

Step 4:

Planning and implementing



Step 4 includes:

- developing a school implementation plan ([Template C](#))
- understanding policy guidance and templates, including:
 - School Gender Equality Policy ([Template D](#))
 - Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy ([Guidance A](#))
 - Student Engagement Policy ([Guidance B](#))
 - Staff Code of Conduct ([Guidance C](#))
 - Promoting Gender Equality in Curriculum Planning ([Guidance D](#))

If you or someone you know needs support or information, call the National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling Line on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) or visit <http://www.1800respect.org.au>



Education
and Training

Our Watch acknowledges the support of the State Government of Victoria

Step 4:

Planning and implementing

Now that you have completed [Step 3](#) including the school gender equality assessment ([Template A](#)), you have a better understanding of your school's areas of need and can consider what can be done to make small but significant changes.

This step includes a template for your implementation plan for [Respectful Relationships Education](#). It maps your priorities over the six elements of the [whole school approach](#). While the template is prepared into the six components, naturally you may find that many actions support each other, or in other words are mutually reinforcing. As you move through the template it can be helpful to refresh what you have in other sections too. It is also important to consider your short and longer term actions – don't commit to everything in the first term!

There are suggested actions in each section, and helpful templates and further guidance to assist you in these actions. There's a broad range of actions your school can take including developing or reviewing key policies for staff and students, mainstreaming the promotion of gender equality across different learning areas and communicating regularly with the school community to increase awareness and confirm the school's commitment to [preventing gender-based violence](#).

Not all actions can be undertaken in one year; and some of the larger actions may need to be broken up into smaller activities that will build towards the achievement of a larger goal. It is recommended that you plan your actions and clearly identify steps towards larger goals over each term.

Before agreeing on the priority actions in your implementation plan it is important to ask:

- Do these actions respond to the feedback and evidence gathered from members of the school community?
- Do these actions equally address the needs of staff and students?
- Are these actions likely to help us create sustainable cultural change in our school?
- Do these actions align with the goals and strategies in our School Strategic Plan or other overarching planning documents?
- Are these actions feasible right now? Do we have the knowledge, resources and support systems to undertake this action?
- How much impact will these actions have?

When you are making your priority actions think **SMART** – Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. For more information see [here](#).

Once priority actions are selected it is important to consider timing, resourcing and responsibility. Having the implementation plan signed off by the leadership team and shared among the school community will help promote whole school ownership and accountability to meet the priority actions. Also remember that you have your wider school community to help and support you with the implementation. They can be a valuable resource.

Suggested actions

- Build your and your school's understanding of the six elements of the whole school approach and how they will provide a framework for your school's implementation plan.
- Ensure that you have worked through the above questions prior to agreeing on the priority actions for your implementation plan.
- Ensure that you have assigned appropriate resources and responsibilities to be able to act on your implementation plan, and that your priority actions are mapped across the academic year.
- Ensure the wider school community know what the priority actions are and what the school is planning to do and if applicable their role.

Support resources

- [Template A: School Commitment Statement](#)
- [Template B: School Gender Equality Assessment](#)
- [Template D: Gender Equality Policy](#)
- [Guidance A: Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Guidance B: Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [Guidance C: Staff Code of Conduct guidance](#)
- [Guidance D: Promoting Gender Equality in Curriculum Planning](#)
- Our Watch [Evidence Paper: Respectful Relationships in Schools](#)
- [Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out against Gender-based Violence](#)

Step 4 Checklist

You have completed Step 4 and are ready for [Step 5](#) if you have:

- ✓ Identified priority actions, mapped them across the next year and assigned suitable resources and responsibility to ensure accountability.
- ✓ Looked at internal school policies and utilised templates and guidance to ensure that you are addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women.
- ✓ Communicated your priority actions and implementation plan to other members of the school community.

Step 5:

[Evaluating and Monitoring](#)



Template C: Implementation Plan

1. School culture and environment

Suggested actions

- Increase your school's understanding of gender equality issues in the workplace and strategies to challenge unconscious bias and structural inequality.
- Strengthen your policies and procedures to promote gender equality in school structures and norms, including drafting a [school gender equality policy](#) and disseminate to staff.
- Ensure strong shared understanding among staff of Respectful Relationships Education.
- Speak publicly about the school's commitment to gender equality and respectful relationships, including displaying your school commitment statement ([Template B](#)) in [Step 1: Getting Started](#).
- Use visual communications to promote gender equality throughout the school including your school commitment statement ([Template B](#)).
- Create a position description to focus on promoting gender equality for the prevention of gender-based violence in your school.
- Undertake an audit of school communication messages in newsletters and website information and ensure both female and male achievements are promoted.

Support resources

The following material will support you in this work.

- [Template A: School Commitment Statement](#)
- [Template D: Gender Equality Policy](#)
- [Guidance A: Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Guidance B: Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [Guidance C: Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [List 1: Visual resources for Respectful Relationships Education](#)

Other resources

- [Workplace Gender Equality Agency: About gender equality for small business](#)
- [Workplace Gender Equality Agency: e-learning module – What is workplace gender equality?](#)

Implementation plan: School culture and environment

Key improvements <i>Strategies and significant projects</i>	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Who <i>Individuals or teams responsible for implementation</i>	When <i>Start and anticipated end dates to track progress</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>

2. Leadership and commitment

Suggested actions

- Prompt discussion among staff about key gender issues.
- Talk to staff about the impact of gender roles, norms and stereotypes in the classroom.
- Include gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence on the staff meeting agenda.
- Encourage critical thinking among staff about language and the impact of sexist words and phrases.
- Ensure that goals on gender equality are included in annual and strategic planning.
- Engage in reflection and a progress assessment of the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education on an annual basis.

