**Grooming:**

Grooming is where an adult contacts a child and by the words and actions during this contact, encourage, entice, recruit or induce the child to engage in sexual activity. This usually occurs over a period of time where a level of trust is developed between the adult and the child and often the child's family.

Online grooming is conducted in a similar fashion and is often a preliminary step to procuring, where the adult through the words and actions attempt to loser the child’s inhibitions regarding sexual activity or heighten their curiosity by sending pornographic material or talking about sexual matters.

**Sexting:**

Is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between mobile phones, but can include internet applications such as MSN, email, or social networking sites.

Once photos are sent, there is no way to get them back, and once in cyberspace, they become a permanent part of a person’s digital footprint. This means that they can forever be linked to that person and without doubt will resurface when least expected such as a job interview. Whilst the immediate fallout is usually amongst the persons peer group, school and local community where they can then be used to cyber bully and harass the victim. These images will then most likely fall into the hands or onto the computers of those with the predilection to sexually offend against children and young people.

It is a criminal offence to take, possess or transmit (share via technology) a naked image of a young person. It doesn’t matter how you came to possess the image, or if you willingly took the photo yourself and sent it on. It is still an offence. Remember, no-one can give you permission to break the law and you cannot give anyone else permission either.

**Problematic Internet Use**

The Internet appears to be capable of altering the mood, motivation, concentration, and producing a dissociating and disinhibiting experience for users; for some individuals, patterns of use can transform to abuse, taking on a compulsive quality. Studies suggest that the Internet may have psychological properties that are capable of altering mood and behaviour, often with little or no awareness. Many of the daily spheres of behaviour, including work, appear to be effected by this powerful technology.

Dr David Greenfield  
Centre for Internet Behaviour USA

Problematic Internet Use is:-

- More common in adolescent males than females
- Often connected to online gaming sites
- Takes over their life of the young person to the exclusion of all else; school, family, eating and sleeping
- Leads to many other mental and physical health issues
- Needs to be addressed as a serious mental health issue and suitable treatment obtained from either your GP or through and adolescent psychologist.

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