



PRESS RELEASE

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Respect and Healthy Relationships Promoted in Schools as part of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for education

The Department of Equality has worked closely with the Department of Education this academic year in order to promote the theme of 'Respect and Healthy Relationships' within all local schools. This is as part of the prevention through education aspect of the Government's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

This has been developed in an age-appropriate manner so that the message is communicated effectively. The Department of Equality is delighted with the response by schools such that there has been a diverse range of schemes of work and projects in the past 2 weeks to mark International Day of the Elimination of Domestic Violence.

Primary schools have focused on 'respect' through teacher-led discussions in PSHE lessons and whole school assemblies which included the use of physical space and songs. Displays celebrating kindness and the positive ways in which students use their hands were also a feature. Some schools have created beautiful murals which will form a permanent reminder to staff, students, parents/carers and visitors to the school of the importance of respect for others. These murals are a wonderful celebration of the values of the school and the wider community.

Middle schools have included the theme of 'respect' in their PSHE lessons extending this to include work on healthy relationships and respectful communication with others. Whole-school initiatives have been a central feature of their work and this has been vital in ensuring that all students have had an opportunity to discuss and reflect upon these issues. A number of middle schools have used physical space to create a heart as a symbol of love and hope. In this way, they have taken a collective and powerfully visual stand against violence. Some schools have held whole-school assemblies which included drama pieces and comic sketches and original songs as a means of engaging their students more fully.

Marlene Dalli, Equality Development Officer from the Ministry of Equality co-ordinated the initiative and has worked closely with the Education Advisors at the Department of Education. Ms Dalli delivered presentations on "Respect and Healthy relationships".



As a result of this initiative and all the work carried out by schools, hundreds of local students have been able to learn about the importance of respect and healthy relationships. This initiative, carried out collaboratively with the Department of Education, forms part of the national strategy on domestic abuse through education and awareness. Prevention is a key part of this strategy and, therefore, the work carried out in schools plays an instrumental role in embedding positive values and positive behavior within the young.

Minister for Equality, The Hon. Samantha Sacramento MP, said: “Teachers in all thirteen schools have made a truly concerted effort to address this issue in ways that are age-appropriate, sensitive and engaging for their students. By promoting healthy relationships and respect at a young age, we are already starting to change future attitudes, which will hopefully translate to fewer cases of domestic abuse in the future. I am fortunate to lead a team of highly motivated and effective individuals in the Ministry of Equality who are working proactively with all Government departments to develop the Government’s equality agenda at every level and the results of this strategy are showing. This is achieved by working together with our stakeholder partners and the Department of Education officials and teachers have totally embraced the partnership and this makes for effective learning on such an important social subject”

Minister for Education, The Hon Dr John Cortes MP said, “In schools, our young people have to learn about life and how live it in harmony, with total respect and for the benefit of all. In many ways, this is one of the most important things that educators have to ensure. The teams from Education and Equality are working together as never before to fulfil this vital purpose.’