



SEXTORTION

A Parent's Guide to Protecting Teens Online

What it looks like. How to reduce the risk. What to do immediately if your teen is targeted.

WHY THIS GUIDE MATTERS

Parents, as a Special Victims Unit detective and a member of an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, I see far too many sextortion scams targeting our children. Because of that, I feel it is important to share this information with you so you can better help protect your teens from becoming victims of this heinous crime.

Unfortunately, offenders are increasingly targeting children where they spend their time - online. Please read this information, take it to heart, and speak openly with your teens so they recognize the warning signs and know they can come to you immediately if they are targeted.

As always, please report any sextortion attempt to your local law enforcement agency. I care too much about your children - and about you - to let the families who follow me face this kind of crime without knowing what to do.

Sincerely, Officer Nae Nae

50,000+

financial sextortion reports to NCMEC in
2025

137 / day

average financial sextortion reports in
2025

37%

increase in daily reports vs. 2024

Source: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), 2025 financial sextortion data released June 25, 2026.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Tell your teen before anything happens: "If someone ever threatens you over a photo, video, chat, or mistake online, come to me. I will help you first. We can deal with everything else later."

Save this PDF. Read it with your teen. Share it with another parent.

Educational resource prepared for social-media sharing by Officer Nae Nae and based on information from NCMEC, the U.S. DOJ Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program, the FBI, and 988. It is not an official publication or endorsement by those organizations.



HOW THE SCAM WORKS

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Sextortion can begin on social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, livestreams, or anywhere people can meet and communicate online. Offenders use speed, secrecy, embarrassment, and fear to keep the victim from asking for help.

1

TARGET & STUDY

The offender finds a teen online and may use public posts to learn their school, interests, friends, team, family, or followers. Accounts may be fake, copied, hacked, or designed to look like another teenager.

2

BUILD TRUST - THEN MOVE FAST

The offender may flirt, offer attention or something of value, send a sexual image first, or ask to move the conversation to a private or encrypted app. Photos and video calls are not proof of identity.

3

OBTAIN OR FABRICATE CONTENT

The teen may be persuaded to send a nude or sexual image, or the offender may secretly capture a video call. ICAC also warns that offenders can use AI to create fake explicit images from an ordinary photo.

4

THREATEN & DEMAND

The offender threatens to send the content to family, friends, school, teammates, or followers. Financial sextortion usually demands money, gift cards, mobile payments, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency. Other sextortion may demand more sexual content or contact.

5

KEEP THE PRESSURE ON

Paying or complying rarely ends the blackmail. Offenders may demand more money, more images, or contact the victim again from new accounts.

Common red flags

- Very new or thin profile, few posts, few followers, or copied-looking photos.
- Immediate flirting or sexual talk, especially from someone just met online.
- Pressure to switch apps, use disappearing messages, or keep the conversation secret.
- Requests for a face photo, private image, live video, or "proof" you are real.
- Screenshots of your teen's followers, school, friends, or family used as leverage.
- Urgent threats such as "pay now," "I'm sending this," or "you have 5 minutes."

Remember

AI CHANGES THE GAME

A teen does not have to send a nude image to be extorted. An offender may fabricate sexual content with editing tools or generative AI and threaten to release the fake.

ANY TEEN CAN BE TARGETED

Current ICAC guidance says these crimes affect children with every kind of family, academic, athletic, and social background. Do not rely on "my child would never..." as a safety plan.



BUILD PROTECTION BEFORE THERE IS A CRISIS

Build protection before there is a crisis

The strongest prevention strategy is not a single app setting. It is a teen who recognizes the pattern and believes they can ask an adult for help without being humiliated or immediately punished.

What parents can do

- Make help-seeking safe. Tell your teen that if they are threatened online, your first job is to help - not lecture, punish, or take away every device.
- Have regular digital-life check-ins. Ask who they talk to, what new apps they use, and whether anyone has asked them to move a conversation or keep something secret.
- Review privacy together. Keep accounts as private as practical; limit who can message, tag, mention, or add them; disable unnecessary location sharing; and review follower/friend lists.
- Use strong security. Unique passwords and multi-factor authentication reduce the chance of account takeover.
- Teach identity skepticism. Photos, voice, video, mutual followers, and even an account they recognize can be fake, copied, hacked, or AI-generated.
- Discuss sexual pressure directly. A healthy relationship does not require sexual images, secrecy, threats, or "proof." Do not forward sexual images received from someone else.

