

embargoed 12.01am Tuesday, 22 June 2021

Young people call for earlier and more holistic sexual consent education

The NSW Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson, has today released polling detailing young peoples' views on sexual consent education in NSW. The polling surveyed 500 young people in NSW aged 16-24 and asked them three questions about sexual consent education in schools.

Ms Robinson said the polling results highlight that young people want access to holistic sexual consent education, so they are prepared for real-world situations.

“Over half of young people in NSW felt their education about sexual consent was insufficient, or they were unsure whether they had learnt enough. We need to better support young people, both those who are in school and those who have recently graduated, to ensure they are equipped with the skills and the information they need.”

“We’ve recently seen a groundswell of young people coming forward, sharing their stories of sexual assault and calling for community change. We must stand behind these brave young people and listen to what they have to say. Young people deserve frank and open conversations about how to have healthy relationships” said Ms Robinson.

The ACYP polling found that:

- Among young women:
 - 22% said they didn't learn anything about sexual consent during high school
 - 41% said they only learnt a little about sexual consent during high school
- Among young men:
 - 10% said they didn't learn anything about sexual consent during high school
 - 35% said they only learnt a little about sexual consent during high school
- Just 15% of young people said they had learnt a lot about sexual consent in high school.
 - The issue was more acute in regional areas with only 8% stating they had learnt a lot.
- Almost 2 in 3 young women who said they had learnt something about sexual consent at high school thought their education about the topic was insufficient (52%) or they were unsure whether it was sufficient (14%)
- Around half of young men who said they had learnt something about sexual consent at high school thought their education about the topic was insufficient (34%) or they were unsure whether it was sufficient (15%)
- Young people with a disability were more likely to feel their education about sexual consent was insufficient (52%)
- Most young people felt the topic of sexual consent should be taught by year 8 (72%).

The ACYP polling data also showed that current high school students who participated in the survey were

more likely to have received education on sexual consent than those who have already left high school.

“We acknowledge the positive steps that Government is taking and their work with the broader community to improve sexual consent education” said Ms Robinson.

“In other recent polling by our office of young people aged 12-24, more than one third said they wanted more life skills information on healthy and respectful relationships.”

“Our office is committed to working across the government and non-government sectors to ensure children and young people are provided with the holistic information and resources they deserve” she said.

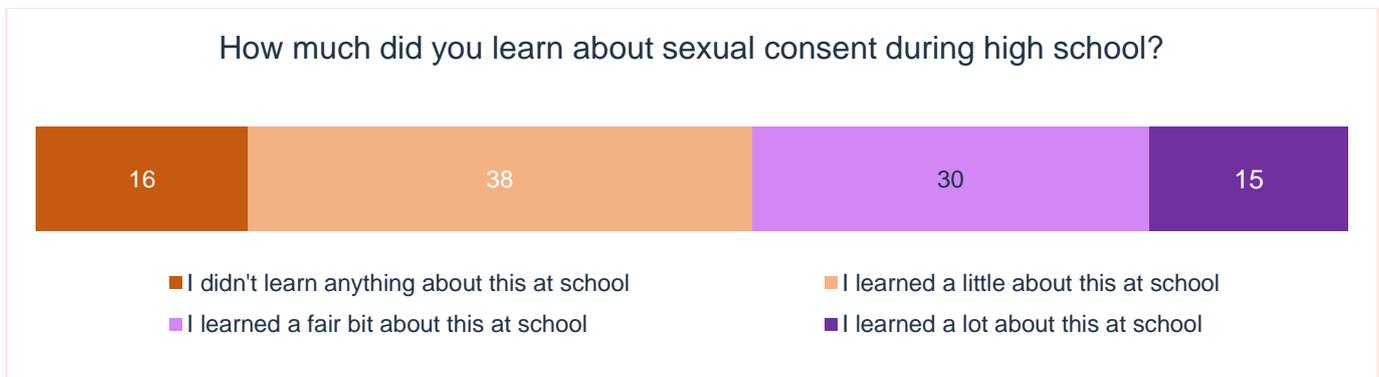
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For more information or to arrange an interview with the Advocate for Children and Young People please contact: **Una O’Neill on 0439 346 249**

Appendix

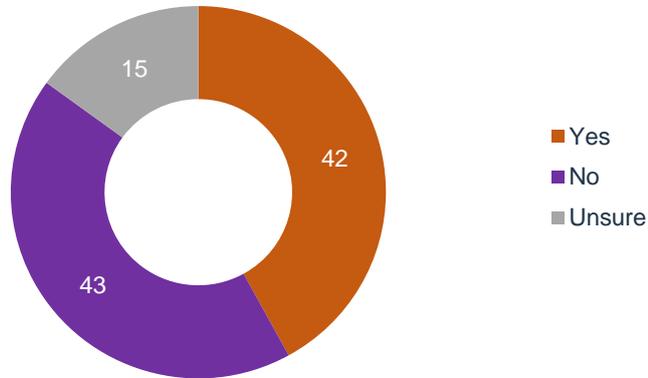
The following charts and tables summarise key data from the online survey conducted with n=500 young people aged 16-24. This yields a margin of error of +/-4.3%.

Q1 How much did you learn about sexual consent during high school? That is, to what extent did you learn about how to communicate willingness to participate in sexual or intimate activity and how to understand whether the person you are with is willing to participate?



Q2 Do you feel the information you learnt at school was sufficient? The below data is filtered to show only those who answered that they had learnt at least a little.

Do you feel the information you learnt at school was sufficient? (%)



Q3 At what grade do you feel schools should begin to teach students about sexual consent?

	Total	Male	Female
Year 7	39%	31%	46%
Year 8	16%	22%	11%
Year 9	12%	13%	11%
Year 10	10%	13%	7%
Year 11	1%	2%	0%
Year 12	4%	7%	1%
This should not be taught in school	1%	2%	0%
This should be taught earlier, in primary school	17%	10%	23%

ACYP polling was conducted by Newgate Research which is a member of the Australian Polling Council.