

A Bill for an Act relating to Family Violence Education in Secondary Schools
To be enacted by the Victoria Youth Parliament

Family Violence Education in Secondary Schools

Bill 2025

A Bill for an Act to educate students in secondary schools on family violence. The Bill's primary purpose is to educate secondary school students on family violence; its causes, impacts and prevention. This shall be done through the provision of information about support services created and provided through the Family Violence Education Board (FVEB). Youth involved in the program shall be able to recognise abuse enacted either upon them or others they know. The education they receive shall, in turn, equip young people with the knowledge on what actions to take after abuse is recognised.

This Bill aims to prevent the cycle of family violence through education of youth using early intervention measures. This is necessary to protect Victoria's youth from abuse at home, and to indirectly protect others at risk from family violence.

PART I—Preliminary

Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this act are;

- (a) To educate young people in secondary school about family violence and how to recognise it;
- (b) To provide information about support services available for victims of family violence;
- (c) To educate young people to prevent future cases of family violence;
- (d) To decrease the prevalence of family violence within Victoria.

Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

Clause 3 Definitions

- (a) **Adapted videos** means videos on the website which are displayed differently to suit an online audience. They shall have the same content and general maturity year level difference as the video from which they are adapted;
- (b) **Culturally aware information** means information provided is aimed towards different cultures that may have different ideas regarding topics such as family, discipline and gender roles;
- (c) **Family violence** means any behaviour in an intimate or family relationship which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear;
- (d) **Family violence education** means age-appropriate education provided to students to increase awareness and understanding of family violence, its causes, impacts and prevention strategies, including knowledge of legal rights and available support services;
- (e) **FVEB** means the Family Violence Education Board;

- (f) **General Maturity** means a person's overall development in how they think, behave and handle emotions and situations;
- (g) **LGBTQIA + Inclusive** means understanding that those in the LGBTQIA+ community may face unique abuse such as being outed or rejected for their identity. They might also feel isolated, fear discrimination or struggle to find support that respects who they are. It means listening without judgment, using correct pronouns and making sure everyone feels safe and respected. It also considers the recognition that abuse may present differently in same sex relationships;
- (h) **Lived experience** means the specific knowledge, insights, and expertise gained by individuals who have personally experienced, or are directly affected by, family violence;
- (i) **Presenter** means an individual selected in an interview manner by FVEB who shall travel to secondary schools to give and guide the presentation, alongside teachers and local representatives. They shall be responsible for directing the local representatives during the presentation;
- (j) **Private organisation** means an organisation which operates independently of the government and is funded and governed privately, including private social work institutions;
- (k) **Public organisations** means the entities that operate within the public sector and are funded by the government, including institutions such as Child Protection Services;
- (l) **Secondary Schools** means schools that provide education to students after primary school and before higher education. These will include all school year levels from 7-12 and includes government, rural, metropolitan, private, religious, home-school and specialist schools;
- (m) **Wellbeing check** means assessing and addressing someone's physical and mental health and well-being. It may be a formal assessment, a brief check-in or a call for support when concerns arise.

PART II—Establishment

Clause 4 Family Violence Education Board

- 4.1 The Family Violence Education Board (FVEB) shall be established.
- 4.2 The FVEB shall include nine people, including at least one representative of;
 - (a) Law enforcement;
 - (b) Qualified educator;
 - (c) Mental health professional;
 - (d) Family violence organisation;
 - (e) People with lived experience;
 - (f) Young people aged 16 – 25 years.
- 4.3 Members of the FVEB shall;
 - (a) Meet monthly for the first 12 months of the program's implementation to evaluate the curriculum and program;
 - (i) After one year of the program's implementation the FVEB shall meet every three months.
 - (b) Update the curriculum once every two years, if necessary;
 - (c) Serve four-year terms, with the ability to reapply.
- 4.4 The FVEB shall be reviewed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing every two years, to determine;
 - (a) Its effectiveness;
 - (b) Its governance.
- 4.5 The FVEB shall be responsible for;
 - (a) Online resources and localised pamphlets with specialised services;
 - (b) Evaluating and updating curriculum.
- 4.6 The presenter shall be reviewed through feedback forms;
 - (a) Feedback forms shall be provided in the following formats;
 - (i) Digitally/online;

- (ii) Physically, on paper.
- (b) Relevant forms shall be completed by;
 - (i) Teachers;
 - (ii) Students;
 - (iii) Institutions.

