



Sexuality and Consent Policy

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize the importance of sexuality education in the Victorian College for the Deaf, including the teaching of consent, and to explain the role that the principal, teaching staff and the school community, play in providing sexuality education to students.

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Victorian College for the Deaf, first established by Frederick J Rose in 1860, is a unique school setting. Centrally located on St Kilda Road and High Street in a vibrant heritage garden we attract students from across Melbourne. VCD is the only P-12 Bilingual/Bimodal School for Deaf children in Australia. Staff comprise both Deaf and hearing teachers together with educational support staff, creating a diverse, supportive and engaging work environment. There are currently 54 students taking part in our rich Deaf specific educational program.

We equip our students for success with skills, knowledge and experience for a prosperous future. The development of strong communication and literacy skills are central to our work. Auslan is our inclusive instructional language and English our language for reading, writing and speaking. Individual Learning Plans are developed in partnership with families and students with a focus on student wellbeing.

We teach to the Victorian Curriculum and in the senior years the college offers studies in VCAL, VET, VCE and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). ASDAN is a hands on learning program grounded in life and work skills, leading to a certificate of achievement. We work closely with other schools and organisations to broaden the educational opportunities for our students.

Our teaching program is enriched by our many extra-curricular programs and vocational education delivered through our award-winning social enterprises, Tradeblock café and Ablock bike shop.

VCD is a dynamic school tasked with seeking solutions for deaf students. A recent review has set some exciting guidelines for 2020 and beyond. Our mission is to lift the educational outcomes of students beyond the norms of Deaf Education globally.

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 Foundation to Year 12 is mandatory. Guidance and resources are available to support schools in educating students on consent.
- Comprehensive sexuality education is most effective when it has a whole-school learning approach and is underpinned by a strong research evidence base.
- The Victorian College for the Deaf is 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.

At VCD we believe that 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, VCD will be cultivating strategic partnerships with the local community, for example the VICPOL Melbourne youth unit, and parents.

The role of VCD school leadership team in sexuality education

VCD school's leadership team provides the overall support for the sexuality education program. 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.

The Principal will 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 the VCD school council regarding the sexuality education curriculum is not required but the principal 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

At VCD we respect and celebrate diverse sexual identity, 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, VCD relies on the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support.

More information

We adopt and use information about sexuality education, teaching programs, professional learning and resources, for example Sexuality education on the Department's website.

VCD also draws core learning material from the Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, e.g. Health and Physical Education curriculum on the VCAA website.

VCD implements Respectful Relationships from Prep to Year 12, refer to the Respectful Relationships page on the Department's website.

Consent Education on FUSE provides VCD staff with evidence based approved resources.

DEFINITIONS

Consent

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

RELATED POLICIES

- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Selecting Suitable Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
- [Student Sexual Offending and Problem Sexual Behaviour](#)

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to the school community via:

- School website
- Staff induction and handbook

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 22nd April 2021 and is scheduled for review in **April 2023**.

This policy does not require school council approval. It was endorsed by the School Improvement Team (SIT) and the Principal on: 10th May, 2021