Support resources

- [The Line: Are you a gender equitable teacher?](#)
- [The Line: Discussing gender and stereotypes with students](#)
- [The Line: Promoting gender equality in the classroom](#)
- [Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out against Gender-based Violence](#)

Implementation plan: Leadership and commitment

Key improvements <i>Strategies and significant projects</i>	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Who <i>Individuals or teams responsible for implementation</i>	When <i>Start and anticipated end dates to track progress</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>

3. Professional learning strategy

Suggested actions

- Get in touch with your department of education to see what professional learning and training is available for you and your staff for Respectful Relationships Education.
- Increase the awareness and understanding among all staff of the links between gender inequality and gender-based violence and the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education.
- Develop the skills of all staff to integrate gender equality into the curriculum across all key learning areas.
- Ensure all staff receive professional learning on appropriately responding to disclosures of violence or discrimination and know the processes to refer students and fellow staff for further support.

Support resources

- [The Line: Are you a gender equitable teacher?](#)
- [The Line: Discussing gender and stereotypes with students](#)
- [The Line: Promoting gender equality in the classroom](#)
- [Australian Women's Health Network: National List of Women's Health Organisations](#)
- [1800 RESPECT: Services and Support Map](#)

Implementation plan: Professional learning strategy

Key improvements <i>Strategies and significant projects</i>	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Who <i>Individuals or teams responsible for implementation</i>	When <i>Start and anticipated end dates to track progress</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>

4. Teaching and learning

Suggested actions

- Support staff to deliver evidence-based Respectful Relationships curriculum resource material such as [Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out Against Gender Based Violence](#).
- Work to ensure students receive messages as part of the formal curriculum that is reinforced through teaching practices and in other areas of the classroom.
- Ask students to undertake a gender audit of a school extracurricular activity (musical, formal, sporting event). Ask what they could do to ensure these events promote gender equality and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Undertake a review of teaching topics and resources to ensure that they are gender equitable and do not condone violence or promote negative gender stereotypes.
- In your curriculum planning process, encourage your staff to develop the skills to integrate gender equality across all learning areas. Encourage discussion and questions on each other about how they can improve in this area.
- Discuss how to be a gender-equitable teacher in staff meetings.

Support resources

- [List 1: Resources to support Respectful Relationships Curriculum](#)
- [Guidance D: Promoting Gender Equality in Curriculum Planning](#)
- [Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out against Gender-based Violence](#)
- [Our Watch: Evidence Brief on Respectful Relationships Education in Schools](#)
- [The Line: Are you a gender equitable teacher?](#)
- [The Line: Promoting gender equality in the classroom](#)
- [The Line: Managing student behaviour – What’s gender got to do with it?](#)

Implementation plan: Teaching and learning

Key improvements <i>Strategies and significant projects</i>	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Who <i>Individuals or teams responsible for implementation</i>	When <i>Start and anticipated end dates to track progress</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>

5. Community partnerships

Suggested actions

- Understand and assess your key community partnerships.
- Strengthen relationships with partners that specialise in the promotion of gender equality and can support work to prevent gender-based violence in your school.
- Engage with other organisations to ensure coordination of strategies and messages and support work in your school, and to gain further gender equality expertise to support the implementation of a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education.
- Engage with local government, as local governments are playing an increasing role in promoting gender equality and have a good overview of the work of other community organisations.
- Share information with families and carers about links to national or state level curriculum.
- Identify key strategies for engaging families in a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education. For instance, theme a school carnival around gender equality, challenging traditional stereotypes, and actively engage families in the running of this event.

Support resources

- [Victorian Department of Education: Evidence and benefits of partnership](#)
- [Victorian Department of Education: Stakeholder Engagement Framework](#)
- [VicHealth: The Partnership Analysis Tool](#)
- Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth: [Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#)
- [Australian Women's Health Network: National List of Women's Health Organisations](#) – connect with women's health organisations who specialise in promoting gender equality
- [National Legal Aid](#) – links to state based legal aid commissions who may have programs to support staff to understand and present legal information to students, staff and families.

6. Support for staff and students

Suggested actions

- Connect with staff in the department of education who are responsible for providing advice about responding to family violence.
- Connect with specialist services in your local area, including family violence service providers to ensure staff know where to refer staff and how to respond to disclosures of violence.

Support resources

- [1800 RESPECT: Services and Support Map](#)
- [Australian Women's Health Network: National List of Women's Health Organisations](#)

Policy guidance and templates

Introduction

Respectful Relationships Education is assisted by policies and procedures which support and guide the work of the school, its staff and students. Schools are required by federal and state equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation and by state institutions such as the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to have particular policies in place. However, embedding a culture of gender equality requires going beyond these requirements to ensure commitments to promote respectful attitudes, norms, behaviours and practices are also embedded in school policies and procedures.

As part of Respectful Relationships Education, consider developing and reviewing many of your policies including:

- Gender Equality Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Guidance is provided on each of these policies. Schools should reflect on their individual context and needs and adapt this guidance as necessary. Regular reviewing of all of your policies is recommended.

Domestic Violence, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Policy

It is important to make sure that your school's commitment to supporting students and staff who experience domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault is embedded in policy.

This will create awareness in the school of the prevalence and impact of domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault and send a message to students and staff who experience domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault that the school environment is one in which they can safely disclose their experience and be linked to appropriate support.

This Toolkit does not include direction on developing a domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault policy. Schools should seek guidance from local specialist services experienced in supporting those who experience domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault when developing a policy.

You can find more information on specialist services at [1800 RESPECT: Services and Support Map](#).

[Download a Word version
of this document here](#)

Template D: Gender Equality Policy

This template policy is designed to be a sample only. Adapting it to your context, guided by consultation with your team, can help you create a safe and inclusive school and workplace where all staff and students, regardless of gender, have equity of opportunity and outcomes.

