



## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXTING

# *Toolkit to develop a sexting policy for your school*

We are inclined to immediately imagine the worst when relationships and sexual conduct via new media are mentioned. Children and young people will experiment, that is part of their normal sexual development. Flirting is different now to how it used to be. Until a few years ago we were concerned about the images children and young people had access to. Now they even create the photographs and video clips themselves and exchange erotic messages, titillating images and film clips.

However, this does not mean that it is all innocent and never leads to problems. They are exploring the boundaries of what is and what isn't acceptable. But how does a school team approach this? Which

situations are unacceptable and which aren't? And how do you react to these situations? The right approach is not always easy to find.

By developing an appropriate sexting policy a school will know how to manage it and deal with it effectively. Mediawijs, Sensoa, Child Focus and Pimento developed this sexting policy tool, a toolkit for schools that have not yet implemented a sexting policy or intend to bring their existing relational and sexual education policy up to date.

Would you like external support to ensure that this process runs smoothly? In that case Sensoa and Pimento can provide a tailor made solution.

<p><b>Phases</b></p>	<p>Let's talk about sexting is a policy tool consisting of two phases, which should be implemented consecutively by school teams. It applies to sexting but can also be used as a basis for a broader policy on sexuality.</p> <p>During the first phase the team explores its vision on sexting. This will help to develop an effective sexting policy during the second phase.</p> <p>During the second phase the policy on sexting is looked at in more detail. Your team will formulate what action can be taken at policy level. Your action plan will be formulated using the Sexting Screener, which is based on the Sexuality and Policy Framework. The latter will help you develop a policy centred on sexuality and bodily integrity.</p>
<p><b>Who?</b></p>	<p>A work group made up of approximately 5 key players within the school (including members of the management team, care coordinators, health &amp; safety representatives, student counsellors or CLB employees and teachers of the various grades) who want to be involved in the development of a school sexting policy. Members of the student council (or other interested students) and parent council can also join the work group.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>Phase 1: 120 minutes Phase 2: 120 minutes</p> <p>There is no need to discuss both phases the same day, it can be done at different times.</p>
<p><b>Setting</b></p>	<p>Create an atmosphere in which participants feel free to express their opinions.</p>
<p><b>Material</b></p>	<p>Phase 1: Poster Let's talk about sexting (download) Phase 2: Poster Sexting Screener, cards (download)</p>

## Phase 1:

# *What is the general opinion on sexting?*



### Purpose

- › To formulate a sexting policy for your school.
- › To differentiate between normal and inappropriate sexting.
- › To assess which situations are unacceptable and how to react to this.

## Step 1: Illustrate your view on the 'Let's talk about sexting' poster

1

Create a work group of key players

2

Review the mission behind a sexting policy together with the other participants.

Our school:

- › tries to prevent, quickly identify and tackle problematic sexting effectively;
- › encourages input from teachers, parents and students;
- › is a place where young people can develop into healthy adults, also in terms of sexuality;
- › starts with a positive outlook on sexuality;
- › starts with a healthy dose of sexual and relationship smartness and social skills;
- › evaluates whether everything is still running smoothly and identifies where improvements can be made.

3

Select 2 basic principles that are crucial for your school. Include them in the 'Let's talk about sexting' poster. They can be used later as a basis for a written vision statement.

- › Young people are supported whilst developing the necessary capacities to enter into successful intimate and friendly relationships with others (online).
- › Young people are entitled to open and transparent communications concerning all aspects that might affect their quality of life and wellbeing, both online and offline.
- › All young people experience sexual development and display age or development specific (online) sexual behaviour.
- › Counsellors have the necessary competencies to handle and support aspects of the (online) sexuality of young people correctly and with the appropriate skills.
- › Children and young people are entitled to receive appropriate and readily available information together with relationship and sexual education.
- › Young people are entitled to have a say and to participate in the development of a (online) policy on sexuality.
- › Sharing private information concerning young people is handled with the utmost care and discretion.
- › Young people underwrite values such as mutual consent, equality and voluntary participation during (online) sexual interactions.
- › Clear guidelines are in place on the situations in which sexting is or is not acceptable.
- › Sexting allows young people to maintain their dignity and self respect.
- › A policy on (online) sexuality does not discriminate and promotes tolerance and respect.
- › Transparent, accurate communication concerning (online) sexuality ensures that questions, wishes, problems and differences of opinion can be openly discussed.
- › There are sufficient communication opportunities with parents and support figures.
- › Appropriate support and competency management is available for counsellors and other employees.

