



## Sextortion Resource Guide

**Sextortion** is a form of child sexual exploitation where children are threatened or blackmailed, most often with the possibility of sharing with the public a nude or sexual images of them, by a person who demands additional sexual content, sexual activity, or money from the child.

This crime may happen when a child has shared an image with someone they thought they knew or trusted, but in many cases they are targeted by an individual they met online who obtained a sexual image from the child through deceit, coercion, or some other method. In many cases, the blackmailers may have stolen or taken images of another person and they are communicating through a fake account. The blackmailer may have sent images as well.

Between 2019 and 2021 the number of national reports involving sextortion **more than doubled and continue to rise.**<sup>1</sup>

**In San Diego County**, sextortion crimes have **increased by over 200%** since 2020.<sup>2</sup>

### Agencies and Organizations to Learn More and Seek Help

- [San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force](#) (SDICAC)
- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#) (NCMEC)

### Red Flags

#### Those involved in the sextortion of children often:

- Approach a child on social media after using it to learn about the child's interests, friends, school, family, etc.
- Move quickly and ask for nudes immediately after following or friending a child on a social media platform.
- Intentionally move their communications with the child from one online platform to another (e.g., moving from social media to private video chat or messaging apps)

### Grooming Tactics:

- A predator will send a friend request to your child on their social media account and begin to "groom" your child. They may:
  - Tell your child "I'm the only one who understands you"
  - Isolate your child from friends and family
  - Send gifts through the mail such as plane tickets, cell phone, etc.
  - Tell your child "I Love You"

## Use tactics to coerce a child, including:

- Reciprocation (“I’ll show you, if you show me”)
- Pretending to work for a modeling agency to obtain sexual images of the child
- Developing a bond with the child by establishing a friendship/romantic relationship
- Using multiple false online identities to contact a child
- Pretending to be younger and/or a member of the opposite sex
- Accessing the child's online account without authorization and stealing sexual images or videos of the child
- Threatening to create sexual images or videos of the child using digital-editing tools

## Signs Your Child Might be at Risk:

- Your child becomes withdrawn and isolated from family & friends
- You notice a drop in grades
- Your child talks of self-harm or suicide
- You find inappropriate material on their computer or cell phone
- You see unknown phone numbers when reviewing the phone bill
- Your child receives mail, money, or gifts from an unknown person

## What to do

- Remember, the blackmailer is to blame, not the victim. Even if he/she made a choice they regret, what the blackmailers are doing is a crime.
- Get help before deciding whether to pay money or otherwise comply with the blackmailer. Cooperating or paying rarely stops blackmail.
- **REPORT** the account via the platform's safety feature
- **BLOCK** the suspect but **DO NOT DELETE** your profile or messages because that can be helpful in stopping the blackmailer.
- Ask for help. The problems can be very complex and require help from adults or professionals.
- Reach out to The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) for support at [gethelp@ncmec.org](mailto:gethelp@ncmec.org) or you can call them at **1-800-THE-LOST**.
- As a child, if you don't feel that you have adults in your corner, reach out to (NCMEC).

Visit [MissingKids.org/IsYourExplicitContentOutThere](https://MissingKids.org/IsYourExplicitContentOutThere) to learn how to notify companies or visit [cyberlipline.org](https://cyberlipline.org) to report and for help with the process.

## For Parents

If your child is victimized:

- Make it clear that the victimization is not his/her fault
- Save all the evidence of victimization, such as emails or instant message conversations
- Contact your local law enforcement agency

Click [here](#) for more tips for parents from SDICAC on

- Open Communication
- Technology Rules and Agreements
- Smart Phone Use
- Social Networking
- Separate Accounts
- Computer Location and Activity Monitoring

Click [here](#) for SDICAC Parents Guide

Click [here](#) for THORN Parent Resources and Conversation Guides

## For Kids & Teens

- Socializing online can help you keep in touch with friends and family, but it's important to know the safe way to navigate the internet.
- Sharing too much information, posting pictures and videos, or using harmful words can damage someone's reputation...and that someone can be you! The things you write or the pictures you post can have consequences offline.
- Sometimes your profile can be seen by visitors or friends of friends...even when your privacy settings are on.
- Employers, college admissions officers, coaches, teachers, and the police can view your posts.
- **Once something's posted, you can't take it back..** Even if you delete the information, you'll have little control over older versions that may exist on other people's computers.
- **Do you have friends on your buddy lists that you've never met? Even if they seem really nice and have sent you pictures, they may not be who they say they are. People will sometimes take on the identity of a juvenile to make you believe they can be trusted and are just like you.**
- When you send a picture of yourself to someone else, that picture can be forwarded to others that shouldn't have it. Did you know it is illegal for you, as a kid, to send nude pictures of yourself or someone else to another person?
- **Trust your suspicions...**if you feel threatened or uncomfortable because of something that happened online or on your cellphone, tell your parents, a counselor, or a teacher right away. It is okay to talk to them about this, they want to help you always be safe and this means online as well.

## Reporting an Internet Crime Against a Child

- To report a crime against your child, involving the internet or other electronic means, please contact your local law enforcement agency.
- To report an online exploitation type crime against an unknown child, contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CBS8 News](#) Other Sources: [San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force](#), [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children THORN](#)