Introduction

[Name of school] is committed to creating a school community where all staff and students are equally respected and valued and enjoy equity of both opportunity and outcomes.

[Name of school] recognises that gender inequality has the potential to limit and impact negatively on the safety, education, employment, family lives and opportunities of staff and students, particularly women and girls, in the immediate and long term.

Under the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* all organisations have a positive duty to take proactive steps to prevent discriminatory practices.¹ **[Name of school]** recognises the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality.

[Name of school] recognises that gender inequality is both structural and individual; this means it is not only the result of individual attitudes and actions, but also of biases in structures, systems, policies and processes throughout our community.

Girls and boys, women and men are subject to gendered stereotypes and expectations about how they should behave, think and act. These gendered stereotypes and expectations contribute to gender inequality by assigning unequal value, status and power to women and men. These expectations are reinforced by structures, systems, norms and cultures that often privilege the knowledge, rights, perspectives and skills of males over females.

Gender inequality can be both a cause and a consequence of direct and indirect discrimination. This discrimination is sometimes the result of unconscious bias which is when our behaviours, choices and practices are shaped by underlying assumptions and attitudes without us realising. Gender inequality is evident throughout our society, and research suggests it is one of the key factors driving the prevalence of gender-based violence.²

[Name of school] recognises that schools are vital spaces in our community to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. Every policy, practice and activity has the potential to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and gendered inequality.

On behalf of the whole school community, the principal, the School Council and the Student Representative Council support this policy.

¹ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2011) [Positive duty: Know your responsibilities](#).

² Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015) [Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#), Our Watch, Melbourne.

Our commitments

[Name of school], as an education institution and an employer, is committed to promoting **gender equality** and to ensuring equality of opportunity and outcomes for all staff and students.

Gender equality involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between women and men and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.

[Name of school] will ensure that all staff, students and school policies, procedures, systems and structures actively promote gender equality and seek to expose and redress gender inequities.

School culture and environment

At **[Name of school]** all students and staff are responsible for promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships. All staff and students will be held accountable if they use language and/or demonstrate behaviour that:

- promotes unequal power relations between women and men
- perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes
- condones violence against women.

For example: Unacceptable behaviour includes accessing or sharing sexist or discriminatory materials at school, during school hours or using school property, using sexist, stereotyping or discriminatory language, dismissing acts of gender-based violence as trivial, making jokes that rely on gender stereotypes, and victim blaming when discussing gender-based violence.

Promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships is just as important for staff as it is for students.

[Name of school] will work to ensure all staff feel respected, safe and valued in the workplace, and will take proactive measures to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all staff. This will include promoting gender equality in school leadership, ensuring processes and policies are free of bias, and supporting all staff to balance work and family commitments.

For example: Commitments include actively supporting and/or mentoring female staff, reviewing recruitment and professional processes to eliminate unconscious gender bias, facilitating flexible work arrangements and family leave in line with department guidelines, and providing private breastfeeding facilities.

[Name of school] will support staff who experience domestic/family violence or sexual assault including by making reasonable efforts to grant appropriate leave, adjust work assignments or accommodate requests for flexible work hours.

Teaching and learning

[Name of school] is committed to supporting all staff to explicitly promote gender equality in their teaching practices, the formal curriculum and their engagement with students outside the classroom.

[Name of school] will ensure adequate support and professional development is provided to staff across key learning areas to select, review and deliver curriculum that:

- represents the range of experience, knowledge, skills and aspirations of girls and women, boys and men
- provides opportunities for students to understand, identify and challenge gender inequality, harassment, discrimination, gender stereotypes and violence against women.

For example: Commitments include implementing best practice curriculum which addresses the underlying causes of violence against women, ensuring gender is considered in curriculum review processes across all key learning areas, and professional learning for staff about gender stereotypes, gender equality or violence against women.

Behaviour is affected by the culture and environment in which it occurs. To promote gender equality it is important to recognise the way that gender stereotypes can influence what is seen as acceptable behaviour for both girls and boys, and the impact this can have on both student behaviour and the ways behaviour is managed.

For example: Unacceptable behaviour includes male students displaying particular behaviours as a means of proving or asserting their masculinity, teachers dismissing problem behaviours as normal or natural for either gender, and using gendered insults as a means of motivating behaviour change such as 'Do you want to gossip like a bunch of girls or just get this done?' or 'Just be a man, get it together and move on'.

Many subtle forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence can be invisible, normalised or seen as acceptable.

The [Name of school] behaviour management framework:

- clearly sets out and models expected behaviours for students and staff
- recognises how gendered social dynamics and norms can influence student behaviour
- gives staff tools to engage students in challenging gender stereotypes
- gives staff tools to identify and respond to dominating or disruptive behaviours so they do not inhibit the learning of other students.

Responsibilities

The principal of [name of school] is accountable for implementation of this policy. The principal of [name of school] may appoint a coordinator to support implementation of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by [insert name and position e.g. the principal, assistant principal, Equal Opportunity Coordinator or subcommittee of School Council] and ratified by the School Council.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to respect and promote the rights of others.

[Name of school] encourages all members of the school community to take appropriate bystander action to intervene safely and respectfully when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination, sexual harassment or a potentially violent situation in the school community.

Complaints procedures

Complaints procedures provide an avenue to address unacceptable behaviour. These procedures are outlined in the **[name of school]** Equal Opportunity Policy.

Any member of the school community who raises an issue of gender inequality will not be victimised or otherwise unfairly treated or disadvantaged. All complaints of victimisation will be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon as quickly as possible.