# Phase 2: *What action can you take?*



## Purpose

To compile a summary of:

- › which components of a sexuality policy are essential for a school to start with (quality);
- › what a school and teacher can do to prevent inappropriate sexting (prevention);
- › what is the best approach to inappropriate sexting if it does happen (reaction).

## How to use the Sexting Screener?

1

### Preparation

- › Set up a work group of key players.
- › Appoint 1 member of the work group as the moderator and ask them to review the Framework beforehand. The Sexuality and Policy Framework will help you develop a policy centred on sexuality and bodily integrity.

2

### Sexting Screener

- › Position the emoticons poster in the centre of the table.
- › Distribute the cards amongst the participants. The front of each card shows a possible aspect of your sexting policy, the other side shows an explanation of what this actually means.

Quality	Prevention	Reaction (Intervention & Aftercare)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Contact person</li> <li>› Part of RSV*</li> <li>› Role of teaching staff</li> <li>› Additional training</li> <li>› Work group sexuality</li> <li>› Media savvy agreements</li> <li>› Opinion on sexting</li> <li>› Policy on sexting</li> </ul> <p>* Relationship and sexual education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Safe sexting</li> <li>› Resistance</li> <li>› Contact person is known</li> <li>› OK or not OK?</li> <li>› Personal reference framework</li> <li>› Involve parents and students</li> <li>› Educate students</li> <li>› Peer-to-peer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Staged plan</li> <li>› Communication with media, parents and external parties</li> <li>› Communication with students</li> <li>› Internal communication</li> <li>› Recovery mediation</li> <li>› Contact person keeps dossier up to date</li> <li>› Process evaluation</li> <li>› Providing assistance</li> </ul>

**The quality** policy provides a conditional framework for sexuality and bodily integrity, including sexting, within your school. This level is critical because it sets the tone/conditions for other levels.

**The prevention** policy is based on the quality policy but focuses more specifically on risk avoidance.

**The reaction** policy is based on the prevention policy and details what an organisation should do in the event of an incident: which procedures, modus operandi, reports or care are required?

### 3 Implementation

- › In your role of counsellor explain the purpose of the task. The group has to join forces and ensure that the emoticons are a realistic representation of the current school policy on sexting. Blue emoticons highlight the strong points that are already part of the school policy. Red emoticons describe the operations required to move forward.
- › Participants must distribute their cards across the poster with the following criterion in mind: 'is this already part of the school policy or not?'
- › Participants are given the opportunity to ask questions about each other's cards. The crucial question is: 'How is this embedded, or not embedded at all, in the broader school policy and why is it important?' With each element the following questions can be asked:
- › Has this aspect ever been tackled within the school? Discuss, as objectively as possible, what action has already been taken, when and by whom.
- › Why is it so important for us to focus on this?
- › Which problems or what kind of resistance do we anticipate?
- › What questions have you got? Can you respond to questions from other parties?
- › Who would you like to work with internally in order to achieve something pertaining to this aspect?
- › Which individuals, companies or organisations can you collaborate with?
- › Each individual must list their top 5 priority aspects. The work group must reach a shared ranking. At least 1 'quality' aspect must be included, as this will be the basis for everything you accomplish.
- › It will subsequently be used to get started. Discuss with the work group how you intend to approach it in the coming school year, who will monitor it, which tasks are involved, when you want to achieve something by, which partners are required to do so, etc.