

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Division of Student Services

SEXTING: Empowering Students to Engage in Positive Communication

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is the first school district to chart the course toward positive communication over the internet. The Division of Student Services developed a curriculum designed to proactively address the transmission, by minors, of sexually explicit text and/or photographs by cellular telephones and other electronic media. To this end, a new word was created “Sexting” a combination of sex and text through the internet or telephones. ***SEXTING: Empowering Students to Engage in Positive Communication*** curriculum provides students with strategies to deal with texting and peer pressure. Parents are also an integral component in the process of empowering students understand the dangers related to Sexting; therefore, a manual with relevant activities and guidance for parents is included at the end of the curriculum.

The Division of Student Services has developed a number of supporting curricula intended for teachers, counselors, and other school-site professionals to utilize along with this manual. The Sexting Curriculum was developed as result of the compelling evidence that 20% of teenagers have electronically sent or posted nude or seminude pictures or video of themselves and approximately 44% of teenage girls and boys report that sexually suggestive messages are frequently shared with individuals other than the intended recipient (*the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*).

Sexting may also subject minors to an increase of at-risk behaviors that could include sexual activity, sexually transmitted diseases or unplanned pregnancies. The propensity to convey sexually explicit communications may lower inhibitions and thereby promote reckless behaviors. Similarly, by impulsively transmitting lurid messages or photographs through electronic media, teenagers that engage in sexting fail to consider the lasting impact such images may wreak on an individual’s reputation, jeopardizing a minor’s future ability to secure college admission, obtain employment and/or establish interpersonal relationships.

Our mission is to ensure the social, physical, psychological and academic well being of all students. We need to consider that the act of sexting could lead to bullying, suicidal behavior, and violent crimes. It may also interfere with the academic growth of the students and could create unnecessary distractions.

A collective and strong commitment has been established with community stakeholders to provide awareness regarding the consequence of sexting through prevention and early intervention efforts. The involvement and support of parents, teachers, and the

community will significantly contribute to empowering and educating our students and parents.

The set of lessons are aimed to allow teachers' flexibility. The lessons could be taught at any given grade from 4th to 12th depending on the student comprehension level, and based on previous knowledge of the topic(s); teachers should adapt the lessons accordingly. Each lesson is followed by a set of activities, which are denoted by the lesson number followed by the activity number.

It is hoped that each teacher follows through with at least two of these lessons. The lessons progress from introducing students to the term sexting and explaining the consequences of using cell phones or computers inappropriately: to discussing the causes and effects of sexting. Lastly, the lessons analyze efforts to better understand the problem with the hope of preventing the practice.

