

# FACILITATOR GUIDE

## Created for Respectful Relationships

### Conversations for Catholic schools

Session 1: Why Respectful Relationships matter in Catholic schools

**READY-TO-FACILITATE SCHOOL EDITION**

Includes facilitator scripts, session plans, video access, staff activities, printable templates, safeguarding guidance and implementation tools.

In partnership with

Victorian Catholic Education Authority

ACU
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# Purpose of this guide

This guide enables a school leader, formation leader, wellbeing leader, curriculum leader or nominated staff facilitator to deliver the complete five-session series without needing to design additional materials. It is intended to be practical, trauma-aware, grounded in Catholic mission, and adaptable to local school context.

**CORE AIM**

To build staff confidence and shared language for Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE), strengthen Catholic identity, and connect safeguarding, formation, student voice and everyday school culture.

## What is included

- A complete run sheet for each staff session
- Opening and closing facilitator scripts
- Video links
- Personal reflection, small-group and whole-staff activities
- Printable worksheets and recording templates
- Trauma-aware participation and support guidance
- A school implementation pathway and action-planning tools
- Full video scripts for reference and accessibility

## Series at a glance

| Session | Title | Core question | Suggested time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Why Respectful Relationships Matter | Why is this central to Catholic education? | 55–65 min |
| 2 | Being and Becoming Human Together | What does it mean to be human in relationship? | 50–60 min |
| 3 | Life and Life to the Full | What do Jesus-inspired relationships look like? | 55–65 min |
| 4 | Voice of the Child | Whose voice is heard, and whose is missing? | 55–65 min |
| 5 | From Vision to Practice | What will we do differently in everyday practice? | 60–75 min |

# Before you facilitate

## Recommended facilitator

Choose a facilitator who can hold reflective conversation, maintain clear boundaries, respond calmly to discomfort and connect staff discussion to the school's established safeguarding, wellbeing and professional-learning processes. Co-facilitation is strongly recommended where the group is large or where sensitive discussion is anticipated.

## Pre-series planning checklist

☐ Confirm leadership endorsement and the purpose of the series.

☐ Nominate a facilitator and a support person who can step out with any participant who needs assistance.

☐ Confirm local Employee Assistance Program details and the school's internal safeguarding contacts.

☐ Review applicable school, system and jurisdictional safeguarding policies.

☐ Make available the applicable school, system and jurisdictional safeguarding policies for staff.

☐ Facilitator takes time to familiarise themselves with videos and this guide.

☐ Book an accessible room with movable seating and reliable audio-visual equipment.

☐ Print the session worksheets.

☐ Decide how anonymous responses will be gathered and stored.

☐ Communicate the participation choices to staff in advance.

☐ Plan how actions arising from the series will be reviewed by leadership.

## Video access

| Video | Link |
|---|---|
| 1. Why Respectful Relationships Matter | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ-bYkLabUs |
| 2. Being and Becoming Human Together | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KspvX1N_jOM |
| 3. Life and Life to the Full | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TomzeGJRm3k |
| 4. Voice of the Child | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aGlbAjPc5A |
| 5. From Vision to Practice | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2XekbVDrVk |

### Technical check

- ☐ Video opens and plays.
- ☐ Sound is clear from the back of the room.
- ☐ Holding slide and support slide are ready.
- ☐ Timers, slides and resources are ready before staff arrive.

## Suggested room set-up

- Tables of four to six people, allowing staff to speak without addressing the whole room.
- A clear screen and speakers, with captions visible.
- A quiet space outside the room for anyone who needs a pause.
- Four wall stations for Session 1.
- Sticky notes, markers, A3 paper and anonymous response cards.

# Safety, participation and support

The topics in this series may connect with participants' personal or professional experiences. The facilitator's task is not to invite disclosure or provide counselling. The task is to establish clear participation choices, maintain professional boundaries, and direct people to appropriate supports.

## Opening safety statement

**READ ALOUD**

Today's session deals with relationships, consent, safety and experiences of harm. You are invited to participate in ways that are professionally useful and personally safe. You may pass on any activity, step out without explanation, or speak with our nominated support person. Please do not share personal stories about students, colleagues or yourself in a way that identifies anyone. This is a professional learning space, not a disclosure or counselling space. If a concern about a child or young person arises, our usual safeguarding and reporting procedures apply.

