

RELATIONSHIPS AND TECHNOLOGY: SEXTING

Phase IV of Young Canadians in a Wireless World
Canada's most comprehensive study on young people's digital lives



This data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic amidst lockdowns and shifts between in-person and at-home learning. It's important to consider this context when reading these findings.

METHODOLOGY

Phase IV of the Young Canadians in a Wireless World study had 1,058 Canadian youth respondents across two surveys, one for Grades 4 to 6 and one from Grades 7 to 11, conducted from September-December 2021.

DEMOGRAPHICS



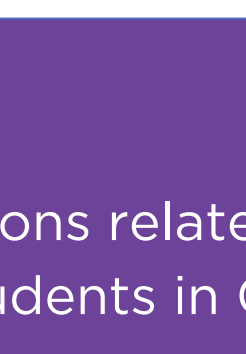
Grades 4-6
Grades 7-11



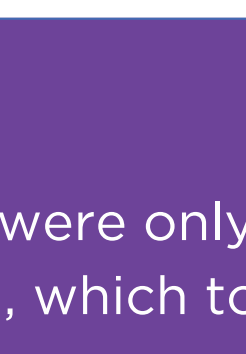
White
Racialized



LGBTQ+
Heterosexual



No identified disability
Identified disability



Boys
Girls
Gender diverse & questioning



Questions related to sexting were only asked of students in Grades 7 to 11, which totaled

110 youth.

Overall, the sample size for youth who said they engaged in sexting was very small; in most cases less than **659 students.**

DEFINITIONS

In this report...



Sext refers to a sexy, nude or partially nude photo

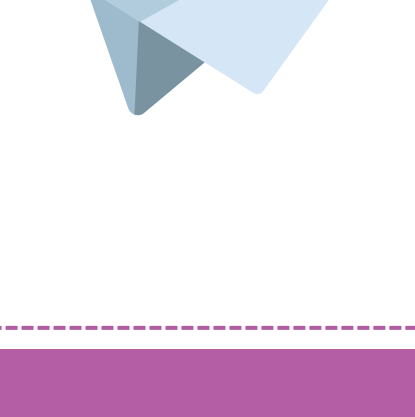


Sexting is a combination of one or more behaviours, including sending, receiving or forwarding sexts

SENDING

9% of youth in Grades 7 to 11 have sent a sext

Most sent them to someone they were in a relationship with



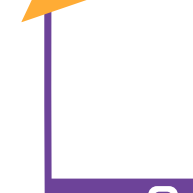
Only 3% of youth reported that they sent a sext to someone they didn't know



RECEIVING

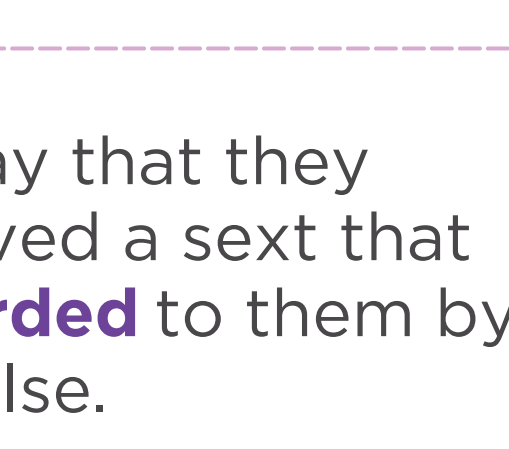
17%

of youth in Grades 7 to 11 say that they have received a sext

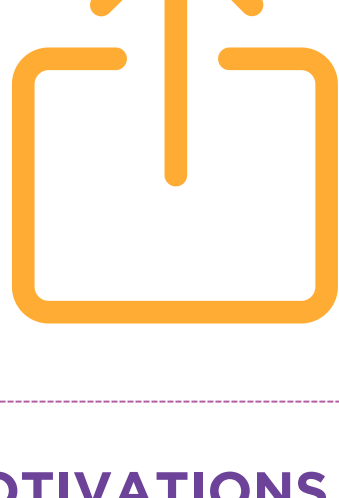


FORWARDING

38% of youth had their sext forwarded to someone else



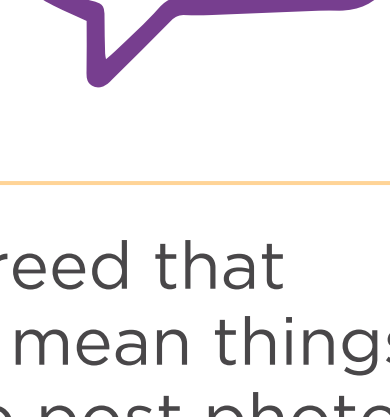
16% of youth say that they have received a sext that was **forwarded** to them by someone else.



29% of youth say they have forwarded a sext

MOTIVATIONS, ATTITUDES AND OTHER FACTORS

Overall, our research shows that sexting happens primarily within the context of a **romantic relationship**



More youth agreed that people will say mean things about **girls** who post photos of themselves deemed too sexy or revealing online than about **boys** who do the same

DIGITAL WELL-BEING

Youth who engage in sexting are...



less likely to say they know how to protect themselves online



less likely to agree that the internet is a safe place



more likely to worry about spending too much time online

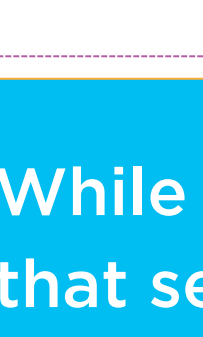
TRUST AND SUPPORT

HOUSEHOLD RULES

Youth with household rules around technology are **less likely to...**



engage in **sending** sexts

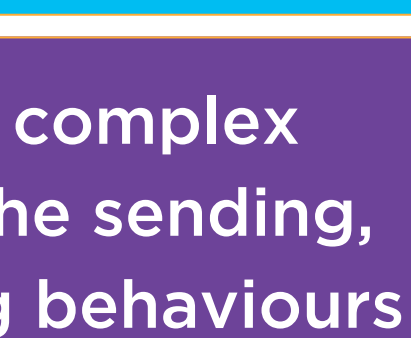


report receiving sexts



report receiving **forwarded** sexts (by someone other than the original sender)

While there is evidence that sexting is not an inherently harmful activity, it does involve some risks and significant harm is possible when sexts are shared without the original sender's consent.



This report highlights complex intersections between the sending, receiving and forwarding behaviours around sexting.



For the most part, there are no clear divisions between these behaviours, as young people who engage in one sexting behaviour often also engage in others.