

Student Consultation Report

Term 4, 2024 to term 4, 2025



**Respectful
Relationships
Education**



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education



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Context

Violence against women remains a serious and widespread issue in Australia, with significant impacts on individuals, communities and society.

The Commonwealth Government's [Consent and Respectful Relationships Education measure \(2024 to 2028\)](#) has provided funding for all states and territories to strengthen the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based education to prevent gender-based violence and promote healthy relationships. This commitment is consistent with the [National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022 – 2032](#) and reflects recommendations from key national inquiries, ensuring that prevention efforts are coordinated, evidence-informed and nationally endorsed.

The South Australian Department for Education is committed to strengthening safe and inclusive environments, where all students and their school communities can learn and thrive. Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) is integral to this effort.

RRE is a whole-school approach which includes classroom learning and extends to school culture, policies and procedures, while fostering inclusivity across the community. The RRE team within the Curriculum and Learning Division at the department is leading the development of professional learning and support in implementation for South Australian department schools.

The RRE team is currently engaging with students, staff and school communities to understand their experiences with RRE and explore existing strengths and opportunities for growth. This report contains insights from students across primary and secondary department schools who were consulted during 2024 and 2025. Consultation was designed to provide space for students to share what is most important to them when learning about respectful relationships, including what they want to learn and how.

Student insights have implications for teaching and learning, community engagement and policies and practices. The findings from this report will influence the guidance schools receive about a whole-school approach to RRE, including the style, breadth and depth of the resources provided, ensuring implementation responds to the needs and interests of children and young people.

Purpose

Consultation was conducted to support meaningful student involvement. The purpose of the consultation was to:

- gain an initial understanding of how students are currently learning about respectful relationships
- explore how to make learning more engaging for students by finding out their preferred learning styles and topics of interest
- strengthen learner agency by empowering students to have a voice in shaping RRE
- ensure learning is relevant to students' lived experiences, foster ownership of respectful behaviours and build confidence to challenge harmful norms
- seek feedback from students about how both classroom and non-classroom learning environments support inclusivity, promote safety and facilitate effective learning.



Consultation method

The consultation process was designed to ensure that all students involved had the opportunity to share their perspectives on RRE.

Schools selected the student groups for consultation based on their context and needs. This included choosing from class or year level groups, priority cohort groups, or student leadership programs. Participation in the consultation was entirely voluntary; parents and caregivers were required to provide active consent for students to take part. Consultation was led by department staff and always supported by the attendance of site teachers or leaders. No information shared in this report identifies personal information of the students consulted. Students from across the state were engaged to provide a broad understanding of experiences and insights.

To strengthen inclusivity, advice was sought from experts internal and external to the department about the best ways to consult with priority cohorts, including:

- gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students
- Aboriginal students
- students with disability
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This guidance ensured our consultation processes were inclusive, culturally responsive and sensitive to the diverse needs and experiences of all students.

Students were consulted through:

- small focus groups in schools: 315 students from years 1 to 12 in 17 schools
- larger metro and regional forums: 475 students in years 5 to 12 from 56 schools.

Small groups included a mix of formats – mixed-gender, male-only, and female-only discussions, school club groups and age groups. Some schools also elected to have a focus group of a priority cohort, where conversations could be tailored to their needs. During these sessions, students were asked questions and shared their responses individually or in groups, with opportunities to share verbal and non-verbal responses. Some small focus groups operated as general discussions, where teachers scribed. While questions usually followed a consistent pattern, they were adapted to follow learner conversation.

Small group consultation was conducted first and informed the design of questions and activities for the larger metro and regional forums. Metro and regional forums were conducted with multiple school groups together at a central venue, following a full-day workshop. The metro and regional forums allowed students across sites to collaborate, discuss common experiences and workshop ideas to strengthen the delivery of RRE.

All direct quotes in this report are from students who participated in small focus groups or large forums, generously sharing their thoughts, experiences and ideas. Some quotes have been modified to enhance meaning. Modifications are indicated by square brackets.



An intersectional lens

Intersectionality recognises that aspects of identity such as race, gender, class, disability and sexuality overlap to shape unique experiences of privilege or disadvantage. An intersectional lens should be used across all sections of the report, as the voices and experiences of diverse student cohorts are present even when not specifically named.

Key messages

What students are saying

While students' experiences are varied, there were many consistencies across age groups, schools and cohorts.

Across small groups and forums, students consistently expressed:

- a strong desire to **deepen their understanding** of building and maintaining healthy relationships. While students defined “respect” and “disrespect”, they find it difficult to recognise within a relationship, especially when it is subtle or occurs in the context of friendship.
- they want to be **involved in their education** through shared decision making. Students want the opportunity to ask questions and make their learning relevant to contemporary issues for students.
- concern about the influence of **peer pressure** on their experiences, including decision making, relationship building and a sense of belonging
- an appreciation of the importance of inclusive and safe **classroom environments** for RRE. Students expressed how fear of judgement, awkwardness from peers or teachers, and classroom distractions create barriers to effective learning.
- a value for **interactive, relevant lessons** and **positive teacher–student relationships**
- an appetite for more opportunities to learn **RRE and sexual health education**
- an enthusiasm for **ongoing and sequential learning**. Students shared that RRE is often confined to specialist lessons, such as Health and Physical Education (HPE), or sessions with external providers. Students advocated for prioritising this learning at their school.
- an understanding of the prevalence of **online environments** and the necessity students to be educated about safe online interactions.

