



The 4 Scams in Your Teen DMs

Keep this where you will see it. If a message does any of these four things: screenshot it, do not answer it, tell an adult.

1

The photo that becomes blackmail

A new friend, fast and flattering, moves to a private chat and sends an image first. The moment one comes back, the tone flips: pay now, or it goes to everyone they know.

What to do: Paying rarely stops it. Block them, keep the messages, and tell an adult tonight — this is a crime, and you are the victim.

2

The job that pays too well

"\$500 a week, two hours a day" — liking videos, rating products, simple tasks. A small payout lands first to prove it is real, then a deposit is required to unlock the bigger one.

What to do: A real job never asks you to pay to start. Money moving toward a teenager unprompted is bait.

3

"Just send me the code"

A friend account asks for help: read back the code that was just texted to you. The account is already stolen, and the code is how the next friend gets taken too.

What to do: The code IS the login. Nobody legitimate ever needs it. Call the friend on their real number instead.

4

The QR code that is not

A sticker over the one on a parking meter, a code dropped in a DM, a "menu" left on a table. It points to a lookalike login or payment page, and the address stays hidden until you arrive.

What to do: Type the address in yourself. A QR code is the only link you cannot read before you click it.

THE ONE RULE THAT BEATS ALL FOUR

Urgent, secret, or moving off the app? Screenshot it, do not answer it, show an adult.

NCMEC received more than **50,000** reports of financially motivated sextortion in 2025 — about **137 a day**, up from 36,000 the year before.

Teens do not fall for these because they are careless. They fall for them because the scripts are good and the clock is loud.

IF IT ALREADY HAPPENED

1. **Do not pay, and do not delete.** Screenshots and the account name are the evidence. Blocking is fine — deleting the thread is not.
2. **Get the images taken down.** takeitdown.ncmec.org is free and anonymous, and covers any image taken when they were under 18.
3. **Report it.** report.cybertip.org, or call 1-800-843-5678. NCMEC is staffed around the clock, and you are not in trouble.

Want them to spot scams automatically?

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