

Consent education statement

Family Planning NSW has welcomed increased discussion and awareness around the importance of consent education and the provision of consistent comprehensive sexuality education in NSW schools.

[Comprehensive sexuality education](#) is an evidence-based, age appropriate and culturally relevant approach to teaching and learning about sexuality and relationships, inclusive of the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects they encompass. It is a crucial early intervention strategy to reduce gender-based violence, promote gender equality and improve reproductive and sexual health outcomes, including reducing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

The sixth [National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health](#) reported that most students will have engaged in some form of sexual activity by the end of year 12, from deep kissing (74.4%) to sexual intercourse (46.6%). It is essential that all students have the skills required to navigate relationships, negotiate boundaries and provide and withdraw consent at any time.

Students from schools around NSW have identified the need for consent and comprehensive sexuality education. In 2018, Family Planning NSW completed a [Student Needs Assessment](#) of sexual health education in NSW schools, which found that 47% of students in years 8-12 were dissatisfied with their experience of school sexual education.

One in three NSW students indicated they wanted more information on a range of topics, including caring and respectful relationships, consent and social pressures around sex and sexting. The report also identified gaps in topics including STI treatment and testing, HIV and blood-borne viruses and the influence of pornographic and media representations of sex.

Last year in [a submission](#) to the NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into the NSW school curriculum, we suggested that due to young people's use of technology occurring earlier, teachers may need to address topics sooner than suggested by the curriculum. From a safety perspective, it is important that all students learn skills that enable them to develop, promote and preserve healthy interpersonal relationships, on and offline.

As an organisation, we believe that all people should have access to high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education which is age appropriate.

Family Planning NSW has been advocating for the consistent provision of comprehensive sexuality education across NSW, Australia and the Pacific for many years. We have written many submissions to State and Federal Governments calling for consistent implementation of comprehensive sexuality education within schools.

We provide a diverse range of [community education](#) programs, including in-school programs and resources for young people, and people throughout their life span.

We also offer training and professional development courses [for school teachers](#) and those involved in delivering sexual health information to young people. Many of these courses and materials are partially or fully funded by NSW Health and were made available online in 2020.

Teachers and schools play a vital role in providing accurate and trusted information to enable students to contextualise and think critically about healthy sexual relationships.

We look forward to seeing educators, schools, government and non-governmental organisations working together to ensure that comprehensive, appropriate and evidence-based sexuality education is available for all.

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