Importance of inclusion

Findings that were intrinsic to individual or group experiences highlighted the importance of an intersectional and inclusive approach to RRE.

For example, through consultation:

- Aboriginal students highlighted the importance of being heard when sharing their culture, experiences and community. Students advocated for schools to connect to Aboriginal families, communities and organisations consistently and regularly.



- Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students called for RRE to be inclusive and promote visibility of all types of relationships and identities; students expressed a need for inclusive classrooms and school structures.
- Students with disability shared positive experiences about their local community and peer connection activities led by their sites. Some students advocated for sitewide programs and mentioned how learner-led clubs and events improved a sense of belonging.
- Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds asked for inclusive programs that go beyond surface-level multicultural activities. This includes early education about racism and stereotypes, and cultural awareness that explores how respect is understood across different cultures, including the norms and expectations of Australian society.

In summary, students advocated for seeing themselves in their education and expressed appreciation for site initiatives and clubs that promoted a sense of belonging.

Gender stereotypes and impact

Students recognise how gender stereotypes and societal expectations influence behaviour and interactions, sometimes leading to double standards and pressure to conform or participate in disrespectful behaviour. Some experiences included:

- boys and young men feeling pressured not to show their feelings and feel they cannot call out disrespectful behaviour due to concerns about their peers' responses
- girls and young women feeling frustration when they are not treated with respect because of their gender, and observing instances where female teachers are treated differently
- an awareness of gender stereotypes and a pressure to conform.

What students want to learn

What a healthy relationship looks like

Students generally said that they understood how to recognise forms of abuse, which speaks to the effectiveness of the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum.

Students were able to define “respect” and “disrespect”, but many said that they feel less confident in recognising subtle or emerging forms of disrespect. They expressed that they wanted to learn more about “recognising red flags”, including gaslighting, coercive control and manipulation.

“More should be taught on where the line of something being abuse is.”

“Recognising red flags (early signs of disrespect).”

“Identify and fix or deal with manipulation in relationships.”



Students want to know what a healthy relationship looks like. Students said that lessons about relationships predominantly focus on reacting to extreme or crisis situations, rather than everyday conflicts they may experience with friends and peers.

“More in-depth lessons about dealing with disrespectful relationships, gender stereotypes.”

“How to know when relationships are respectful or non-respectful.”

Students said they want to know how to be a good friend, and how to help their friends.

“How to be good friends with all genders. And how to be a good partner.”

“I would like to learn more about how to deal with friends/people who aren't feeling their best, how to be there for them.”

“How to know if you're doing something wrong in a relationship.”

How to respond respectfully

Many students said they want to know more about how to respond to disrespect. They explained that they want to learn how to recognise when to speak up, how to disagree respectfully, and how to respond when relationships become disrespectful or manipulative. Students highlighted specific areas in which they want more guidance.

“How to solve an unhealthy relationship.”

“How to help a friend in a disrespectful relationship.”

“How to help a peer if they are getting disrespected.”

Students connected peer pressure with challenges of speaking up and said they want more support in some areas.

“We need to learn how to respect others' actions/opinions even if you don't agree.”

“The line [between] snitching and standing up for yourself or someone else.”

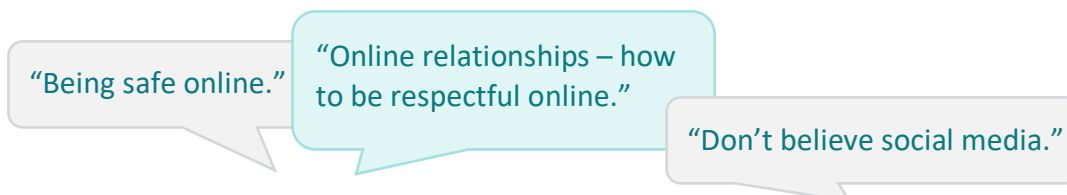
“How to talk through disagreements.”



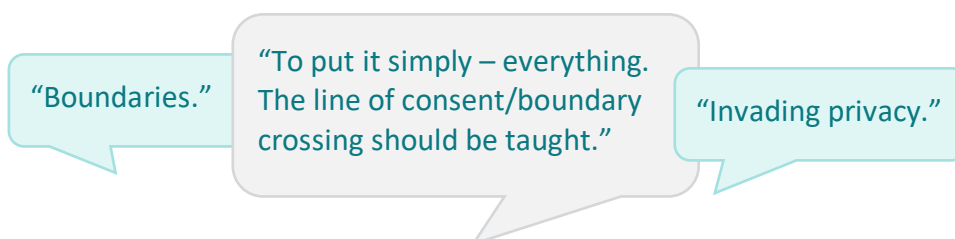
How to keep safe

Students were asked what topics they are interested in learning more about. A range of topics were recorded, with recurring topics identified that link to the RRE curriculum.

