



GUARD YOUR HEART. GUARD YOUR MIND. GUARD YOUR BODY.

“Sexting and Teens: What Parents Need to Know”

An online Law Encyclopedia defines a felony as:

A serious crime, characterized under federal law and many state statutes as any offense punishable by death or imprisonment in excess of one year. Under the early common law, felonies were crimes involving moral turpitude, those which violated the moral standards of a community. Later, however, crimes that did not involve mortal turpitude became included in the definition of a felony. Presently many state statutes list various classes of felonies with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offense. Crimes classified as felonies include, among others, treason, arson, murder, rape, robbery, burglary, manslaughter, and kidnapping.

Treason, Arson, Murder, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Manslaughter, and Kidnapping. These are the types of things that parents fear could happen to their children, and most parents fear even more that their children could be participating in an activity this heinous. But, that is exactly what is going on under the roofs of thousands of parents nationwide. What is this morally reprehensible crime that teens today are participating in that ranks them as felons with the likes of murderers and rapists? “Sexting”, a combination of the words sex and texting.

In a CBS news report from June 5th, there are eight young people age 13-17 in Pennsylvania that have been arrested and charged with felony possession of child-pornography based on the activities of the teens including taking and distributing nude or semi-nude photos and videos of each other. Read the entire [CBS News article here](#).

While to some this penalty seems harsh, parents and teens must realize that these are the type of charges that are waiting for young people who are involved in this type of behavior. In the state of Missouri sexting can result in felony charges, including exploitation of a child and creating, possession and distribution of child pornography. In Kansas, sexting can result in charges of sexual exploitation of a minor and creation, possession and distribution of child pornography. In the United States, as a whole, it is against the law to possess lewd photographs of minors.

The penalties for conviction of this type of felony can be extreme and range from imprisonment to mandatory registration as a sex offender. The laws are very specific and focus on any minor under the age of 18 in most states. In Missouri, a minor is described as any person under the age of 18 years old, while a child is defined as any person under the age of 14 years old. This being stated means that if a 14 year old minor is in possession of photos or video containing nudity or explicit material involving a 13 year old, they could very likely be convicted of child pornography charges and spend the next ten years as a registered sex offender.

Our goal at Lifeguard Youth Development is to Equip and Empower youth through Character Education. We are here as a resource to keep our friends and contacts up to date on information relevant to the youth in our community. We want nothing but the best for our teens, and we want them to all have every opportunity to achieve their highest potential. Whether it is through positive reinforcement of good behavior, or through the identification of at-risk behavior, our goal is to help parents and educators and those who have a primary responsibility to raise and nurture young people.

Parents, Grandparents, foster parents, and any other legal guardians should be aware of this danger that faces our teens. Even if your young person is not involved in the activity or distribution of this type of material, they are still at risk when they receive a message of this nature. Please take time to talk to your kids about this potentially life altering behavior.