



SEXUALITY AND CONSENT EDUCATION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to emphasise the importance of sexuality education in Victorian government schools, including the teaching of consent, and to explain the role that principals, teaching staff and the school community, play in providing sexuality education to students.

SUMMARY

- Sexuality and consent education are part of the Victorian Curriculum, mandated for Government and Catholic schools in Victoria.
- The teaching of consent in all government schools in an age-appropriate way from Prep to Year 12 is mandatory.
- Comprehensive sexuality education is most effective when it has a whole school learning approach and is underpinned by a strong research evidence base.
- Schools are not required to seek parental permission for the inclusion of sexuality or consent education.
- However, a parent or carer may decide not to allow their child to participate in sexual education.

DETAILS

Sexuality education

All students must receive a comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education aligned to the Victorian Curriculum, including the teaching of consent.

However, a parent or carer may decide not to allow their child to participate in the sexual health component of the school's health education.

Working with parents and carers

Productive partnerships between schools, family and the community also provide a strong network of connections that can help young people build social, emotional and positive relationship skills.

The role of the parent or carer is an important part of the shared responsibility of sexuality education and the school should actively support parent engagement activities.

School based sexuality education programs are more effective when they are developed in consultation with parents and the local community.

In recognition of a shared responsibility for sexuality education, school leaders may cultivate strategic partnerships with the local community and parents.

The role of school leadership in sexuality education

The school's leadership team provides the overall support for the sexuality education program. Generally, this is through:

- endorsing the development and ongoing provision of a program that best meets the learning needs of the student population
- ensuring appropriate consultation through the school council
- supporting staff training to ensure teaching staff have the ability to teach and assess sexuality education against the Victorian Curriculum
- ensuring consent is taught in an age appropriate way
- committing the necessary staff time and resources
- demonstrating an understanding of the importance of sexuality education
- communicating support for sexuality education to the school community
- driving the shared responsibility approach to sexuality education
- assisting the school community to reach a shared understanding when there are different views about sexuality education

- communicating that the provision of comprehensive sexuality education is most effective when it has a whole-school learning approach and is underpinned by a strong research evidence base.

Principals must ensure that consent is taught in an age-appropriate way from Foundation to Year 12. Guidance and resources are available to support this

The role of the school council

Consultation with school council regarding the sexuality education curriculum is not required, but principals may choose to take the curriculum or relevant teaching and learning resources to school council for discussion or noting so that the school council is aware of the way in which sexual education curriculum is organised at the school.

The role of community agencies and external providers

Community agencies and external providers such as community health centres, local council youth programs and peak bodies representing specific cultural groups may assist schools in developing comprehensive sexuality education programs in alignment with the Victorian Curriculum.

Supporting LGBTIQ students

Schools must support and respect sexuality diversity, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, and Queer and questioning (LGBTIQ) students.

For specific information relating to support for same-sex attracted, gender diverse, transgender and intersex students, refer to the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support.

More information

For more information about sexuality education, teaching programs, professional learning and resources, refer to Sexuality education on the Department's website.

For more information about the Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, refer to the Health and Physical Education curriculum on the VCAA website.

For more information on teaching and implementing Respectful Relationships from Prep to Year 12, refer to the Respectful Relationships page on the Department's website.

For classroom teaching resources, refer to Consent Education on FUSE.

DEFINITIONS

Consent

To give consent is to give free agreement without fear, force or pressure.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, new legislation and guidelines.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in **April 2021** and is scheduled for review in **April 2024**.

Endorsed by School Council in May 2021