Some students asked to learn more about being safe online and interacting with others through social media.



Students highlighted that RRE should give them practical guidance to keep themselves safe. This included establishing boundaries and strategies for seeking, giving and denying consent.

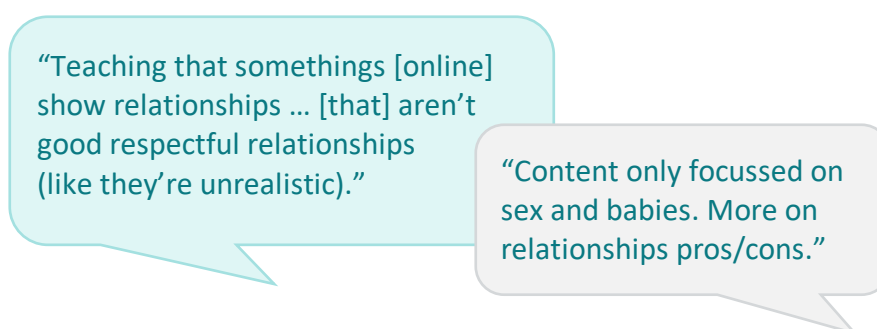


Respectful relationships and sexual health education

When asked about their needs in RRE, many senior years students shared that they understood “respectful relationships education” and “sexual health education” as interconnected topics.

While RRE at times overlaps with sexual health education in the context of sexual relationships, it is important that the 2 elements are distinguished. However, where there is overlap, senior students themselves highlighted that respect, consent and communication are inseparable from sexual decision making and wellbeing, and that learning should include what healthy, equal and respectful relationships look like in everyday life.

Students highlighted a need for clearer teaching about what respectful relationships look like and expressed reflections about the current focus of the curriculum.





How students want to learn

Learning areas

Although RRE is addressed across multiple learning areas, overwhelmingly students identified HPE the main, or only, subject in which they learn about respectful relationships.

790 students were asked about their learning in RRE

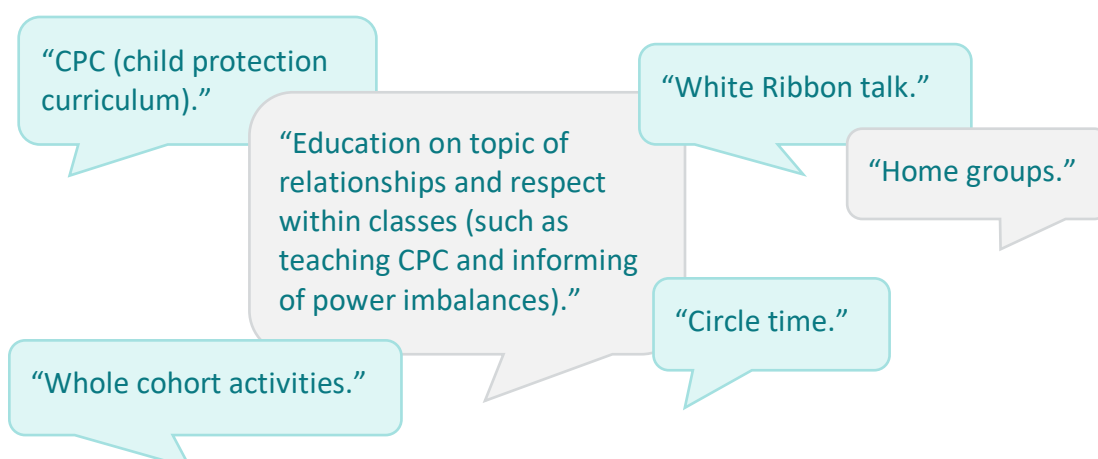
The most common responses were about:

- learning content – 424 responses (21.25%)
- learning environment – 395 responses (19.8%)
- learning method – 563 responses (28.22%)
- school clubs, events and activities – 170 responses (8.52%)



Many students advocated for more lessons on RRE, outside of HPE, where they could make connections to other learning areas and gain consistent messages.

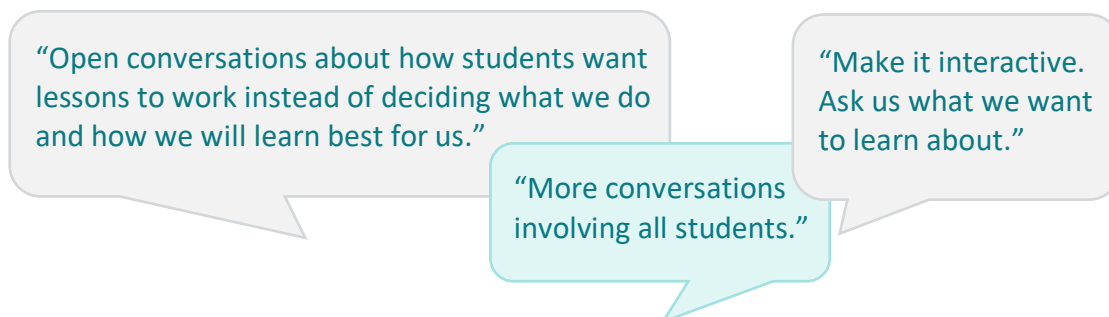
Some students highlighted where they learn about respectful relationships outside of HPE, including through the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, pastoral care programs, assemblies and guest speakers.