Clause 5 Presenter Requirements

- 5.1 Education shall be provided by a presenter who is selected by the FVEB;
 - (a) The presenter shall be qualified as decided by FVEB, which may include;
 - (i) An accredited social worker;
 - (ii) An accredited Victorian teacher;
 - (iii) Those not a current member of FVEB.
- 5.3 Presenters shall be supported by a representative of local organisation/s;
 - (a) The organisation may be a private or public organisation.
- 5.4 Education content shall be tailored to the general maturity level of each year level.
- 5.5 Teachers shall supervise and encourage engagement and participation with the students throughout the program.
- 5.6 Education shall be provided annually and run for the duration of a school day.

Clause 6 Content of the Curriculum

- 6.1 The family violence curriculum shall include;
 - (a) Definitions of the different forms of family violence, including;
 - (i) Physical;
 - (ii) Sexual;
 - (iii) Emotional or Psychological;
 - (iv) Financial;
 - (v) Coercion.

- (b) How to identify when someone may be experiencing family violence, including;
 - (i) Physical signs;
 - (ii) Emotional and behavioural signs;
 - (iii) Social and financial signs;
 - (iv) Signs in children.
- (c) Risk factors identifiable when identifying family violence, including;
 - (i) Victim related factors;
 - (ii) Perpetrator related factors;
 - (iii) Relationship and Family factors.
- (d) How to prevent family violence, including as a;
 - (i) Victim;
 - (ii) Perpetrator;
 - (iii) Bystander.
- (e) How to get help through access to resources including;
 - (i) Websites;
 - (ii) Institutions;
 - (iii) Police.
- (f) Inclusive information, regarding;
 - (i) Cultural awareness;
 - (ii) LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

Clause 7 Online Access to Content

- 7.1 A website shall be created to provide education to online, home-schooled and absent students.
- 7.2 The website shall include;
 - (a) Videos that discuss and explore topics covered in the program;
 - (b) Adapted videos for each year levels' curriculum;
 - (c) Interviews with people with lived experience with family violence;

- (d) Information regarding dedicated referral pathways of those experiencing family violence which consider the following factors;
 - (i) Gender;
 - (ii) Age;
 - (iii) Location;
 - (iv) Cultural background;
 - (v) Severity the of situation.
- (e) Videos targeted at parents providing information regarding;
 - (i) How to discuss the topic of family violence with their children;
 - (ii) How to further support them.

Clause 8 Opt-out

- 8.1 Students expressing discomfort shall be excused from the program;
 - (a) Educators who sense discomfort from a student shall offer them the option to opt-out from the program.
- 8.2 Schools shall provide a designated space for students that opt-out;
 - (a) That shall have supervision;
 - (b) In which students shall continue schoolwork;
 - (c) Where students shall remain until they feel comfortable to re-join the program or they are dismissed from school.
- 8.3 Teachers shall provide a wellbeing check on students who have opted out;
 - (a) Students shall not be required to disclose any information they do not wish to;
 - (b) Students shall not be forced or coerced into disclosing reason for their discomfort.

Clause 9 Pamphlets and Information Online

- 9.1 Schools shall provide a variety of pamphlets to students and parents.
- 9.2 Pamphlets shall contain information regarding;
 - (a) Local organisations and programs;
 - (b) National organisations and programs;
 - (c) Family violence;
 - (i) Recognition and prevention;
 - (ii) Forms of family violence;
 - (iii) Addressing and combating stigma;
 - (d) Recognition and categorisation of family violence;
 - (e) Inclusivity;
 - (i) Culturally aware information;
 - (ii) LGBTQIA+ inclusive information.
- 9.3 Pamphlets shall be available at multiple locations around schools, including;
 - (a) Front office;
 - (b) Classrooms;
 - (c) First aid;
 - (d) Wellbeing.
- 9.4 Students and parents shall be made aware of the locations of the pamphlets at the time the program takes place.

Clause 10 Teacher and Educators Intervention

- 10.1 Teachers shall provide resources regarding how to access support when students disclose experiencing family violence;
 - (a) Resources shall be specific to the student's situation and location;
 - (b) Resources shall include various forms of support, including;
 - (i) Wellbeing support;
 - (ii) Police intervention;
 - (iii) Support groups;
 - (iv) Safe houses.