

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 13 April 2021

NON-GOV SCHOOLS URGED TO TAKE UP RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

A new Expression of Interest process will be offered to provide another opportunity for non-government schools to take part in the Andrews Labor Government's Respectful Relationships program.

Respectful Relationships is a whole-school approach, supporting schools to embed respect and gender equality in all aspects of their culture – in the classroom, the playground, the staffroom, and the broader school community.

To date, 309 non-government schools have signed up to Respectful Relationships, however, the new EO opportunity will ensure that the program can be rolled out even further.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended the implementation of Respectful Relationships to promote respect, positive attitudes and behaviours, and to teach children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. It is a program that is proven to work and change the behaviours of young people.

The Labor Government has invested \$82 million in Respectful Relationships, to deliver training, support and funding to schools to implement the initiative.

All Victorian government schools are now part of the Respectful Relationships initiative, acquitting a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Minister for Education James Merlino recently announced that, from Term 2 this year, the teaching of consent will be mandatory in all government schools in an age-appropriate way.

The Victorian Curriculum requires schools to teach the focus areas of relationships, sexuality and safety. While Respectful Relationships goes directly to the issue of consent, mandating the teaching of consent will bring focus to this critical issue and ensure consistency across the state.

Schools and teachers will be supported to deliver the teaching of consent with further guidance and professional development.

Non-government schools can apply until 31 May 2021 to take part in Respectful Relationships at the website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/respectfulrelationships>.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Education James Merlino

"We are leading the nation through our Respectful Relationships program that goes directly to the issue of consent."

"There are no excuses for any school not rolling out a program like this. It is proven to make a real difference and is a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence."

"I want to see every single school across the country implement this program. Students have been clear they need a greater focus on the issue of consent and that is exactly what we will deliver."