Pedagogical practice

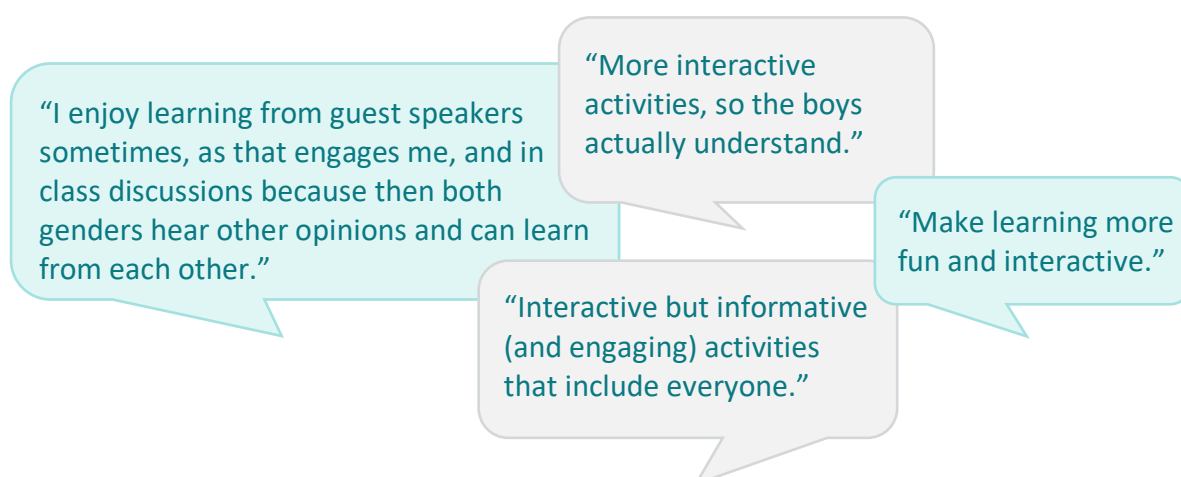
When asked how they want to learn, the responses of students typically reflected what was expressed during the 2022 to 2023 [consultation that informed the purpose of public education](#). Student voice and agency remain very important to them.



Students value engaging, interactive classrooms. While they recognise the importance of direct instruction, they find it most effective when combined with activities that promote discussion with peers. Students view these interactions as opportunities to build connections and better understand others. They also recognise a link between collaborating with peers they may not know well, and the importance of the messages of RRE such as valuing diversity, promoting inclusivity and fostering empathy and mutual respect.

Students said that respectful relationships lessons often feel easier than other lessons because they can connect to topics that are important and relevant to them. While some described the lessons as boring, they also mentioned that the topics themselves can be interesting and enjoyable to talk about. This suggests that the challenge in engaging students lies more in the teaching methods than the curriculum content.

Making learning interactive is vital for students to feel respected and engaged.



Students sometimes face vocabulary challenges, where they struggle to understand the language being used or the information is not communicated in a way that makes sense to them.



Classroom environment

Students highlighted the classroom environment as a significant factor in their ability to learn about RRE.

Students consistently emphasised that the classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping their learning experience. They noted how teachers who deliberately nurture respectful and supportive relationships help create spaces where students feel comfortable and able to focus. This was echoed in reflections that highlighted the effort some teachers make to sustain healthy interactions, alongside the social pressures students feel when surrounded by peers, such as nervousness about what others might think. Ultimately, students stressed that the true priority should be setting up an environment where students feel comfortable and able to concentrate on the lesson content.

“Some teachers go out of their way to maintain and encourage healthy and respectful relationships within the classroom.”

“The class environment is often non-judgemental.”

“Teaching kids about respectful relationships through healthy class norms.”

Impact of the teacher

Students highlighted that teachers play a crucial role in shaping their classroom experience, with both positive and negative impacts evident in their daily interactions.

The teacher’s engagement, confidence and non-judgmental attitude strongly affect lesson effectiveness and student participation.

“Teachers give some support to students emotionally and mentally as well as accidentally.”

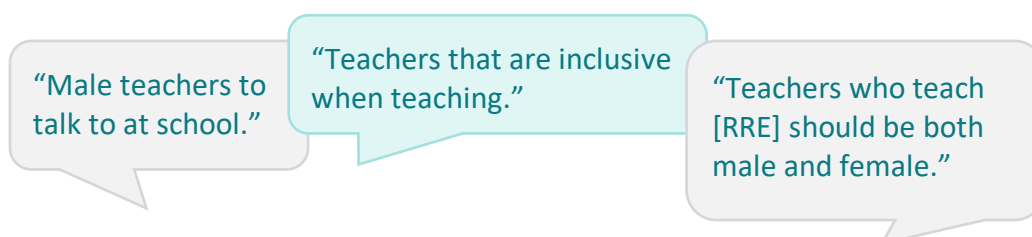
“Teachers should be passionate about what they are talking about (it makes it more interesting to listen to).”