## Group agreements

- ☐ Speak from your own perspective.
- ☐ Protect privacy. Do not repeat personal contributions outside the room.
- ☐ Do not name individual students, families or colleagues.
- ☐ Challenge ideas without attacking people.
- ☐ Allow people to pass, pause or step out.
- ☐ Avoid asking for or offering personal disclosures.
- ☐ Notice the impact of language, not only its intent.
- ☐ If a safeguarding concern arises, follow the process rather than trying to resolve it in the group.

## Support information to place on every session slide

| Support | Details to display |
|---|---|
| Immediate danger | Call 000. |
| 1800RESPECT | 1800 737 732 \| 24/7 national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling. |
| Lifeline | 13 11 14 \| Crisis support. |
| 13YARN | 13 92 76 \| Crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. |
| Employee Assistance Program | Insert school/system EAP provider and contact details. |
| Internal support | Insert principal, safeguarding lead, wellbeing lead or HR contact. |

| Support | Details to display |
|---|---|
| Reporting concerns | Insert school/system child-safety reporting process and link. |

## If someone becomes distressed

1. Offer choice: remain, take a break, or move to the quiet space. Make this offer discreetly and respectfully, rather than in front of the entire staff community.
2. Ask what practical support the person needs now. Do not ask for details.
3. Connect the person with the nominated support person or EAP.
4. If information suggests a child is at risk, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.
5. Check in privately after the session while maintaining professional boundaries.
6. Document only what is required under policy.

# Facilitation approach

## Consistent session rhythm

| Stage | Purpose | Typical time |
|---|---|---|
| Welcome and safety | Re-establish purpose, participation choices and support. | 5 min |
| Watch | Encounter the core idea through the video. | 8–12 min |
| Pause | Allow silent personal reflection before discussion. | 3–5 min |
| Discuss | Make meaning in pairs or small-groups. | 15–20 min |
| Synthesis | Gather patterns, tensions and implications. | 10–15 min |
| Commit | Name one realistic practice or next step. | 5–10 min |

## Facilitator moves that help

- Ask one question at a time and allow silence.
- Invite participants to comment on the idea before debating solutions.
- Use “What makes you say that?”, or “Tell me more about that…” to deepen discussion without confrontation.
- Summarise themes neutrally and distinguish consensus from difference.
- Redirect personal stories toward professional implications.
- Name discomfort without shaming: “This may feel unfamiliar; let’s stay curious and precise.”
- Convert broad intentions into observable actions, owners and review points.

# Session 1: Why Respectful Relationships Matter in Catholic Schools

## *Focus: Mission, reality and responsibility*

**SESSION OUTCOME**
Staff can explain why CRRE is central to Catholic mission and safeguarding, not an add-on.

## At a glance

| Time | Materials | Outputs |
|---|---|---|
| 65 minutes | Video, screen, speakers, timer, printed worksheet, pens, A3 paper/sticky notes | Name It to Change It response and whole-staff themes |

## Video access

| Video title | Why Respectful Relationships Matter in Catholic Schools |
|---|---|
| https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ-bYkLabUs | |

## Preparation

- ☐ Test the video link.
- ☐ Display the safety and support slide when staff enter.
- ☐ Set up the 4 stations for the ‘Reality Check Carousel’ activity.
- ☐ Print the ‘Name It To Change It’ commitment cards.
- ☐ Choose how whole-staff responses will be captured.
- ☐ Confirm the nominated support person.

## Detailed run sheet

| Timing | Facilitator action |
|---|---|
| 5 mins | Read the opening script, participation choices and group agreements. |
| 12 mins | Introduce and play the video with captions. |
| 5 mins | Read the reflection question slowly. Protect silence. |
| 20 mins | Explain the activity, group size, output and confidentiality boundary. |
| 15 mins | Invite patterns, tensions and implications. Do not require every group to report. |

| Timing | Facilitator action |
|---|---|
| 8 mins | Invite a specific commitment. Explain what will happen with collected responses. |

## Facilitator opening script

**READ ALOUD**

Welcome to the first session in our series. We begin by asking why Consent and Respectful Relationships Education matters in a Catholic school. Today is not about adding another isolated program. It is about considering how mission, safeguarding, teaching and culture meet in the everyday experience of students.

## Play the video

## Personal reflection

- If a student learned about respectful relationships only by watching adults in our school, what would they learn?
- What would they learn about dignity, power, listening, difference, boundaries, conflict, forgiveness, consent, asking for help and whose voice matters?

## Small-group activity: Reality Check Carousel

Set up four stations. Groups spend approximately four minutes at each station, building on previous responses.

1. Where do students currently learn about relationships?
2. What messages might they receive outside school?
3. Where might our school unintentionally stay silent?
4. What are the risks of doing nothing or doing only the minimum?