Relevant policies and guidance

- [Name of school] Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy
- [Name of school] Domestic Violence, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Policy
- [Name of school] Student Engagement Policy
- [Name of school] Staff Code of Conduct

Victorian Department of Education and Training

- [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Building Respectful and Safe Schools](#)
- [Managing Diversity and Inclusive Workplaces](#)
- [Flexible Work in Victorian Government Schools](#)

Endorsed by School Council and effective as of:

.....

(insert date)

Guidance A: Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy

Equal Opportunity is a requirement under federal and state anti-discrimination legislation and principals have a legal responsibility for its implementation in individual schools.

Schools in Victoria should be guided by the following Victorian Department of Education and Training policies:

- [Human Resources: Equal Opportunity Guidelines for Victorian Government Schools](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Checklist](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Policy Template](#).

Schools in other states may wish to review the Victorian policies for guidance.

Please review the Equal Opportunity Policy Template and then consider the following suggested additions:

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
OUR COMMITMENTS	Acknowledging the gendered nature of multiple forms of harassment	
	<p>There several categories of discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation that are experienced either solely or disproportionately by women. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solely – breastfeeding, pregnancy • disproportionately – carer status, marital status, parental status, sex. <p>The overwhelming majority of people sexually harassed in the workplace are women.³</p> <p>It is important to acknowledge that gender inequality is a key cause of these forms of discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation and that schools have a <i>positive duty</i>⁴ to proactively address it.</p>	<p>While both women and men can experience discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation, [Name of school] acknowledges that several forms are experienced either solely or disproportionately by women (such as pregnancy, carer status and sexual harassment). [Name of school] will work to address gender inequality as the root cause of these forms of discrimination.</p>

³ For more information on **sexual harassment** see: Australian Human Rights Commission (2012) *Working without fear: The 2012 Australian Human Rights Commission National Sexual Harassment Survey*.

⁴ For more information on **positive duty** see: Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2011) *Positive duty: Know your responsibilities*.

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
OUR COMMITMENTS	Positive duty	
	<p>The Victorian <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> introduces a positive duty requiring all organisations to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible.⁵</p> <p>‘Positive duty’ is aimed at addressing the systemic causes of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.</p> <p>As such it is important that schools recognise the impact school culture can have on gender-based discrimination and harassment.</p>	<p>Under the Victorian <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> all organisations have a positive duty to be proactive about discrimination and take steps to prevent discriminatory practices. [Name of school] recognises the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality.</p>

The Victorian Department of Education and Training Sexual Harassment Policy applies to ‘Department and school council employees, casual staff, volunteers, contractors and students’. While individual schools are covered by this policy, it is recommended that schools develop an school-specific Sexual Harassment Policy as a way of signalling to staff and students their commitment to deterring and responding to sexual harassment.

A Sexual Harassment Policy can stand alone, or can be integrated into the Equal Opportunity Policy.

The development and review of your Sexual Harassment Policy (or the Sexual Harassment section of your Equal Opportunity Policy) should be guided by the following Victorian Department of Education and Training policies:

- [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct – Teaching Service.](#)

⁵ See note 4.

For further explanations and examples of sexual harassment see [Ending workplace sexual harassment: A resource for small, medium and large employers](#) by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2014).

In addition to the above guidance, consider the following inclusions:

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
<p>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</p>	<p>Amendment to sexual harassment definition and examples</p>	
	<p>Ensure definition of Sexual Harassment is the same as that included in the Victorian Department of Education and Training Sexual Harassment Policy. This ensures the definition of Sexual Harassment is sufficiently broad and makes it clear that the intent of actions is irrelevant to whether they are lawful.</p>	<p><i>‘Sexual harassment is conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written. It involves behaviour that could reasonably be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Even if the behaviour is not intended by the individual to be sexually harassing, it may still be unlawful’.</i></p>
<p>Many subtle forms of sexual harassment can be invisible, normalised or seen as acceptable.</p> <p>You should include as many examples as possible from the Victorian Department of Education and Training Sexual Harassment Policy to ensure clear understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Sexual harassment can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments about a person’s sex life or physical appearance • comments of a sexual nature • suggestive behaviours such as leering and ogling • unnecessary physical intimacy such as brushing up against a person • physical contact such as touching or fondling • ‘flashing’ or sexual gestures • sexual propositions or repeated unwanted requests for dates • making promises or threats in return for sexual favours • sexual jokes, offensive telephone calls, displays of offensive photographs, reading matter or objects • sending jokes or graphics of a sexual nature by email or internet • unwelcome questioning about a person’s private life • offensive computer screen savers • unwanted requests for sex • stalking, indecent assault or rape (which are also criminal offences). 	

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING STUDENTS	<p>Acknowledgement that staff may experience sexual harassment perpetrated by students</p> <p>Due to the inherent power imbalance between staff and students, some victims may fail to disclose due to fear that a report of harassment perpetrated by a student will be dismissed or not taken seriously.</p> <p>Making clear the school’s stance on student perpetration sends an important message to staff that sexual harassment will be taken seriously regardless of who is perpetrating.</p> <p>The current Victorian Department of Education and Training <u>Sexual Harassment Policy</u> states that: <i>‘The Sexual Harassment Policy applies to all people in the workplace including Department and school council employees, casual staff, volunteers, contractors and students’</i>, however gives no further details about the potential for student perpetration of sexual harassment.</p>	<p>[Name of school] acknowledges that staff may sometimes be the victim of sexual harassment from students and commits to treating seriously complaints and behaviour which may constitute sexual harassment and to taking immediate action.</p>
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	<p>Endorsement of bystander action as a way of supporting equal opportunity</p> <p>Specifically including bystander action in your Equal Opportunity Policy will encourage staff to take constructive actions as part of their shared responsibility to eliminate sex discrimination and harassment.⁶</p>	<p>[Name of school] encourages all staff and students to report actions or behaviours that contravene our values, policies and Code of Conduct, and take appropriate bystander action to intervene safely and respectfully when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination, sexual harassment or a potentially violent situation in the school community.</p>

⁶ For more information on **bystander action** see: VicHealth (2014) *‘Stepping in’: A bystander action toolkit to support equality and respect at work.*

Guidance B: Student Engagement Policy

The development and review of the Student Engagement Policy should be guided by:

- School Policy and Advisory Guide – Victorian Student Engagement: Policy Requirements and Development
- School Policy and Advisory Guide – Student Engagement: What the policy should include (Victorian).