“We want to be able to go up to any teacher and them know how to help or where to go for help with a disrespectful relationship.”

“If you have problems, teachers can help when they are confident in what to do.”

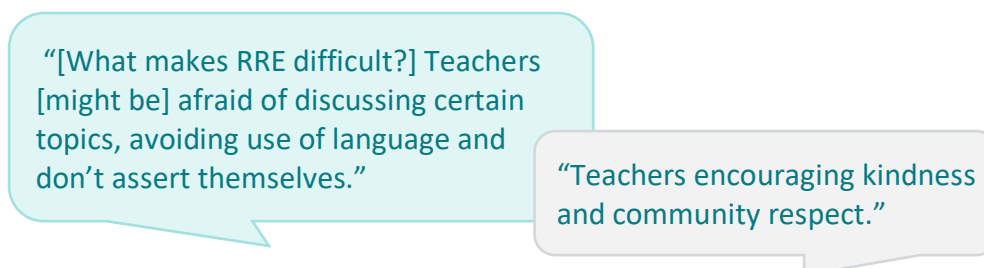


Some boys reported that they benefit from supportive and positive male role models at school, which helps to counter stereotypes, improve wellbeing and build a sense of belonging. Gender differences between teachers and students can make interactions feel awkward, especially for students from cultures with defined gender roles.



Students recognised that the sensitive nature of these topics can sometimes make classroom activities feel awkward or unsafe for certain individuals. They expressed a desire for opportunities to work only with friends, to engage anonymously or to opt out of an activity if they feel overwhelmed. They also suggested that knowing the topics in advance would help them mentally prepare or request not to engage.

At the same time, students consistently emphasised their wish to be taught in a genuine way. They want to engage with challenging topics that have a real impact on their lives, and they value teachers who feel confident to allow those conversations to happen.



Students explained that while they knew how to find help or could identify appropriate ways to seek support, that help was not always impactful or useful when they were dealing with a disrespectful or abusive relationship.

Impact of peers

Students repeatedly highlighted the impact of peer relationships and their school experiences. Students of different genders discussed the challenges of peer pressure, which can make it difficult to form friendships with peers of a different gender. Younger students suggested that setting up classrooms, lessons and lunchtime activities to encourage interaction between genders could help address this. Overall, students recognised the value of building a supportive and inclusive school environment where kindness, respectful communication and opportunities to connect with others are prioritised, helping to prevent bullying and support the wellbeing of all.



Peer pressure

Peer pressure was consistently talked about as negatively impacting respectful relationships. Students frequently said they wanted help to navigate relationships and environments where peer pressure prevented them from engaging in tasks or acting in the way they wanted to.

Students said that fear of judgement prevented them from sharing honestly in class and limited the authenticity of their engagement with lesson content.

“Fear of being judged for sharing honestly in class.”

“Nervousness – knowing friends are around, what will people around think if I share my view?”

Clubs, events and activities

When asked for ways to promote respect in schools, students often suggested clubs, events, group activities and promotional messaging. Students talked positively about events that foster a respectful culture, such as Harmony Day, RUOK Day and NAIDOC Week. They expressed that they value the shared commitment and shared language that are promoted by whole-school events, encouraging a sense of belonging for all members of the school community.

Special interest clubs in schools, particularly those designed by students, for students, were seen as powerful avenues to feel connected.

“Exposure! Posting events on social media, putting up posters, hosting frequent awareness, acknowledgement of observation days [sic].”

“There is a neurodiversity group so that people can get to know others who understand them.”

Students appeared particularly connected to those groups when they had a say in how the group was developed or run.





Supporting diversity, inclusion and gender equity

Identity and stereotypes

Students of all ages and backgrounds said that gender affects how they experience respect in relationships, mostly because of unhelpful stereotypes.

Almost all students agreed that people of different genders are treated differently, but they think everyone should be treated the same. They also said this puts pressure on both boys and girls to act in a certain way.

Students consistently highlighted that conversations about respectful relationships must include the experiences of all genders, as gender stereotypes and expectations can shape how children and young people behave, express emotions and are treated by others.

Students of all genders described situations where they risked losing a friendship for reporting or challenging disrespectful behaviour.

“I think you should make sure to have girls and boys in this talk [about respectful relationships].”

“Some of the boy teachers are treated better than the female teachers.”

“Some boys don’t want to talk about emotions because others don’t find it masculine or something boys do.”

“Some boys call their mates “sims” if they are respectful to others.”

Experiences of boys and young men

Male students described feeling peer pressure to behave in certain ways to fit in and maintain social belonging, which they recognised can sometimes create conditions for disrespectful behaviour. They said they are often told what not to do but want clearer guidance on how to be a good person. Senior students highlighted the importance of learning what consent looks like across all interactions, not just sexual relationships, and older boys said they want to better understand how to treat women respectfully.

“When people are echoing what the teacher is saying (correcting behaviour) backing the teacher up they will get called a teachers [sic] pet.”

“Get called teacher’s pet or a suck up if you are nice to teachers.”

“I believe that boys should participate in activities that include debunking these incorrect gender misconceptions.”



