

How do I Tell the Children?

Ideally you would be able to plan a time and place to explain what is going to the children. This may not be possible if something happens suddenly or the children find out from another source.

If you can:

Find a time when you will not be disturbed.

Put phones on silent, ask the children to do the same.

If someone knocks at the door don't answer it – it's sacred time.

If they don't know, then introduce the conversation with something like:

'There's something I need to talk to you all about. It's important so I don't want us to be disturbed. Shall we go into the lounge for a bit.'

'I've turned my phone onto silent so we don't get distracted by calls, I'd like you to do the same.'

'It's about Dad. There's something he's done I need to tell you about.'

If they do know, you might say something like:

'I want to talk to you about Dad so you understand what is going on.'

What and how much you say will depend on the age of the child/children. Keep it short, factual and as simple as you can.

To a five year old you might say:

'Daddy has been naughty. He has been looking at pictures on the computer that he shouldn't. He's at the police station talking to them about it.'

To a teenager you might say:

'The police have been to the house. They found child pornography on Dad's computer. They have taken him for questioning and also taken away all the computers in the house.'

The children are likely to have questions.

Make sure you respond to what they have asked, but do not tell them about more than they have asked, as they may not be ready for additional information.

Ask whether what you have said answers their question.

Ask them if they have any more questions.

Tell them they can come to you any time to talk about it.

How do I tell the school

To protect your children it is essential that you tell the school what is going on before pupils or staff hear about it from another source, such as the papers. This will be a difficult conversation, but you taking the lead will bring the school on board to support you and your children.

Make an appointment with the Headteacher. Be polite but firm using words like 'urgent' and if necessary 'child protection' to see them quickly.

Once you are with the Headteacher, to help you find your way into the conversation you may find it helps to use phrases like:

'I have something very difficult I need to tell you.'

'Thank you for seeing me so quickly, there is something you need to know about.'

Then tell them what you want them to know. Don't worry if you get upset at this point, that would be perfectly understandable, and the Headteacher will know their job is to support you as well as your children.

Explain that you want to protect the children, and ask how the school can help do that. Tell them your concerns about the children being picked on by other pupils, and ask about the school's anti-bullying policy.

At the end of the conversation ask if you can meet again in a week or two to review the situation.

Written for StopSO by [Lucinda Neall](#), author of 4 books: *Bringing the Best out in Boys: Communication Strategies for Teachers; About Our Boys; How to Talk to Teenagers.*