Sexting is sending sexually explicit and provocative messages, photos or videos via a mobile phone. Although it may seem like harmless flirting or fun to send a sexy photo of yourself to someone, sexting can have some serious social and legal consequences.

The consequences of sexting
Sexting can lead to being publicly embarrassed and humiliated in front of friends, groups, the entire school, or even the world. It can lead to harassment and bullying. It can even lead to sexual assault and some serious legal consequences. It is important to think about the consequences of sexting as they may be more serious than you first thought.

Going public
Once sent, messages, photos and videos can spread really rapidly to many people. That means that something you meant for only one person to see can very quickly be seen by a whole lot of people you wouldn’t want to see it. This can cause a lot of embarrassment and humiliation.

Sexting can also lead to bullying or harassment. For example, it is possible for someone to threaten you to go public with the photos that you sent them. If the photos or videos fall into the wrong hands sexting can even lead to sexual assault.

It's forever
Photos or videos sent by mobile phone can easily be sent on to other people, fall into the wrong hands and even be posted on the internet in an instant and end up ‘going viral’.

And remember that these images once posted on the internet may last forever and may be seen by your future employers, partners or even your own children.

It may be illegal
You can be charged with a criminal offense for filming, storing or downloading sexual images of yourself or another young person. This can apply even if you have deleted it from your phone or computer. These acts can be classed as child pornography, even if everyone involved in the photo or filming was willing.

Here’s some tips
➔ Think before you act – remember the consequences of taking or sending sexual photos or videos.
➔ If you get sexual photos or videos of someone else sent to you, don’t send them on, tell a trusted adult or teacher who can then advise if this needs to be reported to the Police. Deleting the images could mean you are deleting evidence so ask someone you trust what to do next.
➔ And remember the feelings of others – if you do receive messages, images or videos of someone else, think how you would feel if it was you.
➔ Say no if someone asks you to take a photo or pass on a photo that you don’t feel comfortable with. Don’t be embarrassed to talk with a trusted adult if this happens.
➔ If you have taken or sent a photo or video that you regret, you can ask the person you sent it to to delete it. If this doesn’t work you can always talk about it with an adult you trust.
➔ If you receive anything that you know is inappropriate, you should report it immediately to an adult, a teacher or the Police.

If you need more information you can jump online and go to www.theline.gov.au.

There’s no such thing as safe sexting