Some male students discussed the importance of empathy and showing understanding towards others.

Students asked to learn more about establishing positive and loyal friendships and identified challenges they experience in navigating pressure from friends. Boys and young men mentioned how friendship dynamics, peer pressure and social hierarchies can influence relationships and actions.

Male students reflected on the importance of the role of the teacher and mentioned that the gender of the teacher is not always relevant.

“Understanding of what everyone is going through – what is in their invisible backpack.”

“It’s okay to not do stuff everyone else is doing.”

“How to find a good friendship group.”

“How to be loyal friends for a long time.”

“People who are trying to relate may participate in things they don’t want to.”

“Having girls in your friendship group [will help] you ... learn how to interact with them ... and [later it] won’t be awkward.”

“Relationship with the teacher is really important.”

“The teacher needs to be engaging more so than their gender having an impact.”





Experiences of girls and young women

Female students talked about the value of having mixed-gender classes to allow male students to learn from female students and understand what girls and young women experience. Conversely, there was also some female students who talked about the value in having lessons separate from male students, to allow the female students to feel able to properly engage without judgement.

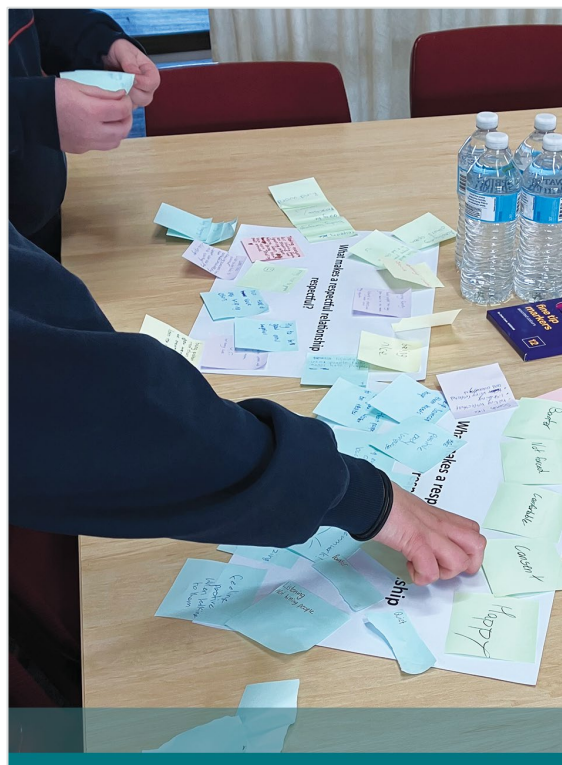


Female students also talked about the inequity they see in the learning and behaviours they are expected to demonstrate, compared with the expectations placed on male students. They mentioned the sexist comments they experience from some boys, and how they feel that they are expected to meet a higher standard of behaviour and respect than male students.





The dynamics of friendships and relationships were also mentioned by girls and young women throughout consultation, including the importance of including others. Behaviours attributed to some female friendships, such as “unfriending” online and ignoring someone were discussed as topics some students need support in navigating.



Understanding differences

Most students talked about other parts of their identity, like weight, culture and disability, that can affect how they are treated in relationships. They said it’s important to have more education about understanding differences and treating others the way you would like to be treated in relationships.





Some students shared that RRE could deepen their understanding of diversity and address harmful behaviours.



Aboriginal students

Consultation with Aboriginal students was designed in collaboration with site leadership and responsive to cultural protocols. This included consultation groups with Aboriginal students only: all genders, male-only and female-only groups in the presence of support staff. Aboriginal students were also part of other consultation groups.

Aboriginal students talked more than other students about the value of education outside of school. They talked about learning through activities and stories, being with family and feeling safe with their family and friends. Younger Aboriginal students were more likely to say that teachers made them feel safe to learn and talk about relationships, whereas older students also thought about parents, family and friends as important sources of information about relationships.

While all students talked about the benefit of hearing from guest speakers occasionally, Aboriginal students specifically highlighted the value in learning from members of the community.

Responses included promoting staff and school-wide understanding of local culture, including how this is modelled outside of the classroom through interactions, values and commitments. Aboriginal students talked about valuing more education, visibility and activities about culture.

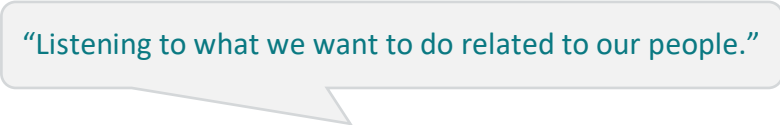




Feedback from Aboriginal students emphasised how whole-school celebrations of culture are imperative in establishing respectful relationships.



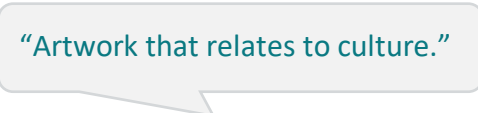
Some discussions around learner agency were initiated by Aboriginal students, expressing the value of ownership and partnership in their learning.



Students across consultation groups recognised Acknowledgements of Country as one way of showing respect and spoke positively about learning about Aboriginal culture.



