

**The Respectful Relationships initiative teaches our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. It also supports school leaders, educators and our school communities to promote and model respect and equality.**



## ABOUT RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

We all want our children to have an education that gives them the best start to a happy, healthy and prosperous life. Respectful Relationships supports students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage safe and respectful relationships.

Respectful Relationships takes a whole-school approach, recognising that schools are a place of learning, a workplace and a key part of local communities. It embeds a culture of respect and equality across our entire school community, from our classrooms to staffrooms, sporting fields, fetes and social events.

This approach leads to positive change in students' academic outcomes, their wellbeing, classroom behaviour, and relationships between teachers and students. We know that changes in attitudes and behaviours can be achieved when positive attitudes, behaviours and gender equality are lived across the school community.

Together, we can lead the way in creating genuine and lasting change so every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

Respectful Relationships acknowledges that children of any age have challenges to overcome, teaching social and emotional skills appropriate to their age and level of maturity. It is being taught in all government and Catholic schools and many independent schools from Prep to Year 12, as a core component of the Victorian Curriculum. Respectful Relationships in the secondary years focuses on treating everyone with respect and dignity.

It is taught as part of the Personal and Social Capability and Health and Physical Education areas of the Victorian Curriculum.

The supporting Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials have been developed by world-leading experts from the University of Melbourne.

These age-appropriate resources align to the Victorian Curriculum and include lesson plans and activities that help students learn and practise social skills and apply them in a positive way to learning, life and relationships.

The Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships resources cover eight topics for each year level.

- Topic 1: Emotional Literacy
- Topic 2: Personal Strengths
- Topic 3: Positive Coping
- Topic 4: Problem Solving
- Topic 5: Stress Management
- Topic 6: Help-Seeking
- Topic 7: Gender and Identity
- Topic 8: Positive Gender Relations

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The best relationships are respectful ones. That's why the Victorian Government is introducing Respectful Relationships in all government schools and many Catholic and independent schools are choosing to participate.

To find out more about Respectful Relationships, please visit: [www.education.vic.gov.au/respectfulrelationships](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/respectfulrelationships).



## BUILDING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AT YARRA HILLS SECONDARY COLLEGE

'At Yarra Hills Secondary College, we have incorporated respectful relationships education into our learning program and it is changing our school culture for the better.'

'Students are becoming more aware of how their actions are impacting on others. We've looked at what it means to be respectful and how you can demonstrate respect in different situations,' says our Year 9 coordinator Matt Sheaves.

'We are teaching respectful relationships within our core Health subject, where it fits naturally with topics such as bullying and family relationships. The activities are specifically tailored for each year level.'

In Year 9, for instance, the focus is on teaching positive coping skills, personal strengths and emotional literacy. In Years 11 and 12, we teach topics of particular importance to senior students, such as study skills and stress management.

'In our respectful relationships learning activities, all the teaching is done through scenarios,' shares our Health teacher Christine Steer.

Scenarios outline a situation, which the students explore in small groups before opening the topic up for wider discussion. It helps students work through how to handle situations they might confront in the real world.

'It's relevant to the students because they all want to have better social skills and better relationships,' Christine says. 'We have scenarios about not getting homework done or wanting to do a part-time job

but a big assignment is due. It explores how to make those decisions. Some scenarios are simple and some are very serious – we match scenarios to the maturity level of the group.'

Christine says students are now 'pulling each other up' if they hear disrespectful comments in the schoolyard or classroom.

'It's changing the culture of our school for the better,' she says. 'It's giving students a platform to say I'm not happy with what's going on here so they can willingly speak up about it.'

Being aware of and challenging gender stereotypes is also part of respectful relationships education, reinforcing the message that everyone deserves to be respected, valued and treated equally.

Our Year 9 student Jess says she now has a better understanding of how to speak out against gender stereotypes.

'I know how to handle the situation if someone is being told they run like a girl or told to man up.'

Classmate Connor says the program has made him more aware of what's happening around him, including how some comments can make some students feel excluded.

'Now that I know what this stuff is, I keep an eye out for it,' he says. 'I'm more aware of what I say myself.'

Mt Evelyn campus Principal Robyn Dew says, 'Our teachers are working to support students to develop their resilience, social skills and coping mechanisms and I'm proud to say I can see a change across the whole school. We're moving in the right direction.'

