

# High school students involved in 'sexting' raises concern



Several students at a Canadian high school recently went to school administrators for help, after it was discovered that images, intended to be shared privately through text message, had made it online and were circulating through social media.

In an interview, the Principal noted "We know that kids are using their devices in a variety of ways – some ways that may be problematic. We know kids are struggling with this – the fallout when it goes wrong."

The high school responded by communicating with parents, staff and the community. A letter was sent to all parents, inviting them to an information session about the issue and surrounding circumstances.

Police were invited to help educate students about the risks with this behaviour. No criminal charges have been laid in the cases brought to

school officials, pending a full review of the concerns.

"Parents and schools may not be hearing about it – but that doesn't mean it isn't happening. A great deal of youth are doing it and sometimes, those youth get in over their heads" noted the school liaison officer that was brought in to speak with the students and parents.

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"They're embarrassed – many youth don't want people to know about it," he said. "But it happens that sometimes, once it has gone too far, the image hits the entire school or the photo is posted on a website and everyone sees it. In such cases, cyberbullying ensues. It can be devastating. That is often when adults

hear about the situation."

Tyler, a 15-year-old student at student at the school, said the problem happened to one of his close friends. "It was funny, or whatever, to send the nude. He didn't even think twice about it – nobody really does. Then he broke up with his girlfriend and she wanted to get him back so she sent it to her friends. They were mad at him too so it just went from there – everywhere."

A 16-year-old student at the school, who asked not to be identified, said this type of incident happened to her friend "She changed schools because of it. She doesn't like her new school – you don't want to change schools but she really had no choice. It was everywhere and people were just so harsh – in the halls the guys would always make comments to her about that pic. Her friends just stopped hanging out with her."