

Diocese of Tucson Guidelines for the Response to Sexting and Cyberbullying

What are sexting and cyberbullying?

Both involve the use of a digital communications technology to send messages, pictures or videos.

- Cyber-bullying involves sending them to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, defame, engage in extortion or otherwise harm another person.
- Sexting involves sending them to transmit sexually suggestive or explicitly sexual matter to another person.

What is to be done?

When the sender of such messages, pictures or videos is an adult and the receiver is a minor and/or the sexual material depicts a minor, the matter should be reported to law enforcement for investigation as a crime.

If you receive such material, directed to or concerning a minor, do not forward it or delete it. Report it to law enforcement.

If you find such material on a phone confiscated from a minor for improper use of digital communications device during a parish or school activity, do nothing to the device. Call law enforcement to investigate.

What if I hear about such activity but do not actually witness it?

If you have reasonable concern that a minor is being bullied or sexually approached through digital communications by an adult, call law enforcement to make the report.

What if I am hearing rumors that there is bullying or “sexting” among minors?

Notify your supervisor.

Investigate the concern by involving parents of the youths in question.

If reasonable cause to believe that criminal behavior has occurred arises in the course of the investigation, stop; call law enforcement.

Sending sexually suggestive or explicit sexual pictures of a minor should always be considered criminal, triggering a report to law enforcement, regardless of the age of the sender.

IN ALL CASES, DON'T HESITATE TO SEEK CONSULTATION AT THE PARISH, SCHOOL OR PASTORAL CENTER.