Aboriginal students said that they feel respected when their school promotes Aboriginal art, culture and ways of learning.





Students with disability

Students with disability were consulted at sites with specialised education options and at sites with reasonable adjustments for students with disability. Consultation was always conducted in collaboration with site staff. Throughout the consultation, students with disability shared their experiences, feedback and ideas for their learning across a variety of contexts.

Some students raised the importance of learning about the experiences of people with disability and asked for lessons on inclusion. In this context, many students expressed a need for connection between peers, further visibility and knowledge shared at school regarding individuals with disability. Students shared that they want to learn more about the perspectives of people with disability.

“How to understand disabilities in relationships – we need all perspectives.”

“Teach about kids with special needs.”

“Learn more about [neurodiversity].”

At some sites, students identified how clubs and initiatives played an effective role in building a sense of belonging and promoting respectful relationships at their school.

“There is a neurodiversity group so that people can get to know others who understand them.”

“I like that there is a neurodiversity club so that people can connect and make new friends.”

“Schools should join in with neurodiversity club.”

Students were consulted in collaboration with educators and site support staff at sites with specialised education options. Student responses were recorded by a scribe. Some students shared how school values, peer connection and staff support promoted kindness and being friendly at school.

“The school values being written on the board in class, having a choice about what school value the class would focus on.”

“Doing activities with friends (games, sport and art).”

“Helping someone to read.”



Students also shared that they enjoyed peer or group work, such as games or learning activities. Staff from their school went through a list of activities that were familiar to students and asked students which activities they enjoyed. Students agreed that they enjoyed the following:

- Community excursions
- Hearing from role models
- Events with parents and carers
- Learning through media such as television programs, movies and songs

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students

Students talked about how meaningful it is to learn about other cultures, other languages and other ways of being. They highlighted the importance of events that celebrate culture, noting that when diversity is visible, it helps everyone feel included and valued.



Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students shared that sometimes cultural nuances in communication are misunderstood in the classroom.

For students who have recently moved to Australia, their prior schooling experiences often shape how they engage with some topics in RRE. Some shared that certain issues are rarely addressed in their home countries.



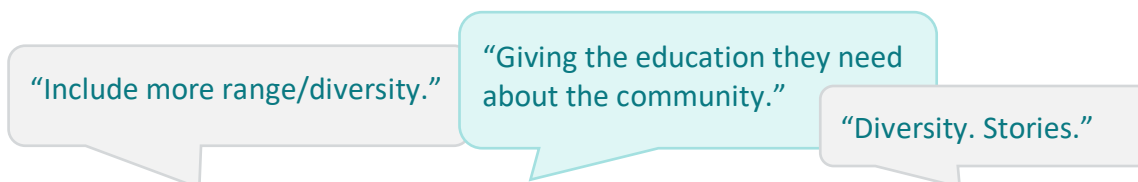
Students reflected on the varied ways that respect is understood and displayed across cultural contexts. They observed that expectations around respect – including those directed towards teachers, between genders and concerning personal boundaries – can differ significantly from one culture to another. For instance, while some cultures may consider gestures such as hugging appropriate and friendly, others may interpret such actions differently or view them with discomfort. The student comments above highlight these differences.



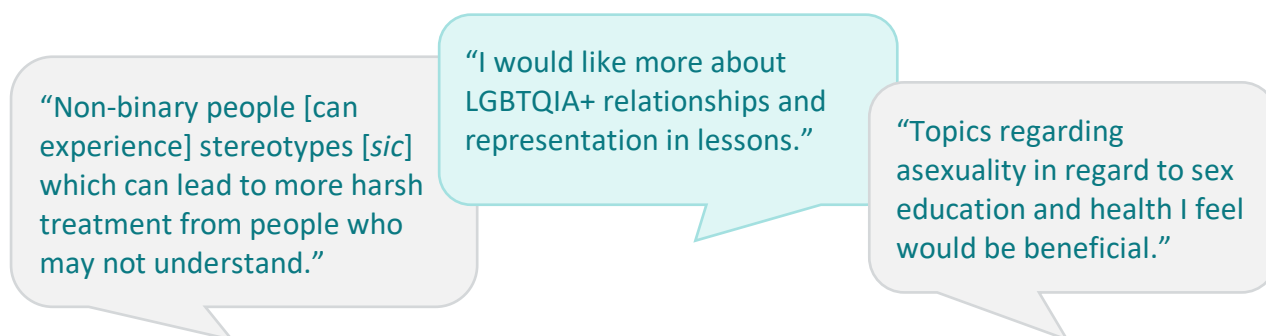
Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students

While staff highlighted positive elements of the school culture for gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students – particularly strong practices around respecting names and pronouns – students shared that their lived experience does not always reflect this intent.

Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students emphasised the need for greater diversity and inclusivity in lesson content and representation.

