



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

May 24, 2010

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Incidents of “sexting” involving minors

Dear Brothers:

As you know, elders are instructed to call the Legal Department for legal direction whenever they receive reports of physical or sexual abuse of a minor. This is to provide additional direction regarding incidents of “sexting” involving minors.

“Sexting” describes the sending of nude photos, semi-nude photos, or sexually explicit text messages electronically, such as by phone. This misconduct is potentially a criminal offence, especially when a minor is involved. If the elders become aware of minors “sexting” with other minors, or adults “sexting” with minors, the Legal Department should be called immediately. After a report has been made to the Legal Department, the elders will be directed to the Service Department for assistance with questions regarding theocratic or judicial aspects of the case. The Legal Department does not need to be called when the elders receive reports of adults (that is, all parties involved are at least 18 years old) consensually “sexting.”

When baptized minors become involved in “sexting,” the elders must use good judgment in determining whether the wrongdoing has escalated to a point warranting judicial action. Helpful information can be found in “Questions From Readers” in the July 15, 2006, issue of *The Watchtower*. Please review this material carefully before concluding that a baptized minor is guilty of gross uncleanness or loose conduct. In most cases, judicial action is taken, especially if the baptized minor has been previously counselled and persists in the wrong course. Cases in which an adult and a minor are involved in “sexting” may be viewed differently. Thus, each case must be evaluated on its own merit. Questions regarding specific cases should be directed to the Service Department. Also, keep in mind that Christian parents should be included in any discussions the elders have with a minor who may be involved in “sexting.”

The potential serious consequences associated with “sexting” underscore the importance of Christian parents supervising their children’s use of mobile phones and other means of electronic communication. Excellent suggestions can be found in articles such as the one on pages 6-7 of the November 2009 issue of *Awake!* (Matt. 24:45) So when a minor has been involved in “sexting,” elders can draw from this excellent material when offering Scriptural counsel and encouragement to both the parents and the child.—Isa. 32:1, 2; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

Thank you for noting this direction. We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

cc: Travelling overseers

PS to the secretary: This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters—For Bodies of Elders (S-22)* at this time as well.