Rules teens can remember

- Do not send a nude or sexual image to someone you only know online.
- Be cautious when a new contact quickly asks to move to another app.
- Never assume a photo or live video proves who someone is.
- If anyone asks for sexual content + secrecy + urgency, stop and tell an adult.
- If anyone threatens exposure, do not pay first. Ask for help first.
- If a friend is targeted, do not share the image or gossip. Help them get to a trusted adult.

FAMILY SAFETY RULE

No online mistake is too embarrassing to bring home. A teen who expects immediate shame may try to solve an extortion crisis alone - exactly what the offender wants.

A 60-second parent script

"I want you to know about a scam called sextortion. Someone may pretend to be your age, ask for a picture or video, and then threaten to send it to everyone you know unless you pay or send more. They can also fake images with AI. If this ever happens to you or a friend, come to me immediately. Even if you made a choice you regret, I care more about getting you safe than getting mad. We will save the evidence, stop responding, and get help together."

5 questions to ask your teen tonight

- 1 Has anyone you met online ever asked you to switch apps, video chat privately, or keep the conversation secret?
- 2 Has anyone ever asked you for a photo or video you would not want posted publicly?
- 3 If someone threatened to send an image to your friends or school, what would you do first?
- 4 Who are three adults you could tell if you felt too embarrassed to tell me right away?
- 5 What could I do as a parent that would make it easier for you to tell me about a bad situation online?

NCMEC recommends regular conversations about technology, sexuality, healthy relationships, boundaries, and consent rather than relying only on scare tactics.



IF IT IS HAPPENING NOW: STOP - SAVE - REPORT

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The first goal is to reduce the offender's control, preserve useful evidence, and make sure your teen is emotionally and physically safe.

1**STOP PAYMENT & COMPLIANCE**

Do not send money, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or more images. Do not negotiate alone. If money was already sent, stop additional payments and save receipts, transaction IDs, usernames, wallet addresses, or payment handles.

2**GET YOUR TEEN WITH A TRUSTED ADULT**

Stay calm. Tell them they are being victimized by a crime. Avoid anger, blame, interrogation, or threats about losing their phone. Fear of punishment can keep teens trapped.

3**SAVE THE EVIDENCE**

Before deleting or blocking, preserve the offender's username, profile, messages, threats, payment demands, dates/times, phone numbers, email addresses, and relevant URLs. Screenshots can help. Do not forward or redistribute sexual images.

4**REPORT THE ACCOUNT - THEN BLOCK**

Use the platform's reporting tools and block the offender after useful account/message information is preserved. Expect that the offender may try again from another account.

5**REPORT THE CRIME**

Contact local law enforcement and/or the FBI. Also report child sexual exploitation to NCMEC's CyberTipline. These reports can help connect cases and identify offenders.

6**USE TAKE IT DOWN**

If a nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit image/video was created when the person was under 18, NCMEC's free Take It Down service can create a digital hash on the device. The image itself does not have to be uploaded to NCMEC. Participating platforms can use the hash to help prevent or remove sharing.

7**CHECK FOR CRISIS RISK**

Sextortion can create intense panic, shame, and hopelessness. Ask directly whether your teen feels unsafe or is thinking about hurting themselves. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support. If there is imminent danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

**DO NOT PAY
A "FIXER" IN
PANIC**

The FBI warns families not to fall prey to for-profit companies that charge sextortion victims for help. Start with law enforcement, NCMEC, and the free resources in this guide.



AFTER THE FIRST REPORT: HELP YOUR TEEN RECOVER

After the first report: help your teen recover

The offender's leverage is strongest when a teen believes the situation is permanent, public, and impossible to survive. Your response can replace that panic with a plan.