In *Building Respectful and Safe Schools*, Victorian government schools ‘are expected to integrate their strategies to prevent and respond to bullying and unacceptable behaviour within their Student Engagement Policy’.

Schools must ensure that their Student Engagement Policy outlines:

- that every student has the right to feel safe at school (including broader learning situations such as digital learning environments) and bullying or unacceptable behaviour including harassment, discrimination or a threat or act of violence is not tolerated
- goals, standards and expectations for student behaviour
- that the school environment is inclusive of all children and young people and diversity is valued and respected
- the whole school approach to promoting respectful relationships includes school culture, policies and procedures, curriculum, programs and partnerships with families and community organisations
- the range of initiatives and strategies to be utilised to prevent and respond to bullying and unacceptable behaviour
- explicit reference to how the behaviours and strategies relate to the safe and responsible use of digital technologies.

In addition to the above guidance, consider the following inclusions:

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
OUR COMMITMENTS	Acknowledgement of gender-based student engagement issues	
	<p>School policy, culture and environment can have a significant impact on the engagement of pregnant or parenting students, gender diverse or gender questioning students and those who experience or witness domestic/family violence and sexual assault.</p> <p>Acknowledging this and detailing commitments to support these students is key to ensuring gender inequality and violence against women does not result in the disengagement or exclusion of particular students.</p>	<p>[Name of school] recognises there are actions that need to be taken to ensure gender-based discrimination and the prevalence of violence against women does not impact on the opportunities and outcomes of students.</p>

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES	Support for students who experience and/or witness domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault	
	<p>Experiencing or witnessing domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault can impact on the wellbeing and education of students.</p> <p>Students who experience domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault may have decreased engagement in school, such as absenteeism, work interruptions, behavioural issues or trouble concentrating.⁷</p> <p>Ensuring commitment to supporting students who experience violence is enshrined in policy is an important way to create awareness within the school of the prevalence and impact of domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault.</p>	<p>[Name of school] recognises that experiencing or witnessing domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault can have a significant impact on the wellbeing and engagement of students.</p> <p>[Name of school] will work with students who experience domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault, their parents/ carers (where appropriate) and involved teaching staff to agree on ‘reasonable adjustments’ to the student’s workload, assessment and attendance requirements to ensure as little interruption to their education as possible.</p>
	Support for pregnant and parenting students	
	<p>The consequences of not completing a secondary education for a young mother include social isolation, a higher risk of violent or unhealthy relationships, a higher risk of welfare dependency and/or poverty and a reduced capacity and likelihood to return to schooling or post-school.⁸</p> <p>The Victorian Department of Education and Training <u>School Policy & Advisory Guide – Student Pregnancy and Parenting</u> advises that ‘schools and principals can make local decisions to support students to continue their schooling’ so it is important to make clear your stance as a school.</p>	<p>[Name of school] recognises the right of pregnant and parenting students to continue their schooling, and is committed to working with pregnant and parenting students to support their continued engagement with education.</p> <p>[Name of school] will work with the student, their family and involved teaching staff to agree on ‘reasonable adjustments’ to the student’s workload, assessment and attendance requirements in order to ensure the student has every chance to complete their education free of discrimination.</p>

⁷ For more information on the **impact of experiencing** domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault **on young people** see: Australian Childhood Foundation (2014) *Safe and secure: A trauma informed practice guide for understanding and responding to children and young people affected by family violence and* Australian Childhood Foundation (2010) *Making space for learning: Trauma informed practice in schools.*

⁸ For more information on **equity issues related to pregnant and parenting students** see: Australian Education Union (2008) *Policy on gender equity.*

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
<p>ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES</p>	<p>Support for gender diverse and gender questioning students</p>	<p>[Name of school] will maintain a safe and welcoming environment for gender diverse students to ensure no interruption to their education.</p> <p>[Name of school] will work with gender diverse students, their parents/carers (where appropriate) and involved teaching staff to ensure that school facilities, practices and culture do not deter the student’s continued engagement in education.</p>
	<p>While the Victorian Department of Education and Training <u>School Policy & Advisory Guide – Gender Identity</u> gives clear guidance on expectations of schools to support gender diverse students you may wish to include reference to this in the student engagement policy so your support for gender diverse and gender questioning students is clear.</p>	
<p>BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSES</p>	<p>Managing student behaviour within a framework that reflects an understanding of gender equality</p>	<p>The [Name of school] behaviour management framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly sets out and models expected behaviours for students and staff • recognises how gendered social dynamics and norms can influence student behaviour • gives staff tools to engage students in challenging gender stereotypes • gives staff tools to identify and respond to dominating or disruptive behaviours so they do not inhibit the learning of other students.
	<p>Behaviour is affected by the culture and environment in which it occurs. To promote gender equality it is important to recognise the way that gender stereotypes, roles and norms can influence what is seen as acceptable behaviour for both girls and boys, and the impact this can have on both student behaviour and the ways behaviour is managed.</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>For example: Unacceptable behaviour includes male students displaying particular behaviours as a means of proving or asserting their masculinity, teachers dismissing problem behaviours as normal or natural for either gender, and using gendered insults as a means of motivating behaviour change such as ‘do you want to gossip like a bunch of girls or just get this done?’ or ‘just be a man, get it together’.</p> </div> <p>Approaches to behaviour management should be informed by an understanding of how behaviour can be influenced by gender expectations, norms and stereotypes and staff should be supported with the skills and tools to respond appropriately to this.</p>	

