

Mike Anderson, KSL TV



Morgan County deputies, high school officials warning students about sexting

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MORGAN — Students at Morgan High School are getting a warning about sexting after signs of increased activity at the school. Teachers and counselors are reporting more chatter about the activity than usual.

Morgan County Sheriff's deputies aren't investigating any specific cases at the school right now, but they said several different groups of students have been heard talking about sexting more than usual. They're concerned that could be a bad sign.

There's little doubt that nearly all teens know what sexting is, but it's not always taken seriously.

"I've heard about it just kind of as a joke around the school," said high school senior Tucker Skinner. "I think it's a big issue in not just our school ... lots of schools, and it's obviously unacceptable, and I think that it happens too much. I think that it's taken lightly by students. They don't realize how big of a problem it can be."

And in just the past few days at Morgan High School, administrators said more conversations than usual have been overheard about sexting.

Morgan County Sheriff's deputy Gary Dudley said it's happened enough that it's drawing some attention.

"Discussions that were happening in class, disruptions that were happening in class," Dudley said. "And it seemed to be coming from such a wide variety of people, that we felt it wasn't just an isolated group."

Which is why the sheriff's department and school district are now putting out a warning.

"Anytime a picture is taken, and you share it, it's out there," said Morgan High School principal Crae Wilson. "It's out there and it can be distributed. It can be copied and it can be sent anywhere."

Not to mention the fact that those images are considered child pornography.

"The message is that it's illegal. The message is that it's harming and damaging," Wilson said.

Dudley points out even the requests for illicit pictures alone can be troublesome enough.

"How comfortable is that young lady going back to school if she's receiving Snapchats and text messages, asking for nude photographs of herself," he said.

And that's why deputies are saying if students get a request, if they get a picture, they should take a screenshot and report it to authorities.

Still, their main hope is that the sexting will stop.