



Making sure our children and young people stay safe online is a key priority for police in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

The internet plays such an active role in the lives of children and young people and has many benefits, not just in an educational setting but also as a way for them to connect with others and socialise.

Starkly, the internet can also be a dangerous and sinister world, and it is sickening to see how our children and young people can be abused and exploited.

During these unprecedented times, children have been spending more time at home using their phones, computers and tablets, meaning there may be an increased threat from offenders who are online.

While children and young people need to know how to keep themselves safe online, so too do parents and guardians, which is why it's really important you have a conversation with your loved ones about their online activity and privacy settings.

Watch out for any changes in your child's behaviour, such as being secretive around their online activity. Get to know what apps and websites they are using, what access they have to messages being received via their phones, tablets and computer games consoles, and how to report wrongdoing.

Sextortion is a form of blackmail where a perpetrator threatens to reveal intimate images of the victim online unless they give into their demands. These demands are typically for further indecent images or money. The perpetrator will befriend the victim through a social media site, often using a fake profile online, persuading the victim to perform sexual acts / send indecent images of themselves via a webcam or mobile device. It is then that the perpetrator will blackmail the victim and threaten to reveal the images to friends and family.

A victim of this type of crime often feels embarrassed and ashamed however we would urge anyone who has been a victim to report it to police. We are here to deal with what has occurred and investigate the incident thoroughly.



Police advice on online safety:

- Do not share intimate videos online.
- Do not get lured into compromising situations such as removing clothes or performing intimate acts online.
- Always remember that what goes online may well stay online
- Be wary about who you invite or accept invitations from on social networking sites. Do not accept friendship requests from complete strangers
- Update the privacy settings on your social networking accounts so only people you know can view your account
- Do not include any sensitive, private or confidential information in profiles
- Quickly block nuisance and fraudulent users from further contact with you and also report them for abuse
- If you become a victim of this type of scam, do not respond to the blackmailer's demands, but report the issue to the police and the relevant social networking site
- If you think that you have been persuaded by anyone to part with payment details, contact your bank or card issuer immediately

Further advice can be found on the Get Safe Online website at
<https://www.getsafeonline.org>

https://www.psn.police.uk/advice_information/sextortion/.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

If you would like to speak to anyone concerning any issues you may have please call the 101 number.