and Young People. This strategy stresses the dangers and public concerns of unnecessarily criminalising children and young people. The Criminal Justice System should not be used to resolve issues that would ordinarily fit under the umbrella of parenting or care. This applies as much to parents as it does to corporate parents and those *in loco parentis*.

Gloucestershire Constabulary also supports the sexting guidance which has been provided. Importantly we recognise the difficult decisions which sometimes have to be made. There is an acknowledgement that reporting decisions for those charged with caring for children can be complex, but that the decisions need to be made both in the best interests of all parties and take account of wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Parents, carers and schools make daily decisions as to whether or not to report criminal activity to the Police. Schools will deal with a range of offending such as assaults, criminal damage, thefts and minor sexual offences – some they will report to the Police, others quite rightly will be dealt with appropriately without the need to notify the Police. Sexting is no different in concept and schools should apply the same decision making rationale (supported by this new guidance).

There have been some concerns nationally that any report to the Police will result in the child being criminalised, with future Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) disclosures reducing the life chances of children reported for relatively normal behavior. Although a crime report would be created and it may then include the details of children involved, this in itself does not criminalise a child or young person. The likelihood of a future DBS disclosure in relation to isolated sexting incidents is low.





Gloucestershire Constabulary
County Police Headquarters,
No. 1 Waterwells, Waterwells Drive,
Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AN
Tel: 101 www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Further national sexting guidance is likely to come out in summer 2016. If there are any changes which affect parents, carers or schools we will update you as soon as possible.

Professionals can direct queries relating to sexting as well as cyberbullying and digital safety to the [Safer Internet Center Helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk) (0844 381 4772 or email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Detective Superintendent Simon Atkinson

Head of Public Protection and Investigations

Specialist Crime

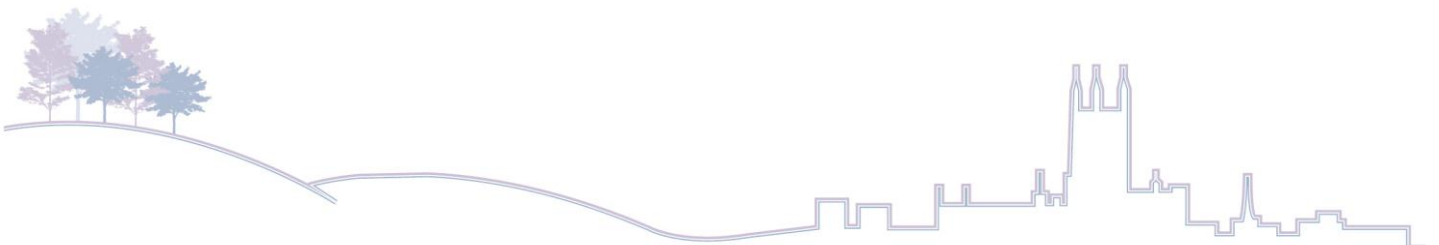
Gloucestershire Constabulary

+ Prism House, Davey Way, Waterwells Business Park, Gloucester, GL2 2AD

8 www.gloucestershire.police.uk

 [Twitter page](#)

 [Facebook page](#)





Gloucestershire Constabulary

County Police Headquarters,
No. 1 Waterwells, Waterwells Drive,
Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AN

Tel: 101 www.gloucestershire.police.uk



Do you have a cyberbullying or digital safety concern?

The Safer Internet Centre has been co-funded by the European Commission to provide a Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care. We provide support with all aspects of digital and online issues such as those which occur on social networking sites, cyber-bullying, sexting, online gaming and child protection online. The Helpline aims to resolve issues professionals face about themselves, such as protecting professional identity and reputation, as well as young people in relation to online safety.

Where possible, queries will be responded to within 3 hours (during the office opening hours). We work directly with a number of industry partners to resolve more complex issues and these may take longer to fully resolve. Helpline staff will keep service users updated throughout the process.

It is primarily a signposting, advice, and mediation service, any urgent risk to children should be dealt with via normal safeguarding procedures.

Due to the nature of the service, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, we will endeavour to protect anonymity where possible and will discuss beforehand if we need to share information with other relevant agencies.

We are open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. The Helpline can be emailed at any time, and these will be responded to during our normal working hours.

