

Pictures, stories and animations about young people

Anyone can talk to a lawyer for free at Tasmania Legal Aid.

To get free legal information call 1300 366 611, drop into our Hobart or Launceston office (no appointment necessary) or use the Legal Talk chat function on our website. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

A lawyer can listen to your story and help identify the next steps you can take.

Pictures, stories and animations about young people may be illegal because of the way they portray and/or sexualise young people.

Are some animations, pictures and stories about young people illegal?

Pictures, animations, and stories about young people are popular forms of entertainment. However, some of these products can show images or have ideas that are illegal in Tasmania because of the way they portray and/or sexualise young people.

It is important to consider how people under the age of 18 are shown. The law makes it illegal to have media products (e.g. pictures, videos, stories or comics) that show young people involved in sexual activity, or shows them in a sexual context, or shows them being abused or tortured. The law calls these 'child exploitation material'.

Is it against the law if they are cartoons?

Yes. The law does not treat drawings or animations any differently to pictures or videos of actual children. The law is aimed keeping children safe by stopping sexual images of children being available.

Is it against the law if it is a written story?

Yes. The law is strict on this, and it covers all descriptions of sexual activity of young people. This includes texts which do not have any pictures at all. If the story has inappropriate and offensive descriptions of sexual activity relating to young people, it is illegal.

What about anime or material from another country?

It doesn't matter that some countries have different laws. Something from another country might be popular and available on the internet, but it may be illegal in Tasmania and you could be guilty of a crime. It doesn't matter if it is easy to access or that you believed it was legal.

What if I accidentally see or get sent inappropriate media?

You should delete any material that may be illegal. You should not keep the material or send it to any other person.

What punishment could I get?

Tasmania has very serious penalties for offences related to accessing, possessing, making or posting/sending inappropriate media about young people. You can receive a maximum penalty of 21 years in prison for each offence.

You may also be added to the 'community protection register' which means you will be required to do certain things even after you have served your other punishments. This includes telling the police about your addresses, phone numbers, social media accounts, passwords and all interactions you have with young people.

What if I am charged?

If you are charged with an offence as a result of possessing, creating or distributing any stories, pictures or videos which depict young people, you should seek legal advice as soon as possible.

This is written for people who live in or who are affected by the laws of Tasmania, Australia. The law changes all the time – this information is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, you should talk to a lawyer before making a decision about what to do.