Guidance C: Staff Code of Conduct

A Staff Code of Conduct clarifies what behaviours are acceptable and appropriate and applies to staff in the learning environment and during education events and activities, in their interactions with all members of the school community. As such, it is useful for schools to develop a Code of Conduct unique to their individual context and community. In contrast to an Equal Opportunity Policy, which prohibits discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation, a Code of Conduct takes a more proactive approach to the expected behaviour of staff. A Code of Conduct should be an active guide to decision making by providing examples to illustrate the ethical problems that staff might encounter and strategies for dealing with them.

A Code of Conduct:

- outlines the standards of behaviour set by your school
- reinforces your commitment to respectful interactions between staff and other members of the school community and effective conflict resolution
- communicates your school’s expectation that these standards will be met by all staff and how staff will be accountable for meeting these standards.

Victoria

All Victoria Department of Education staff are guided by the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#) and all Victorian teachers are guided by the [Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#).

Other states

To ensure your Code of Conduct promotes gender equality and respectful relationships, consider the following inclusions:

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
OUR COMMITMENT	Acknowledging the gendered nature of particular forms of discrimination, harassment and violence	
	<p>Many forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence can be subtle or invisible. This means that perpetrators, victims and witnesses can normalise or trivialise harmful actions and words.</p> <p>Being clear about your commitment to gender equality ensures that employees know that gender-based discrimination and harassment is unacceptable and will be taken seriously at your school.</p>	<p>[Name of school] recognises the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality.</p> <p>[Name of school] is committed to treating all members of the school community with dignity and respect regardless of their gender.</p>

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
OUR COMMITMENT	Commitment to preventing violence against women by promoting gender equality	
	<p>Gender inequality is evident throughout our society, and research suggests it is one of the key factors driving the prevalence of violence against women.⁹</p> <p>Making clear the link between the prevention of violence against women and gender equality is an important way of raising awareness and challenging inequitable norms, practices and attitudes.</p>	<p>[Name of school] recognises that gender inequality is one of the key factors driving the prevalence of violence against women in Australia.¹⁰</p> <p>[Name of school] is committed to building a school culture and structure that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality as a way of contributing to the prevention of violence against women in our society.</p>
PROFESSIONAL AND APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR	Reference to gender equality in relation to ‘professional and appropriate’ behaviour	
	<p>It is important to specify what constitutes ‘professional’ and ‘appropriate’ behaviour with a Code of Conduct, rather than assuming the interpretation of these terms will be consistent among staff. For some staff, gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence may be invisible, normalised or seen as acceptable so providing a clear description and examples to staff is essential.</p>	<p>As part of [Name of school’s] commitment to professional and appropriate behaviour, actions and words that reinforce stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality will not be tolerated at [Name of school]. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using sexist, stereotyping or discriminatory language • making jokes that rely on gender stereotypes • accessing or sharing sexist or discriminatory materials at school, during school hours or using school property.
HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING	Commitment to the safety of staff experiencing domestic violence or family violence	
	<p>Given the prevalence of violence against women in our society,¹² it is reasonable to assume that staff members may experience domestic violence and family violence. It is important to ensure all staff know that the school will make efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing at work of those who experience domestic violence and family violence.</p>	<p>[Name of school] will make all reasonable efforts to provide a safe workplace and school environment for staff experiencing domestic violence and family violence.</p>

⁹ For information on **violence against women in Australia** see: VicHealth (2011) [Preventing violence against women in Australia research summary](#).

¹⁰ For information on violence against women in Australia see: Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015) [Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#).

Section	Suggested addition and rationale for inclusion	Example clause
USE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES	Explicitly prohibiting the use of school property to threaten, harass or abuse another person	
	<p>Given the prevalence of violence against women in Australia, it is reasonable to assume that some staff members may be perpetrators. Violence can take many forms and violent and controlling messages can be transmitted in various ways.</p> <p>A Code of Conduct should clearly prohibit the inappropriate use of school resources, both within the school and in interactions with those outside the school community (such as with intimate partners).</p>	<p>Any employee who threatens, harasses or abuses another person at, or from, the school will not be tolerated and such employees will be subject to disciplinary action according to [Name of school]'s existing policies and procedures. This includes employees who use workplace resources such as phones, fax machines, email, mail or other means to threaten or abuse another person.</p>
	Explicitly prohibiting accessing or sharing pornography	
	<p>Pornography communicates a range of complex messages about men, women, sex and power. The overwhelming majority of modern pornography portrays and reinforces gender stereotypes and condones violence against women.¹¹ It should be explicitly stated, rather than assumed, that using school resources to view, download or share pornography is unacceptable at all times.</p>	<p>Any employee who accesses or shares violent, sexist, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise offensive materials, including pornography, during school hours while on school premises or while using school property will be subject to disciplinary action according to [Name of school]'s existing policies and procedures.</p>
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Endorsing bystander action as a way to support the Code of Conduct	
	<p>Specifically including bystander action in your Code of Conduct will encourage staff to take constructive actions as part of their shared responsibility to eliminate sex discrimination and harassment.¹²</p>	<p>[Name of school] encourages all staff and students to report actions or behaviours that contravene our values, policies and Code of Conduct, and take appropriate bystander action to intervene safely and respectfully when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination, sexual harassment or a potentially violent situation in the school community.</p>

¹¹ For more information on **pornography and young people** see the Brophy Foundation, Reality and Risk Project website (2014) [It's Time We Talked](#).

