

Staying Safe - Sextortion

What is sextortion?

Sextortion is when someone gets a sexual image or video of you and then threatens to share it unless you do what they say. It's a crime. It's common. And it's not your fault. Most offenders target boys because they expect panic, silence, and quick payment. The moment you stop giving them those things, their power collapses.

How sextortion usually works

1. Someone adds you online and acts friendly or flirty.
2. They push for sexual photos or videos.
3. As soon as they have something, they threaten to send it to friends or family.
4. They demand money, more images, or both.
5. They try to make you panic so you act fast.

Knowing this pattern helps you see that you're not alone and you're not the first person they've tried this on.

What to do the moment it happens

These steps protect you and take away the offender's control.

1. Stop replying. Do not argue, explain, or apologise. Offenders lose interest when they realise you won't engage.
2. Save the evidence. Take screenshots of Messages, Usernames, Threats and Payment requests. Do not save the sexual images themselves.
3. Block them everywhere. Block on the app, on any other accounts they used, and on any new accounts they create.
4. Tell a trusted adult. This is the hardest step, but it's the one that makes the biggest difference. Choose someone who will stay calm: a parent, teacher, coach, or safeguarding lead.
5. Report it. To the platform (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.). Open the chat or profile, tap the three dots or report icon, select Report, choose blackmail, sexual content or harassment, then block the account. Action Fraud Report [sextortion and online blackmail here](#). If you are under 18: Report to [CEOP](#). Police: Call 101 to report, or 999 if you are in immediate danger. Click [here for guidance](#).
6. Do not pay. Paying does not make it stop. Once you pay, they know you're scared and they usually demand more.
7. Look after yourself. Sextortion is designed to make you feel ashamed and alone. You're not. Talking to someone you trust reduces the fear and stops the offender's power.

What NOT to do

- Don't send more images.
- Don't pay anything.
- Don't try to negotiate.
- Don't delete the messages.
- Don't keep it secret.

These actions would make things worse for you and better for the offender.

Why ignoring them works

Most sextortionists are not interested in you personally. They are running a scam on hundreds of people at once. When you stop replying and report them, they usually move on because they lose access to your account and the ability to pressure you, and they don't want attention from police or platforms. They rely on panic. When you stay calm and follow these steps, their leverage disappears.

How to avoid sextortion in the future

- Keep accounts private.
- Don't accept random friend requests.
- Don't send sexual images, even if someone seems real.
- Be cautious with people who push for fast intimacy.
- Use two-factor authentication on all accounts.

These are normal safety habits not signs you've done anything wrong.

A simple rule to remember

If someone threatens you with a sexual image, the safest response is:

Stop. Block. Tell someone. Report.



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