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We must see how all schools are teaching sex consent

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AVA BENNY-MORRISON

THERE must be an audit into how all NSW schools teach students about relationships and sex to identify where “the gaps are”.

Katrina Marson travelled around the world researching best practice when it came to relationship and sexuality education (RSE) in schools.

In Australia, these subjects are embedded in the curriculums of each state and territory.

But the quality and depth of relationship and sex education varies from school to school.

In line with The Saturday and Sunday Telegraph campaign, A Matter of Consent, Ms Marson has backed calls for all schools in NSW to audit how they teach students about the sensitive issues.

“This is not a product question because there is really good product out there,” Ms Marson, a criminal lawyer, said. “There is plenty of research, resources and material from experts about how to teach children about relationship and sexuality education from a young age.

“It is really easy to say let’s improve the curriculum but that says nothing about how it’s being delivered and supported by the school. Nor how the school and teachers are being supported by the government and wider community.”

Ms Marson is a member of Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy, which is partnering with the campaign.

We are calling on the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) to oversee the audits and ensure the results are publicly available.

“We need to know how schools are currently delivering RSE,” Ms Marson said. “Whether it’s a fleeting lesson once a year to year 10 students, or repeated lessons that start young and build up skills, or bringing in external groups to run regular workshops, so that we can see where the gaps are.”

NSW Education Minister Sarah Mitchell has not ruled out an audit.

“Public schools already track how we deliver the curriculum,” she said.

“But if there are things that we can do to strengthen and improve that, I am very happy to have those conversations.”

**Katrina Marson.**