

**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.

In the primary years, Respectful Relationships focuses on treating everyone with respect and dignity. It is taught as part of the Health and Physical Education and Personal and Social Capability 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 SPRING GULLY PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Spring Gully Primary School we introduced the Respectful Relationships initiative less than a year ago, but its impact is already being felt beyond the classroom.

Our Grade 3/4 teacher Sam Muscatello recalls a lunchtime recently where students felt empowered to intervene after overhearing a classmate being excluded from a game of soccer because there were too many players. The students told Sam they went over and said, 'Wait a minute, what would be a better way of doing this? You could make the game bigger, we could get two balls. That was us doing Respectful Relationships wasn't it Mr M?'

Our students were proud to apply in the real world what they had learnt in class about reading body language and facial expressions. Emotional literacy is a key focus in respectful relationships education. Sam says activities such as acting out what it looks like to be happy, sad or anxious, teaches students to recognise and better understand their emotions.

'We teach the kids to recognise when you're angry, for example, and if you are, what are you going to do with it?' says Sam. 'If you are going to say something hurtful, is that the best thing to do? Is there another way?'

Ways to deal with uncomfortable emotions are talked through and role modelled in the classroom. 'We talk about strategies like writing things down on a page, screwing it up and throwing it away, or taking deep breaths to get rid of those negative feelings.'

Our Grade 5 student Isabella says she's been surprised at the value in learning to recognise and deal with emotions. 'I thought that it was just a thing that helped you a little but actually it helps a lot.' Isabella says she is now able to handle issues that come up within friendships, issues she's sometimes struggled to navigate in the past.

Belle from Grade 6 agrees. 'Now we know how to handle things a lot better. If someone is sad or upset, you know what to say.' Sebastian in Grade 5 says he is more confident at resolving situations where there is conflict, like when other kids are hogging the sporting equipment.

Sam says the Respectful Relationships celebration day held at the school, open to everyone in the school community, helped parents and carers see first-hand how respectful relationships education is taught in our classrooms.

'As gender equality is part of the program, we invited mums and dads in careers not traditionally held by their gender to come in work gear and talk about their jobs, to challenge students' perceptions,' says Sam.

'We asked a senior sergeant from the Bendigo police force to come along, who's a woman. We had a dad who was a nurse come in his scrubs gear, another mum who's a geologist came in her hard hat. We were challenging the students' perception of who could have those careers. The kids' faces were priceless! You could just see the students thinking, I didn't know I could be a nurse, or a miner or the local head of police.'

Our Grade 3/4 teacher Kate Murphy says the Respectful Relationships day was a highlight, but the real value is in the day-to-day. 'I've noticed the kids are talking to each other, rather than shying away from difficult conversations,' she says.

'If we can teach our students to understand how to have healthy and respectful relationships now with their class mates, teachers and family, then I'm hoping these things will filter through when they're forming relationships later in life. They'll have the skills and the strategies they need to have good relationships and stay safe, because we've spent time in class learning about respecting others. That would be awesome.'

