

# Family Education Trust

(Family and Youth Concern)

A Company Limited by Guarantee No. 3503533; Registered Charity No. 1070500

Jubilee House, 19-21 High Street, Whitton, Twickenham TW2 7LB

tel: 020 8894 2525 fax: 020 8894 3535

e-mail: [info@familyeducation.plus.com](mailto:info@familyeducation.plus.com) web-site: [www.famyouth.org.uk](http://www.famyouth.org.uk)

---

## **Government sex education plans set out to limit the influence of parents and remove discretion from schools, says new report**

**Media information: embargo 00.01 on Monday 20 July 2009**

Making sex education a compulsory part of the national curriculum would limit the influence of parents, remove discretion from local schools and run counter to the government's general education policy, according to a new report from the independent research charity Family Education Trust.

The Trust's report, *Too Much, Too Soon*, is released as the government's public consultation on Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education, enters its final week. Under government plans, schools would be placed under a legal obligation to provide sex education to all pupils from the beginning of primary school as part of a PSHE programme.

The report's author, Family Education Trust director Norman Wells stated:

*'Making PSHE statutory would inevitably reduce the influence of parents over what is taught. Schools are currently required to consult with parents with regard to their sex education policies and to be sensitive to their wishes. However, making PSHE part of the national curriculum would inevitably make schools less accountable to parents in what is a particularly sensitive and controversial subject area.'*

At the moment, schools are free to develop their own policies on sex education in line with their own ethos. However, if the government mandates PSHE centrally, it will inevitably remove discretion from schools at the local level, and primary schools will, for the first time, be obliged to provide sex education.

---

Trustees: Arthur Cornell MEd F.Coll.P (Chairman); Betty, Lady Grantchester; Dr John Guly MB BS DMJ;  
Eric Hester BA (Vice Chairman); Dr Joseph Lim BPharm, MRPharmS, PhD; Simon J Ling MA FCA (Hon Treasurer);  
Mrs Valerie Riches (Founder President); Dr Trevor Stammers MA FRCGP DRCOG; Robert Whelan MA Director: Norman Wells FRSA

Sponsors: Professor John Bonnar MA MD FRCOG; The Viscountess Brentford OBE; Peter Dawson OBE BSc FRSA;  
The Baroness Elles; Michael McKenzie CB QC; The Duke of Montrose; The Baroness O'Cathain OBE; Professor Dennis O'Keeffe

Norman Wells observed:

*‘One of the government’s stated aims in proposing to make PSHE statutory is to ensure consistency. This raises the very real possibility that some schools would be forced to compromise their beliefs on controversial areas such as contraception, abortion and homosexuality in the name of consistency. Allowing schools flexibility to teach sex education in line with their ethical and moral values is incompatible with the goal of consistency.’*

Towards the end of last year, government ministers stated: ‘Recent curriculum developments have been aimed at reducing the statutory core and allowing schools even more autonomy to organise their curriculum.’ However, making PSHE statutory would be a step in the opposite direction.

According to the Family Education Trust report:

*‘Introducing sex education at an early age runs the risk of breaking down children’s natural sense of reserve. Far from being a hindrance, children’s natural inhibitions and sense of modesty in talking about sexual matters are healthy and provide a necessary safeguard against both sexual abuse and casual attitudes towards sexual intimacy later on.’*

Norman Wells commented:

*‘It is unconvincing to say the least to suggest that young people are placed at risk of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections for want of knowing the proper names for two or three parts of their anatomy from the age of five.’*

*‘It is equally spurious to defend compulsory sex education on the basis that young children need to learn that their relationship with their parents is different from their relationship with their grandparents, which in turn is different from their relationship to their siblings, their friends, their neighbours and their teachers. Children already learn about different types of relationships in the context of everyday life. There is no need to formalise and professionalise such things by adding them to an already overloaded curriculum.’*

Written to alert parents to what is going on in school sex education lessons, *Too Much, Too Soon* contends that: 'Sex education is an ideological battlefield on which a war is being waged for the hearts and minds of our children.' Norman Wells remarked:

*'Behind the plausible-sounding arguments and innocuous-sounding words there is a definite agenda at work to undermine the role of parents and to tear down traditional moral standards. The need for parents to be alert and vigilant has never been greater.'*

**ENDS**

### **Notes for editors**

*Too Much, Too Soon* is available from Family Education Trust, priced at £3.50 (inc p&p)

The government launched a 12-week public consultation on its plans for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education on 30 April. The consultation is being managed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the consultation period will conclude at 5.00pm on **Friday 24 July 2009**. Full details will be found at [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_22258.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_22258.aspx)

Family Education Trust is an educational charity committed to promoting stable family life and the welfare of children and young people.