

Senior

RESPECT ME

What is RespectMe?

RespectMe is a free best-practice respectful relationships and violence prevention education program. Informed by the National standards for the primary prevention of sexual assault through education, RespectMe aims to increase the capacity of young people to:

- Know and understand what constitutes respectful relationships
- Recognise their rights and responsibilities in relationships
- Recognise and deconstruct the proliferation of sexual imagery
- Contextualise their exposure to pornography
- Identify the early warning signs of sexual and intimate partner violence
- Access and seek support

RespectMe has been delivered within Far North QLD Schools since 2012 and is now a funded initiative through the Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women's Youth Sexual Violence Prevention Service.

What can schools expect from RespectMe?

The RespectMe student program is targeted at lower secondary students and incorporates a variety of topics pertaining to respectful relationships including:

- Gender stereotypes and media literacy
- Relationship rights and responsibilities
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual ethics and consent
- Bystander behaviour

A number of interactive teaching and learning strategies will be implemented to maximise student engagement such as role play, hot seating, games and other educational drama techniques. Where required assessment tasks and resources can be provided.

The RespectMe staff session aims to introduce and raise awareness of sexual and intimate partner violence amongst school personnel and is an important element in developing whole of school approaches to respectful relationships. This is usually delivered during a School Staff Meeting/PD Session and/or through professional development offered to student support staff.

Why focus violence prevention education on young people:

- Adolescence is a crucial period in the formation of respectful, non-violent relationships
- Many children experience violence in their homes
- Young people are already being subjected to, and perpetrating violence themselves
- There is already a degree of tolerance for violence against girls and women
- Violence prevention among children and youth has been shown to work.
- Sexual Violence is recognised as a particular issue for children and young people in Cairns. Over the period 2011-12 to 2015-16, the Cairns Police Division was ranked highest in the state for average youth sexual victim and offender (count and rate).

Why locate violence prevention efforts in schools?

Violence prevention and respectful relationships education is an important focus of the State Governments new sexual violence support responses and is being prioritised in acknowledgement of the prevalence of sexual violence, both as a component of domestic and family violence and as a standalone issue which requires specialist support.

Extensive evidence shows that school violence prevention and respectful relationships programs work! School prevention programs can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours. Programs also generate benefits for schools by helping to make schools safe and supportive environments, improving young people's social, behavioural and academic successes.

How can schools use RespectMe?

RespectMe is a primary prevention program and is targeted at whole year cohorts (Year 6 and 7 Junior Version and/or Year 9 Senior Version). The program is delivered for 1 lesson per week consecutively for 5 weeks. The program is designed to give schools flexibility when integrating the activities into their curriculum. Schools may integrate the program into existing learning areas such as Year 9 HPE, or in other less curriculum-specific areas, such as Valuing Education or Life Skills programs.

Who will deliver the program within Schools?

VPG has been improving child and youth transitions in Far North Queensland for over 20 years. VPG is a leader in respectful relationship education and has been successfully delivering RespectMe to local primary and high schools for the past eight years. VPG has a multi-disciplinary team with staff holding varying university qualifications relating to Health Promotion, Education and/or Psychology. VPG will also provide training to school-based support staff in order to develop their knowledge and skills to aid program facilitation.

The Australian Curriculum

Schools are required to provide learning experiences that develop the personal and social capabilities of their students such as recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others, making responsible decisions and building positive relationships.

Explicit in the RespectMe program is the teaching of these required skills and behaviours. RespectMe also has strong curriculum links with Health and Physical Education and includes an assessment task and resources informed by the current curriculum documents for Year 9. There is potential for synergy between RespectMe and other school curriculum which can be developed to meet individual school needs.

How do schools register?

Schools can register their interest at any time by emailing respectme@vpginc.com.au and requesting a meeting to discuss the initiative and develop a partnership agreement.

"Students thoroughly enjoyed all activities. The content and delivery was interesting and engaging."
Teacher, Malanda SS

"With the year levels that have participated in the program over two years at ASHS, we have experienced a drop in the number of students bullying each other and reporting inappropriate behaviours. Students are taught about their rights and responsibilities in relationships and this supports our whole school values."

H Carne, Principal Ravenshoe SS

RespectMe is an initiative of VPG and is proudly funded by the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women



Queensland Government

