

## Sara's story

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Sara, aged 13, lives in Birmingham, a large city in England in the UK. She has recently been chatting online to a boy in the year above who she really likes. She feels very flattered by his attention, particularly as she's been finding things at home difficult recently as her mum was unwell. When he asked her for a nude, she decided to send one, hoping he might go out with her. But now someone has told her that her nude photo has been posted on two different Instagram accounts called 'Slags\_of\_Birmingham\_xx' and 'Brum\_beef\_100'. She feels distraught and doesn't know what to do. She's not sure if it's true and if the boy did it, as she doesn't have access to the accounts as they are 'private' and say you have to send gossip or images to be allowed to follow them. She is too scared to tell anyone, because she thinks she might get into trouble with the police and that they would blame her for sending images of herself. She's worried the boy might get into trouble too. She is too embarrassed to speak to her parents or a teacher. She feels like everyone has seen the image, and doesn't want to go to school. She has even considered taking her own life. A teacher notices that she looks very distracted and quiet in class, and overhears a few remarks made by other pupils that makes him think something had been going on. At the end of the class he asks to have a word with her to check if everything was okay. Although she doesn't feel she can tell him everything, he tells her who she could speak to in school and reassures her they would help. This gives her confidence to speak to another school staff member the next day. The school is really supportive and reassures her they would help her deal with this. They speak to the boy and his friends and make them delete the images. The school speaks to any pupils who follow the Instagram accounts. The school involves the police, but the police said they can't do anything without evidence that the nude photo was on the Instagram account. ”

Note: This composite case study is drawn from the real experiences of multiple young people.

## Owen's story

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Owen is a 14 year old boy living in a village near Aberystwyth in north Wales in the UK. Someone has created a fake profile on Instagram 'owen\_bums\_mr\_crane' which ridicules him for being gay, saying that he has a crush on his teacher Mr Crane. The profile shares photos that had been secretly taken of him talking to his teacher and edited to make them sexual. Lots of people in his school follow the profile and like the posts shared. Even people who Owen thought were his friends. He feels it is probably all meant to be a joke, even though he feels really upset by it. His phone number is posted on the page and he starts getting anonymous messages calling him really offensive names. Owen thinks he might be gay but hasn't told anyone yet and doesn't feel he can speak to his family or a teacher about this. A close friend, Harry, is worried that Owen seems really low and had missed school that day. That evening his friend Harry speaks to his mum about this and she encourages him to speak to a teacher. After finding out, the school called the Professionals Online Safety Helpline in the UK to get help with reporting the profile, which was removed that day. The school support Owen, and check that it's okay to involve his parents. Later that week another fake profile is created, and the school help Owen to report it and get it removed, but as they don't know who in school created it they found it difficult to address this behaviour. They decide to hold a whole-school assembly and say they will involve the police if another profile is created. ”

Note: This composite case study is drawn from the real experiences of multiple young people.



"I would be too scared to go to the police."  
Girl, 13 – 14 years

"It might not be physically noticeable but they're probably judging you in their heads and you know it. It's easy to see that coming across."  
Boy, 17 years

"It's definitely a lot worse for girls. From my point of view, I hear a lot more male nudes going around than female. And I feel like, not that they don't care, but it's not a surprise to them anymore. They're just like, ok, whatever. If a girl does it, it's a lot more sensitive."  
Girl, 17 years

"If he's been brought up in a way that respects women he's less likely to make fun of her and send it around. But if he's someone that treats women like animals and doesn't care about them at all, he'll show it to his friends and makes a real laugh out of her."  
Boy, 17 years

"If one person was to start spreading the rumour, other people will then join in, and if one of them picks on them then they would eventually get everyone else joining in. It just slowly grows and grows."  
Boy, 14 – 15 years

"It was late at night and I got a message, it was from a boy from my school. It was pornography and then he started messaging me. I blocked him but I still get upset about it sometimes."  
Girl, 15 years

"Say your nude's been leaked to people and they are saying stuff to you, you won't tell a teacher because you know full well that teachers got to ring home, so what will your mum and dad say?"  
Girl, 14 – 15 years

"It passes on, everyone has friends, those friends have friends, and it all links back. The internet makes it such a small world."  
Boy, 17 years