

23 May 2018



Kirsty Williams AM  
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Sent by email to: [Kirsty.Williams@assembly.wales](mailto:Kirsty.Williams@assembly.wales)

**RE: Inclusive Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Welsh Schools**

Dear Ms Williams,

We are writing regarding your announcement that SRE will become compulsory in the New Curriculum for Wales. We welcome this announcement and the assurances that SRE will be inclusive, comprehensive and address issues of discrimination head on.

We are concerned, however, that ministers have indicated that schools of a religious character will continue to be permitted to deliver RSE classes in a way that is 'consistent with their ethos'.

We understand that the expert panel on the future of sex and relationships education curriculum in Wales found a particular lack of research on SRE provision and quality in schools with a religious character.<sup>1</sup> Our research focussing on secondary schools examined all 18 maintained secondary faith schools in Wales. While a SRE policy could not be found on the website for of the six schools, the twelve remaining all taught SRE within the tenants of their faith.

Our research (which is included in this letter) is an appendix to *Unsafe Sex Education: The risk of letting religious schools teach within the tenets of their faith*, our report covering schools in England.<sup>2</sup>

Your statement to the Senedd drew attention to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, a shameful episode in our nation's history. Given this, we were disturbed to 'promoting' homosexuality, including direct reference to Section 28 – as though it were in effect – in St. John Baptist High School, updated September 2017. Our research cites other examples of explicitly and implicitly anti LGBTQ teaching in almost half of the policies examined.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/180104-future-of-the-sex-and-relationships-education-curriculum-in-wales-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2018/05/most-faith-schools-distorting-sex-education-nss-study-finds>

The expert panel warns of the risk of poor SRE drawing on “scripts of risk, shame and blame”, calling for a curriculum that is “fundamentally non-judgemental, non-stigmatising and anti-discriminatory”.

Yet our research uncovered examples of problematic teachings include the promotion of shame surrounding masturbation, premarital sex, contraception and abortion- all related to the schools’ religious ethos. We therefore seek your assurances that the SRE section of the New Curriculum for Wales will:

1. Apply to all schools, including those with a religious character
2. Require accurate non-judgmental teaching about contraceptives and abortion
3. Not provide the opportunity for faith schools to use SRE to promote religious teachings
4. Require accurate non-judgmental teaching about LGBTQ people
5. Discourage shame based approaches to any aspect of normal human sexuality

We look forward to your response, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns.

Kind regards,

Stephen Evans, CEO  
National Secular Society