



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training

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SCHOOL ETHICS COURSE TRIAL BEGINS TODAY

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said the trial of the NSW Government's new student ethics course begins in 10 public primary schools today.

"The ethics course is an alternative for parents who don't choose to send their children to religious scripture classes.

"The course will focus on increasing ethical awareness and decision-making," she said.

Each lesson will explore an ethical dilemma.

"Students will be encouraged to think and talk about things like fairness, honesty, care, rights and responsibilities," Ms Firth said.

"The trial is an Australian first, and is an initiative that is very important to me as Minister.

"The lessons will be delivered by specially trained volunteers and will go for thirty to forty-five minutes per week over a ten week period.

The role of the volunteers is to engage students in ethical discussion, not to offer instruction on what in their opinion is, and isn't ethical.

Ms Firth said the trial was developed by experts at the independent St James Ethics Centre in collaboration with the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW.

"I look forward to feedback on the ethics trial in the spirit of enriching the diversity and rigour of our public school system in NSW," she said.

The President of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW, Di Giblin, said she's pleased to see the trial go ahead.

"We thank the Government for its support.

"We've had enormous interest from parents across the State and we're pleased that this ethics program will offer students who opt-out of Special Religious Education an opportunity to examine their values and ethics in a meaningful way," said Ms Giblin.

Ms Firth said Haberfield Public School in Sydney's Inner West would be the first school to trial the new course from this morning.

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NSW Government schools participating in the trial:

- Baulkham Hills North Public
- Bungendore Public School
- Crown Street Public School
- Darlinghurst Public School
- Ferncourt Public School
- Haberfield Public School
- Hurstville Public School
- Leichhardt Public School
- Randwick Public School
- Rozelle Public School