Group output: circle the observations that most need whole-staff attention.

## Whole-staff synthesis

- What themes appeared at several stations?
- Where is there tension between discomfort and responsibility?
- What is one shared insight about our role?

## Practical takeaway: Name It to Change It

**PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT**

One area where I think our school could grow in supporting safe and respectful relationships is…

## Facilitator close

**READ ALOUD**

Thank you for engaging thoughtfully. This work is not about having every answer or achieving perfection. It is about taking the next faithful, professionally responsible step together. Please complete your commitment card. The themes gathered today will be used only for the stated school improvement purpose, and we will communicate the next review point.

## Facilitator debrief notes

**What worked well?**

**What needs adjustment?**

**Actions or follow-up required?**

# Video script for Session 1

## Why Respectful Relationships Matter in Catholic Schools

Hi everyone, and welcome.
This series is designed to support you in building confidence and capacity in teaching Consent and Respectful Relationships Education.
Across these five short videos, we'll explore why this work matters, how it connects to our Catholic tradition, and what it can look like in everyday school practice.
We know that this content can be both professionally and personally significant.
So if anything in these sessions raises questions, concerns, or personal challenges for you, we encourage you to reach out—whether that's to a member of your leadership team, a trusted colleague, or your Employee Assistance Program.
Remember, you're not expected to have all the answers.
This is an invitation to reflect, to learn, and to take the next step together.

**Opening**
Hi,
I want to begin with a simple but important question:
Why does Respectful Relationships actually matter?
Why are we, as Catholic educators, being asked to engage in Consent and Respectful Relationships Education?
Is it just another requirement…
another initiative…
another thing to fit into an already full curriculum?
Or is it something deeper?
Today, I want to suggest that this work is not an "add-on" at all.
It actually goes to the very heart of what it means to be a Catholic school.

**Part 1: Moving Beyond Compliance**
It's true that schools have legal responsibilities around child safety.
But in Catholic education, safeguarding is not just about compliance.
It is a core expression of our mission.
We are entrusted not only with academic formation, but with the wellbeing of young people at some of the most formative stages of their lives.
And that means creating environments where students can flourish—
intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.
Put simply:
child safety is not an additional initiative—it is a foundational condition for learning.
And this is where respectful relationships education sits.
Not on the edge of our work…
but right at the centre.

**Part 2: The Reality Our Students Are Living In**
At the same time, we need to be honest about the world our students are growing up in.
The evidence is clear.
Child maltreatment is not rare or exceptional.
It is a widespread social reality in Australia.
The Australian Child Maltreatment Study – the most comprehensive national study of its kind – tells us that around one in three Australians has experienced some form of abuse or neglect during childhood.
And importantly, harm does not only come from adults.

A significant proportion of sexual abuse and harassment occurs between children and young people themselves.
In fact, one in ten Australians have experienced peer sexual harassment during childhood – most commonly by male peers.
But we also need to name another challenging truth.
For many children, harm occurs in the very places that should be safest – their homes and families.
The ACMS shows high rates of physical and emotional abuse, exposure to domestic violence, and sexual abuse occurring within family contexts.
This is why education matters.
Families are, and always will be, the first and foremost educators of their children.
But not all homes are safe homes.
And not all children have access to the language, modelling, or protection they need to understand boundaries, consent, and dignity.
Schools therefore play a critical role – not instead of families, but in support of them.
We are often the one accessible, structured space where children can learn what safe, respectful relationships look like, and where harm can be noticed rather than hidden.
And when we remember that nearly half of those who experience sexual abuse never tell anyone, it becomes clear:
If we wait for students to disclose harm before we act,
we will miss much of what is happening.
What this means for us as educators is quite confronting, but also clarifying:
We are not just teaching students who might encounter harm in the future.
We are teaching students who may already be carrying experiences of harm.
And increasingly, this includes experiences in online environments—
image sharing, coercion, exposure to harmful content.
So safeguarding today must extend beyond physical spaces
into relational spaces, peer cultures, and digital worlds.

**Part 3: Why Education Matters**
This is where education becomes critical.
Because without it, harmful behaviours don't just disappear—
they often escalate.
And when students don't receive clear, developmentally appropriate education about relationships, consent, and boundaries, they will still learn…
just from somewhere else.
Often from peers.
Often from the internet.
Often from places that distort the beauty of the human person.
We also know that many students experience current approaches to this learning as:
too little,
too late,
and not reflective of their real lives.
So the question becomes:
If not us… who?
If not here… where?

