



2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2020

The Rt. Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP,  
Secretary of State  
20 Great Smith Street,  
London.  
SW1P 3BT  
*(sent via e-mail: [sec-of-state-diary.ps@education.gov.uk](mailto:sec-of-state-diary.ps@education.gov.uk))*

Dear Gavin,

First, let me to congratulate you on your important and powerful presentations on Education during this Covid19 continuing crisis. We are all grateful to yourself and to your department for what must be backbreaking work to ensure all children continue to learn either in virtual or normal class.

I write in response to approaches from a large number of parents and to express some of their concerns. I assure you that while we are in such enormously testing circumstances so please trust I would not bring this matter before you were it not important and urgent.

The Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Guidelines have statutory force for the next academic year, beginning in September. Instruction on how to deliver them in respect of LGBT+ issues has been largely sub-contracted to Stonewall, Mermaids, GIRES and similar lobbying groups.

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You will be aware that the Stonewall guidelines are widely seen by many parents and older children as incorrect and misleading materials to the point of being corrupt and corrupting. You will, of course, know that various iterations of the “Transgender Toolkit for Schools” have been withdrawn by a growing number of local authorities pending Judicial Review, while the Crown Prosecution Service has withdrawn its Guidance on Hate Crimes in Schools pending their own internal review.

As sexual relations between two people from different households has become unlawful, today, it is surely both necessary and appropriate to reconsider the State’s role in RSE, and quickly. The purpose of this letter is to put forward views and concerns which have been given to me for your attention.

In general, RSE Statutory Guidelines are seen by the parents in touch with me to be sensible and well-meant. In your Introduction you acknowledge “there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention”, and you say that “Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.”

In primary schools, “Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents and carers amongst other structures.)” That is the only mention of ‘LGBT’ as far as primary schools are concerned. There is no identification of a blanket need to teach about trans families.

There is no stated need for schools to teach about transgenderism and there is no mention of ‘identity’ at all in the primary school provisions, which seems perfectly sensible to my correspondents.

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Conversely, LGBT is not mentioned with reference to teaching in secondary schools, but Gender Identity is. “75. Pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way.”

This raises two questions.

1. What are the ‘facts’ about Gender Identity?
2. At what age should these facts be taught?

If it is left to activists like Stonewall, Mermaids and GIRES to decide what the facts are and when they should be taught schools ends up with five-year-olds being taught about bisexuality, eight-year-olds are taught to be “whatever kind of girl or boy they want to be”, 11-year-olds are taught about anal sex, and 12-year-olds are set “hardcore pornography” for homework.

This is happening already, although there is no requirement for any of it, and no justification.

Unfortunately, whilst the Guidelines are quite good on what they do want, *they do not prohibit anything* and in consequence seem to be abused. It is, of course, a difficult subject but abdicating responsibility to teachers only for them to abdicate it to minority interest lobby groups is surely unsatisfactory, unhealthy and unsafe.

You acknowledge the correct role of schools in augmenting teaching about relationships and sex which is, nonetheless, primarily a matter of parental responsibility. It is right for the State to ensure that certain bases are covered. Unfortunately, as offered, the Guidelines leave the door open for anyone to teach whatever they want at any age they consider appropriate. That is not right on a matter for which parental and family rights are irrevocably intertwined.

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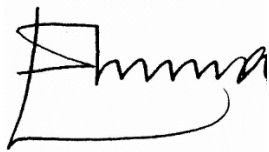
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There is, fortunately, an easy way to correct this. Instead of being permissive (“Teach this and anything else you feel like”) the Guidelines should be restrictive (“Teach this: no more; no less”).

We must surely consider carefully the state’s role in “telling schoolchildren that a bearded man with a penis can be a lesbian and any girls and boys deviating from 1950s gender norms are in the wrong body,” (to borrow Maureen Chadwick’s famous phrase). That is not perceived by most parents as education. That is perceived as indoctrination.

Might it be possible for your Department to take early action with the administering Councils to pull back and reconsider?

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**