¹² For more information on **bystander action** see: VicHealth (2014) ['Stepping in': A bystander action toolkit to support equality and respect at work](#).

Further material

In addition to sources referenced in footnotes and the Victoria Department of Education and Training guidance, policy advice and templates referred to in this Toolkit, Our Watch acknowledges the following sources that informed the development of this material which may be useful for schools.

Australian Childhood Foundation (2010) *Making space for learning: Trauma informed practice in schools.*

Australian Childhood Foundation (2014) *Safe and secure: A trauma informed practice guide for understanding and responding to children and young people affected by family violence.*

Australian Education Union (2008) *Policy on gender equity.*

Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) *Ending workplace sexual harassment: A resource for small, medium and large employers.*

Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) *Fact sheet: Domestic and family violence – a workplace issue, a discrimination issue.*

Delaney, M. (2015) *Gender and education guidelines*, developed for the Association of Women Educators.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs – Gender Equity Taskforce and Reference Group (1997) *Gender equity: A framework for Australian schools.*

VicHealth (2009) Preventing violence against women: *A framework for action.*

Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009) *Respectful Relationships Education: Violence prevention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian secondary schools.*

Women's Health Victoria (2012) *Everyone's business: A guide to developing workplace programs for the primary prevention of violence against women.*

Guidance D: Promoting Gender Equality in Curriculum Planning

Respectful Relationships Education supports us to recognise that every policy, practice and activity has the potential to promote gender equality and respectful relationships, however every policy, practice and activity can also reinforce existing stereotypes and gender inequality.

Teaching and learning – not only in the delivery of Respectful Relationships Education, but across all learning areas – is a core part of the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education. In your regular reviews of curriculum content use a gender lens across all year levels and learning areas to ensure gender equality is actively promoted and modelled.

Use the following questions to guide staff during curriculum planning to ensure gender equality and respect are actively promoted in all learning areas.

Key questions for curriculum planning

1. Do the examples and narratives used in your classes equally represent the experiences, knowledge, skills and aspirations of women and men?

Examples

- Make sure that men and women are represented equally as authors, artists, directors and protagonists of texts studied in English, media, drama, music and art.
 - Use narrative examples in maths and science that show women, men, girls and boys undertaking non-stereotypical tasks (such as *Penny was at footy training*, *Jack was cooking dinner*) or use gender neutral names and pronouns (such as *Sam was shopping*, *Ballet is their favourite sport*).
 - Include deliberate reference to women and men in non-stereotypical roles and highlight role models in these fields (such as male nurses and female doctors, women in STEM and construction, men in care roles and professions) during discussion or activities around careers and life goals.
2. Have you reviewed the examples and narratives used in your classes to ensure they do not unconsciously:
 - promote unequal power relations between women and men
 - perpetuate or reinforce harmful gender stereotypes
 - condone violence against women?

Examples

- In discussion about history, politics and society consciously include the stories and perspectives of women as well as men, as often women's role in historical and political accounts is absent.
- Where an act of violence, harassment or bullying is referred to in a text or discussed in reference to a current or historical event, pay attention to highlighting the perpetrator's responsibility for their actions and not placing blame on the victim.

- Where narratives and/or examples show characters conforming to traditional ideas of masculinity and/or femininity, make space for discussion with students about gender roles, norms and stereotypes and the impacts they have on the identity, attitudes and actions of the character.
3. Where appropriate, have you included examples, narratives or topics that explicitly encourage critical thinking about gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes?

Examples

- Use age-appropriate materials to encourage critical thinking and discussion about the media's representation of women, men, girls and boys. Ask questions like 'Do all girls/boys do/think/act like that? Do you think this represents you? Why/why not?'
- Integrate discussion of gender inequality into classes such as using the gender pay gap as a tool to teach statistics, or discussing the different ways women's and men's achievements in sport are celebrated and supported.

Glossary

A bystander is someone who sees or hears about an act of sexism, harassment, discrimination or any other form of inappropriate behaviour. People who witness inappropriate behaviour, but aren't involved in an incident (either as an instigator or a target), are increasingly recognised as having the potential to be powerful allies in challenging sexist or discriminatory behaviours and attitudes.

Drivers are the underlying causes that are required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.⁴ See also family violence.

Emotional/psychological violence can include a range of controlling behaviours such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death.⁵

Family violence is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members.⁶ This includes for example, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.⁷ In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.⁸

Gender refers to the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity.⁹ Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.¹⁰

Gender-based violence is usually used to explain violence against women, referring to violence that is specifically 'directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately'. However it is also useful to explain other forms of violence, in recognition that rigid, binary and hierarchical constructions of gender, sex and sexuality are also a driver of violence against people whose experience and/or identity does not conform to such binary definitions, including members of the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer and intersex communities.¹¹ In Respectful Relationships Education, the term gender-based violence is often used as it is considered to better encompass the experiences of girls and young women than 'domestic violence' or 'violence against women'. The term encompasses the various forms of violence that girls and young women experience, such as dating violence, sexting and revenge porn, and is also inclusive and extends to violence experienced by the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer and intersex communities.

Gender equality¹² involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between women and men and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all¹³ and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.

Gender equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of rights, responsibilities and resources between women and men according to their respective needs.

Gender identity is a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of their gender¹⁴ in how they define themselves in relation to masculine and feminine characteristics.

Gender inequality is the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value afforded to women and men in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.

Gender roles are the functions and responsibilities¹⁵ expected to be fulfilled by women and men, girls and boys within a given society.