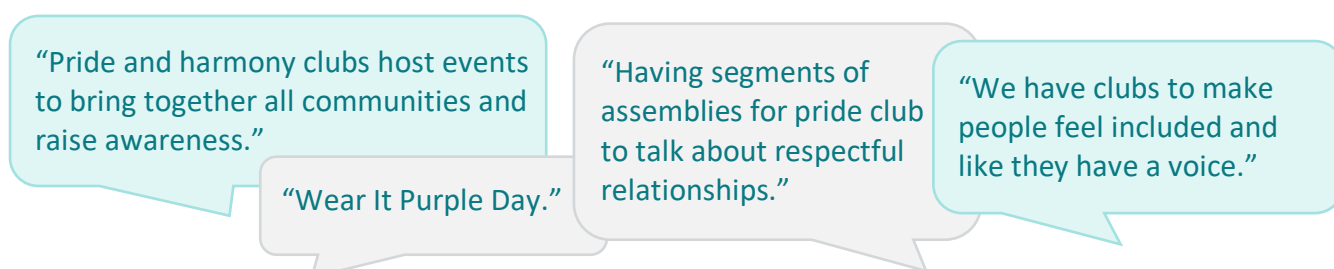


Students are in a unique position to provide different perspectives on gender stereotypes and the impact these have on their experiences. Students appreciated being able to talk to adults about their experiences and working with them to improve respectful relationships in schools. This was reflected in their comments.



These insights highlight the importance of consulting with students to better understand their lived experiences and the necessity of addressing gaps in curriculum content, especially around representation and inclusion.

Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse students shared the importance of safe spaces, peer connection and belonging, and praised learner-led initiatives at their sites, such as clubs and celebrating dates of significance.





Next steps

What the team will do from here

Responses highlighted specific topics and areas that students want to know more about. Consultation also provided meaningful reflections on how RRE is taught, including through pedagogical practice and existing school structures.

Through student consultation it was found that staff confidence, safe and engaging learning environments and promoting diversity and inclusivity are vital to ensure our students receive effective RRE. Building staff capacity and knowledge in the prevention of gender-based violence ensures all staff can contribute to a safe, equitable and respectful school environment to ensure children and young people can thrive.

RRE is most effective when it includes teaching that supports students to understand and analyse gender roles, norms and healthy relationships in ongoing and age-appropriate ways. It is essential that all school staff model the skills, knowledge and behaviours they are teaching in their classrooms when interacting with staff and students. To successfully engage students in RRE, a safe and inclusive learning environment must also be established and maintained by staff. This reinforcing action will have significant impacts on what students learn and understand about gender, respect and relationships.

Using the knowledge gained from the consultation, the first iteration of resources and professional learning will be designed using student input to build the knowledge and skills of all school staff to:

- apply a gender lens across all areas of the curriculum
- strengthen pedagogical practices integral to RRE, such as dialogic teaching strategies
- create culturally safe, trauma-informed learning environments
- build confidence in teaching content relevant to RRE
- sustain intersectional and inclusive practices, which promote diversity and inclusivity
- find opportunities to reinforce messages conveyed through the explicit teaching of RRE across learning areas other than HPE, such as English, Humanities and Social Sciences and The Arts
- engage students as partners in learning by establishing opportunities for them to have a say in their learning and creating space for collaboration.

Consultation with students will be ongoing throughout the development of resources and professional learning for RRE, ensuring their feedback is sought and incorporated to evaluate effectiveness and inform necessary improvements.



What schools can do from here

While students provided broadly consistent messages, the specific contexts of individual schools influenced their experiences. Schools can gain a deeper understanding of their culture by actively engaging students and demonstrating a genuine commitment to listening to them. Schools encourage students to take an active role in their learning by listening to their concerns, supporting student-led ideas, and genuinely working in partnership with them. It is essential that these conversations include a diverse range of voices. Disengaged students showed a real interest in their educational experience once they realised their perspectives were valued.

Schools can use the following strategies to foster genuine learner agency and continuously strengthen a positive, respectful and responsive school culture.

- **Actively engage students:** Create regular opportunities for students to share their experiences and perspectives about school life. Show a genuine commitment to listening by following up and acting on their feedback.
- **Inclusive consultations:** Ensure that a wide range of student voices are heard, including those who may feel disengaged or marginalised. Develop strategies to reach students who don't always participate.
- **Support student-led initiatives:** Encourage and resource student ideas and initiatives. Partner with students to co-design activities, projects or school improvements, giving them real ownership and agency in shaping school culture.
- **Respond to student concerns:** Address issues raised by students promptly and transparently. Let students know how their feedback has influenced decisions or led to changes.
- **Use data as a conversation starter:** Leverage Wellbeing and Engagement Collection (WEC) data to facilitate open discussions with students about trends and issues within the school. Invite students to help interpret the data and suggest solutions.
- **Provide safe spaces for feedback:** Create safe, non-judgemental environments where students feel comfortable to speak openly. Use anonymous channels at times to allow students to say what they might not say in front of peers.
- **Commit to ongoing consultation:** Make student voice an ongoing part of school life; build it into planning, review and improvement cycles so conversations and actions continue over time.



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- Systems performance, support and inclusion
- Consent and Respectful Relationships Advisory Committee
- Statewide Inclusive Education Services



Respectful Relationships Education

For more information contact the Respectful Relationships Education team via:

Education.RRE@sa.gov.au



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