



FBI PRESS RELEASE

Detroit Field Office

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FBI Detroit Partners with Chaldean Community Foundation to Warn the Community about the About the Dangers of Sextortion

The FBI is partnering with the Chaldean Community Foundation to warn the community about the dangers of sextortion. As part of this awareness campaign, FBI Detroit along with Sterling Heights Police Department, a representative from the Warren Consolidated School District, and a behavioral health specialist from the Chaldean Community Foundation will take part in a Facebook live event on May 20, 2021 at 6:00pm.

The event can be accessed on the Chaldean Community Foundation Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/chaldeanfoundation>.

The FBI is seeing more and more cases involving sextortion, particularly of young kids . . . sometimes as young as seven or eight years old. The extortionist finds children and teens on social media, through gaming apps, or through other online platforms. He will either find victims who respond to attention from an adult, or he will pretend to be another child. Either way he will groom the victim, using flattery or gifts. Those gifts could be real or something as simple as virtual tokens or extra progress in a game.

Eventually, he convinces the child to send a naked photo—and one is all it takes. If the child tries to pull away, the extortionist will threaten the victim with exposure, telling the child that he will send the photo to friends and family or post online. Over time, the extortionist continues to threaten while escalating demands, which can include the production of more explicit photos. He may even command that the child perform sex acts alone or with siblings and friends.

For too many parents, the thought is that it can't happen to my child, and it can't happen here. Unfortunately, it can on both counts.

What can parents do to protect their children?

Often children and teens are so concerned that they will get in trouble that they are reluctant to come forward. It's up to you—the parent—to develop that open, honest line of communication. Start with some short conversations, and ask:

- When you are online, has anyone you don't know ever tried to contact you?
- What would you do if they did?
- Why do you think someone would want to talk to a kid online?
- Why do you think adults sometimes pretend to be kids online?
- Has anyone you know ever sent a picture of themselves that got passed around school?
- What do you think can happen if you send a photo to anyone—even a friend?
- What if that picture were embarrassing?

Finally, consider using what you've just learned to start the conversation. “Hey, I heard this story on the news today about kids getting pressured to send pictures and videos of themselves to people online. Have you heard anything like that before?”

What to do if sextortion has already taken place:

If your child discloses that he or she is the victim of sextortion, report it to the FBI by calling 313-965-2323 or 1-800-CALL-FBI or submit a tip online at <https://tips.fbi.gov>.

If you are a victim and not ready to talk to the FBI yet, go to a trusted adult. Tell that adult that you are being victimized online and need help. Remember, you are not the one in trouble. Criminals will try to make you feel unsure, scared or embarrassed. Your willingness to talk to a trusted adult, though, may just be the key to keeping this predator from hurting someone else.

More information: Students, parents and educators can find more tools and information on the FBI's website at <https://www.fbi.gov/stopsextortion>.

If you have questions about the Facebook live event, please contact FBI Community Outreach Specialist Mary Abouljoud (mjabouljoud@fbi.gov).

All media inquiries should be directed to Special Agent Mara Schneider (mrschneider@fbi.gov).

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