

# LEGISLATION

## THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

**A child is always a child until the age of 18, and this is to protect them. However, young people can be prosecuted for sending or receiving indecent images. There are serious consequences to this, including being placed on the sex offender's register.**

The police are duty-bound to investigate incidents of indecent images, but they don't seek to criminalise children. There are specific guidelines to help officers in cases where children are involved in sexual offences. Sexting is normalised within young people's social circles, so education is vital to ensure young people are aware of the legal consequences of sexting, as these aspects of the law are not well-known.

The police have technology to retrieve deleted images, and phones will be taken and analysed if young people are involved in a sexting investigation. Technicians can see who has sent, received and passed on images, as well as dates and the length of time the image was kept.

It is advisable that, if a young person receives an unwanted image, they should delete it immediately. The most important message for young people is: if they couldn't show their granny an image, the image shouldn't be taken or sent.

The Sexual Offences Order (NI) 2008 can be viewed here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2008/1769/contents>