

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Emergency Services



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VICTORIA LEADING THE WAY ON RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

All Victorian students will learn about respectful relationships to help end the vicious cycle of family violence as part of a new mandatory primary and secondary school subject starting next year.

Minister for Education James Merlino and Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos today joined family violence campaigner Rosie Batty at the Forum for the Role of Education in Preventing Family Violence to make the announcement.

Mr Merlino launched the new Respectful Relationships curriculum, the results of a Victorian trial into a whole-of-school approach to respectful relationships, and a new program for 120 Victorian schools to become leaders in implementing this approach.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$21.8 million to roll out this important initiative, delivering on a recommendation from the Royal Commission on Family Violence.

Age-appropriate resources for the curriculum include lesson plans and activities that help students learn and practice social skills and apply them in a positive way to learning, life and relationships.

The focus of the subject in primary years is on treating everyone with respect and dignity, with the secondary years subject building on this by teaching students about the relationship between gender and power.

The resources have been developed by world-leading experts from Deakin University and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, led by Associate Professor Helen Cahill who worked with UNESCO on similar resources used in the Asia-Pacific.

The curriculum has been developed following a trial of a whole-of-school approach that was run in 19 Victorian schools by the Department of Education and Training and the anti-family violence organisation Our Watch.

Mr Merlino launched Our Watch's report evaluating the trial, which found embedding Respectful Relationships education in a school's culture leads to clear improvements in student and staff knowledge, attitude and confidence in discussing issues of violence, equality and respectful relationships.

To support the roll out of the new curriculum, 120 Catholic, independent and government schools will be selected this year to become leaders in the whole-of-school approach to Respectful Relationships.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"All the evidence shows that education is the key to ending the vicious cycle of family violence, which is why teaching Respectful Relationships at school is so important."

"This is about teaching our kids to treat everyone with respect and dignity so we can start the cultural change we need in our society to end the scourge of family violence."