

# Supporting & Inspiring Family Conversations

## Responding to requests for private photos & videos

The internet is an integral part of our lives that has many benefits, but it's also likely our children will encounter unsafe people and unsafe situations online. Increasingly, children and young people are asked by people they know and don't know to take and share photos and videos of the private parts of their body\*. (see the next page for more information)

As a trusted adult in your child's life, you have the opportunity to support and guide them to have safer and more positive experiences online. Ensure your child knows they can talk with you about anything, no matter what it is.

### **No one is allowed to:**

- Take photos or videos of your private parts.
- Ask you to take photos or videos of your private parts
- Show you private photos or private videos
- Send you private photos or private videos

### **You're not allowed to:**

- Take photos or videos of your own or anyone else's private parts.
- Ask someone else to take photos or videos of their private parts.
- Send or ask anyone else to send private photos or videos.
- Show anyone else private photos or private videos.

Many children don't talk with trusted adults because they fear getting in trouble, they fear losing the device and sometimes because what they see or hear, are sent, asked to send or shown is embarrassing and awkward for them to talk about. Consider using the conversation starter below to open the lines of communication and address factors that inhibit children talking with a trusted adult.

I understand this may happen and I would like you to talk with me about it so I can help you understand and make sense of what you've seen/heard, been sent/shown/or asked to send/sent. There is nothing you could do that would mean I would love you less. I may be upset with you or disappointed but I'll always be here to help you problem solve anything that happens online and offline.

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It's important to teach children the correct names for the private parts of their body. Private parts are the parts of our body usually covered by our underwear or swimwear.

Private body parts include; penis, testicles, scrotum, vagina, vulva, breasts, nipples, bottom and anus. We also include mouth as a private body part as child sexual abuse sometimes includes oral sexual acts. *"No one should put anything in your mouth unless there is a good reason"*. A good reason may include going to the doctor, dentist, giving medication or feeding a child.

Sometimes families call private body parts by 'nick names' or 'home/family names'. It's important that we teach children that if their private parts are hurting or they need to talk to someone about their private parts, using the correct names means no one gets confused.

Increasingly, children and young people are asked by people that they both know and don't know, to take and share photos and videos of the private parts of their body. For primary school age children, you may choose to describe nude images, requests for nude images and pornography as 'private photos' and 'private videos'.

Avoid using the words 'rude' and 'bad' when describing private parts of the body or pornography. Words like rude or bad can inhibit children talking with trusted adults and contribute to feelings of shame, self blame, fear and confusion.

Children may use the internet to find out more about their own bodies or to search a word they have heard (e.g. sex, porn). What they will find is often not what they are expecting and is usually highly graphic, confronting and upsetting. If a child sees, is sent, or is shown pornography, we do not want them to think they are rude or bad, as this may discourage them from talking with a trusted adult.

Also teach children about public and private clothing, information, places/spaces and behaviours. Start at clothing, information, place/spaces, behaviours and then progress to body parts. Children will then become familiar with the language and concept and it can make introducing private body parts and body safety rules less daunting. To learn more, view the eSafeKids Protective Behaviours resources.

If you've not already done so, consider attending an eSafeKids *Protective Behaviours* and/or *Reducing The Harm: Talking About Children and Pornography* workshop.