



## The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Ms Helen Minnican  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

MT21/1207

[helen.minnican@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:helen.minnican@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Minnican

I write in response to the petition lodged by Ms Jenny Leong MP, Member for Newtown, on 8 June 2021, from certain citizens regarding sexual consent education in the curriculum.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring young people have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to develop and maintain respectful relationships.

In NSW, the Kindergarten - Year 10 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabus focusses on respectful and positive relationships, sexual harassment, discrimination and, importantly, the explicit and age-appropriate teaching of consent. This syllabus will be reviewed as part of the current Curriculum Reform process, and alignment with any change to legislation will be necessary.

The Department of Education also offers the Life Ready program, which is a mandatory 25-hour course for all Year 11 and 12 students in NSW public schools. This course builds on the respectful relationships education that is included in the mandatory Kindergarten – Year 10 PDHPE syllabus. The Life Ready course prepares senior students to lead healthy, safe and meaningful lives and to develop respectful, safe and healthy relationships.

The NSW Government has developed professional learning programs and resources to support the teaching of the PDHPE syllabus and the Life Ready course. These resources help students develop skills in recognising and responding to unsafe situations, effectively seek assistance, and develop the knowledge and skills of protective strategies appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

Subsequent to the implementation of the new syllabus there has been wide public discussion around consent and sexual assault experienced by young people. These reports have further raised awareness of this major societal issue that required a further response.

On March 26, 2021 I announced the cross-sector Statement of Intent signed by the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors. This joint commitment sets in place a common foundation for the significant and ongoing work ahead.

The Statement of Intent acknowledges the crucial role of our schools in supporting and protecting the safety of children and young people. It identifies key areas where the education system and schools can lead meaningful change including increased support for teachers and school leaders and curriculum provision. This will ensure the views of students are heard and strengthen community and parent connections.

The Statement of Intent can be accessed on the Department of Education's website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/whole-school-approach/statement-of-intent-our-shared-commitment>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Sarah Mitchell MLC**

13 July 2021