**Part 4: A Catholic Vision of the Human Person**
This is where Catholic education offers something unique—and deeply needed.
Because our starting point is not just risk.
It is vision.

A vision of the human person grounded in dignity.
A belief that every person is created for intimate and life-giving relationships
with God, with others, and with themselves.
And that our role, as educators, is not simply to prevent harm…
but to support young people to become more fully human.
At the heart of the Church is a call.
A call that arises from the heart of our Creator.
It is God's call
"to become more deeply holy and so more deeply human."
That's what this work is about.
Not just safety.
But formation.
Not just avoiding harm.
But enabling flourishing.

**Part 5: Inclusion, Diversity, and Belonging**
And this vision must be lived out in real, diverse communities.
We know that experiences of harm, exclusion, and vulnerability are not shared equally among students.
Some young people—particularly those whose identities or circumstances place them at the margins—are more likely to encounter these challenges.
Often, these experiences are not shaped by just one factor,
but by the way multiple aspects of a young person's identity and context overlap—
such as their background, relationships, or social positioning—
creating more complex experiences of both vulnerability and resilience.
So creating safe environments isn't about treating everyone the same.
It's about recognising that students experience risk differently,
and responding with dignity, care, and professionalism.
In the Catholic tradition, this is what we mean by catholicity—
not uniformity,
but unity in diversity.
A community where each person belongs and is valued,
not despite their uniqueness,
but through it.

**Part 6: The Invitation to Educators**
I also want to acknowledge something here.
For many of us, this area can feel uncomfortable.
We may not have received this kind of education ourselves.
We may feel unsure about language, content, or boundaries.
We may worry about getting it wrong.
That is completely understandable.
But the invitation here is not to be perfect.
It is to be present.
To be willing to learn.
To be willing to engage.
To be willing to accompany.
To be willing to create classrooms where respectful conversations can happen safely.
Because culture is not built by policies.
It is built by people.

By what we say…
what we don’t say…
what we model…
and what we allow.

**Closing**
So as we move into the rest of this session, I want to leave you with this:
Respectful relationships education is not simply about teaching rules.
It is about building communities
where every person’s dignity is recognised and protected.
Where young people are equipped not just to stay safe—
but to live well.
And where our schools become places
that reflect something of the Gospel:
communities of dignity, belonging, and care.
Thank you.

As we come to the end of this video, we invite you now to take some time to reflect and engage with this together.
The most important part of this work happens in conversation—
as you share perspectives, explore ideas, and consider what this means in your own context.
In a moment, you’ll move into personal reflection, small-group discussion, and whole-staff synthesis.
As you do, we encourage you to think about your own school community:
What’s already working well?
Where are the opportunities for growth?
And what might this look like in your everyday practice?
This is not about getting everything right.
It’s about taking the next step—together—
in building a school culture where dignity, safety, and respectful relationships are lived out each day.

# Printable facilitator resources

# Session 1: Why Respectful Relationships Matter in Catholic Schools

**WORKSHEET CONTENT**

## Reality Check and Reflection

### Purpose

To consider what students learn about relationships through school culture, identify areas of silence or inconsistency, and name a constructive opportunity for growth.

### Participation reminder

Respond only at a professional level. Do not name or describe identifiable students, families, colleagues or personal experiences. You may leave any section blank.

## 1. Personal reflection

If a student learned about respectful relationships only by watching adults in our school, what might they learn about:

**Dignity and belonging**

_____

_____

**Power and fairness**

_____

_____

**Listening and student voice**

_____

_____

**Boundaries and consent**

_____

_____

**Conflict, accountability and repair**

_____

_____

**Help-seeking and support**

_____

_____

## 2. Reality Check Carousel recording

**Where do students currently learn about relationships?**

**What messages might students receive outside school?**

**Where might our school unintentionally stay silent?**

**What are the risks of doing nothing or doing only the minimum?**

## 3. Identify the pattern

Circle or highlight the observations that most need whole-staff attention. Then complete:

**A recurring strength we noticed is…**

**A recurring gap, silence or inconsistency we noticed is…**

**The possible impact on students is…**

**A question we need to explore further is…**

## 4. Whole-staff synthesis notes

# Session 1: Why Respectful Relationships Matter in Catholic Schools

**COMMITMENT CARD CONTENT**

## My commitment

**One area where I think our school could grow in supporting safe and respectful relationships is…**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**A first realistic step could be…**

_____

**This matters because…**

_____

*Keep this card somewhere visible. Revisit it before the next session.*