What helps

- Keep the focus on the offender's conduct. Your teen may regret sending an image, but blackmail and exploitation are the offender's actions.
- Reduce repeated retelling. Document key facts and allow investigators or victim specialists to guide additional interviews when possible.
- Lock down accounts. Change passwords, enable MFA, review recovery email/phone numbers, remove unknown sessions, and tighten privacy settings.
- Plan for re-contact. New accounts, new numbers, and impersonation may follow. Save, report, and block those attempts too.
- Use support systems. A school counselor, victim advocate, therapist, SRO, or trusted coach may be helpful when the threat involves peers, school, or a team. Share only what is necessary.
- Protect peer privacy. If content circulates among students, instruct your teen not to save, forward, repost, or joke about it. Report it to the platform and a responsible adult.

Common parent questions

"What if the image is fake?"

Treat the threat seriously. ICAC guidance specifically warns that AI-generated explicit images can be used for sextortion. Preserve the evidence and report it.

"What if my teen already paid?"

Do not shame them. Stop further payment, save transaction information, and report the crime. Paying often does not end the demands.

"What if my teen sent the image willingly?"

The extortion is still the offender's wrongdoing. A victim-centered response makes it more likely your teen will cooperate with help and disclose additional threats.

"Should I delete everything?"

No. NCMEC advises blocking the account but not deleting it; account information and messages may be useful to law enforcement. Preserve first, then report/block.

A note about suicide risk

NCMEC reports that it is aware of at least three dozen teenage boys in the United States who have died by suicide after being victimized by financial sextortion. That is why sudden panic, withdrawal, self-harm, statements of hopelessness, or dramatic behavior changes after online activity should be taken seriously. Stay with a teen who may be in immediate danger and connect them to crisis or emergency support.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988 (24/7, free and confidential). If someone is in imminent danger, call 911.



KEEP THESE RESOURCES

Keep these resources

Use the QR codes or type the addresses directly. Save this page somewhere your teen can find it without having to ask first.



NCMEC CyberTipline

report.cybertip.org

Report suspected online child sexual exploitation. NCMEC hotline: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).



NCMEC Take It Down

takeitdown.ncmec.org

Free, anonymous help to limit sharing of sexual images/videos taken before age 18 on participating platforms.



ICAC Task Force Program

icactaskforce.org

National network supporting investigations, prevention, training, victim services, and community education.

ALSO REPORT / GET HELP

Local law enforcement | FBI: 1-800-CALL-FBI or tips.fbi.gov | 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988

Official sources used for this guide

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). "NCMEC Releases New Sextortion Data: Over 100 Reports Received Daily in 2025," June 25, 2026. <https://us.missingkids.org/blog/2026/ncmec-releases-new-sexortion-data-2025>

NCMEC. CyberTipline Data / 2025 CyberTipline reporting and Take It Down data. <https://us.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline/cybertiplinedata>

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NCMEC. "New NCMEC Resource Helps Parents Talk to Kids About Sextortion," Sept. 3, 2026. <https://us.missingkids.org/blog/2026/new-ncmec-resource-helps-parents-talk-to-kids-about-sexortion>

U.S. DOJ / OJJDP - Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program. Program overview and current national network information. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/internet-crimes-against-children-task-force-program>

ICAC / Online Child Exploitation Prevention Initiative. "Helping Youth Navigate Online Sextortion and Exploitation" (current resource on sexually motivated sextortion, financial sextortion, AI/deepfakes, warning signs, and response). <https://www.icactaskforce.org/assets/FMS%20and%20SOE%20Fact%20Sheet%20Single%20Pages%20Color.pdf>

Federal Bureau of Investigation. Financially Motivated Sextortion and Sextortion guidance for youth, caregivers, and reporting. <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/common-frauds-and-scams/sexortion/financially-motivated-sexortion>

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Get Help / call, text, or chat 988. <https://988lifeline.org/get-help/>

Shareable takeaway: The goal is not to convince teens that they will never make a risky choice. The goal is to make sure they recognize blackmail quickly and know exactly who to call before fear takes over.

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