Gender stereotyping is a form of sexism. Gender stereotypes are simplistic assumptions about the behaviours, attributes, skills, differences and roles of women and men. These attributes are often perceived as natural or innate but are more often the result of women and men being socialised in different ways. Gender stereotypes can be positive, for example 'women are naturally caring and nurturing' or negative, for example 'men can't communicate their emotions very well', but they are usually incorrect and based on generalised assumptions about how we believe people will act, what people are good at or what people will like and dislike, simply because of their gender.

Gender transformative approaches move beyond 'gender blind' or 'gender specific' approaches to encourage critical awareness of, and explicitly challenge, harmful gender roles, practices and norms, and shift the unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men.

Gendered drivers are the specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. The gendered drivers are the underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

Gendered norms consist of a set of dominant beliefs and rules of conduct which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from girls and boys, women and men.

Gendered practices are the everyday practices, processes and behaviours undertaken at an individual/relationship level, organisational/institutional and societal level that reinforce and perpetuate gendered norms and structures.

Gendered structures are the laws and systemic mechanisms that organise and reinforce an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power and resources between women and men.

Intimate partner violence is any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, familial relations, or people who share accommodation) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of violence against women.¹⁶

Respectful relationships refer to relationships among intimate, romantic or dating partners characterised by non-violence, equality, mutual respect and consideration and trust.

Respectful Relationships Education is the holistic approach to school based, primary prevention of gender based violence. It uses the education system as a catalyst for generational and cultural change by engaging schools as both education institutions and as workplaces, to comprehensively address the drivers of gender based violence and to create a future free from such violence.

Settings are environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play.

Sex refers to the biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as female or male.

Sex discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex would be treated in the same or similar circumstances. Direct discrimination (for example women and men doing the same job but receiving different pay) and indirect discrimination (for example a policy requirement that all managers must work full time) are both illegal in Australia.

Sexism is discrimination based on gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination.¹⁷

Sexual harassment is unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be obvious or subtle, direct or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one off, and can be perpetrated by both women and men against people of the same or opposite sex. Men are most likely to perpetrate sexual harassment against both women and other men, and women are most likely to be the victims of sexual harassment.

Sexual violence is sexual activity that happens where consent is not obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity, such as touching, sexual harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.

Social norms are rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are grounded in the customs, traditions and value systems that develop over time in a society or social group.¹⁸

Socio-ecological model is a feature of public health and is used to demonstrate how violence is a product of multiple, interacting components and social factors.¹⁹ The model conceptualises how the

drivers of violence manifest across the personal, community and social level and illustrates the value of implementing multiple mutually-reinforcing strategies across these levels.

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.²⁰ This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience, including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial and others, that are gender-based. See also gender-based violence.

Violence prevention refers in Respectful Relationships Education to the primary prevention of gender-based violence. Primary prevention focuses on stopping gender-based violence before it occurs, rather than intervening once an incident has already happened. Primary prevention involves working with whole communities to address the attitudes, behaviours, norms and practices that drive gender-based violence.

Whole School approach refers in Respectful Relationships Education to providing students with multiple exposure to key messages across the curriculum and in different areas of the school and community. It involves engaging not just students, but school staff and the wider school community in the process of cultural change. For example, school staff, including non-teaching staff, might undergo professional learning and development around the drivers of gender-based violence and their role in prevention.

- ¹ Morgan, A. and Chadwick, H. (2009) *Key issues in domestic violence*, Summary paper, no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/07.html>.
- ² Council of Australian Governments (2011) *National plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022*, p. 1, <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>.
- ³ Morgan, A. and Chadwick, H. (2009). See note 1
- ⁴ Australian Law Reform Commission [ALRC] and New South Wales Law Reform Commission [NSWLRC] (2010) *Family violence: a national legal response: Final report, volume 1*, ALRC Report 114/NSWLRC Report 128, ALRC and NSWLRC, Sydney, p. 17, http://www.alrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/ALRC114_WholeReport.pdf.
- ⁵ Stanley, J., Tomison, A.M. and Pocock, J. (2003) *Child abuse and neglect in Indigenous Australian communities*, Child abuse prevention issues no. 19, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/issues/issues19/issues19.pdf>.
- ⁶ Australian Women's Health Network (2014) *Health and the primary prevention of violence against women position paper 2014*, http://www.gasgasgas.com.au/AWHN/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/172_AWHNHealthandThePrimaryPreventionofViolenceAgainstWomen2014.pdf.
- ⁷ World Health Organization (2015) *Gender*, Factsheet No. 403, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs403/en/>.
- ⁸ Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015). See note 2.

- ⁹ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, opened for signature 1 March 1980, 1249 UNTS 13 (entered into force 3 September 1981) <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No 25, on Article 4, Paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on Temporary Special Measures [3]-[14] <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HGRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Recommendations.aspx>, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 47th session, UN Doc CEDAW/C/GC/28 (16 December 2010) ('General Recommendation 28'); Report on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Thirtieth Session <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Recommendations.aspx>.
- ¹⁰ Australian Women's Health Network (2014). See note 6.
- ¹¹ Australian Human Rights Commission (2015) *Resilient individuals: Sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex rights*, National Consultation Report, https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/SOGII%20Rights%20Report%202015_Web_Version.pdf.
- ¹² World Health Organization (2015). See note 7
- ¹³ World Health Organization and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2010) *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence*, World Health Organization, Geneva, <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564007/en/>.
- ¹⁴ Australian Women's Health Network (2014). See note 6.
- ¹⁵ VicHealth (2007) *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/preventing-violence-before-it-occurs>.
- ¹⁶ Wall, L. (2013) *Issues in evaluation of complex social change programs for sexual assault prevention*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, <http://www3.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i14/i14.pdf>.
- ¹⁷ This definition derives from United Nations (1993) *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>, and in turn is used in Council of Australian Governments (2011) *National plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022*, <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>.

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