

Sextortion: A Guide for Families

Your teen took part in a lesson on sextortion: online blackmail using sexual images. Here is what to know, and how to help if it ever happens.

What your teen learned

Sextortion is when someone threatens to share a sexual image unless a young person pays or sends more. It can start with a friendly-looking profile and happen within minutes. It relies on panic and shame to keep young people silent. Your teen learned the exit plan: **Stop. Don't pay. Save. Tell. Report.**, and that it is never too late to stop.

If your teen comes to you

- **Stay calm and thank them.** They may be terrified and ashamed. Say: "You're not in trouble. We'll handle this together."
- **Don't pay and don't negotiate.** Paying rarely ends it.
- **Save the evidence, not the image.** Screenshot the threat, the username, the date and time, and any payment demand. Don't copy or forward images.
- **Report.** Report the account on the platform and to the Internal Security Forces (112). If the image was taken before 18, Take It Down (takeitdown.ncmec.org) can help limit sharing.
- **Look after their wellbeing.** Stay close in the following days. The National Lifeline 1564 offers support 24/7.

Conversation starter

- "If anyone ever threatened you online, even if you made a mistake, I would help you, not punish you. What would make it easier to tell me?"

The exit plan

1 Stop & don't pay

Stop contact. Don't pay and don't send more.

2 Save the threat

Messages, username, date, time, payment demand. Not the image.

3 Tell someone now

Before the deadline:
"Someone is threatening me. I need help."

4 Report

The platform, the police (112), and Take It Down if under 18.

Where to get help

1564

National Lifeline for emotional support, open 24/7

LARA

Email for support and guidance:
laraa@laraa.org

112

Internal Security Forces: report threats and blackmail

Take It Down (takeitdown.ncmec.org): Free help to remove private images taken before you turned 18. The image never leaves your device.