

CYBERBULLYING, SEXTING, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND THE LAW

Judge Kimberly Cocroft

Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, General Division

DEFINITIONS

Sexting

Sending or receiving sexual pictures, messages or videos through technology (cell phone, app, email or webcam). It is a combination of the word “sex” and “text”.

Definition from myhealth.Alberta.ca

Cyberbullying

Sending hurtful or threatening emails or instant messages, spreading rumors, or posting embarrassing photos of others to “cause” the bullying.

From the American Psychological Association

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Sexting
 - Diminished Respect and Unfair Labels
 - Depleted Opportunities (Scholarships, Education, Work)
 - Devastating Losses (Friendships, Relationships)
- Cyberbullying
 - Kids Who are Cyberbullied
 - Loneliness
 - Health complaints
 - Loss of Appetite, Lack of Sleep
 - Decreased Academic Achievement (Missing or Skipping School)
 - Kids Who Cyberbully
 - Depression, Anxiety, Sadness
 - Abuse alcohol and drugs
 - Fight Frequently
 - Have Criminal Convictions and Traffic Citations as Adults
 - Kids Who “Witness” Cyberbullying
 - Increased Use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs
 - Miss or Skip School
 - Depression, Anxiety

LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

- Pandering Sexually Oriented Matter Involving a Minor (Sexting)
 - F2 (2-8 years in prison)
 - F3 (6-30 months in prison)
 - Sex Offender Registration Requirement
- Illegal Use of Minor or Impaired Person in Nudity-Oriented Material or Performance (Sexting)
 - F2 (2-8 years in prison)
 - F3 (6-30 months in prison)
 - F4 (6-18 months in prison)
 - F5 (6-12 months in prison)
 - Sex Offender Registration Requirement
- Telecommunications Harassment (Sexting or Cyberbullying)
 - M1 (up to 180 days local jail time)
 - F5 (6-12 months) after first offense