

# 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 web-site: www.famyouth.org.uk

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## **Government goes back on commitment to consult parents before imposing sex education on every school**

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In announcing that sex and relationship education is to be made compulsory in all schools, the government has gone back on its commitment to undertake a full public consultation before making any decisions about substantive changes to the present arrangements. Family Education Trust director, Norman Wells, commented:

*‘Given that the government’s review group was largely made up of individuals known for their ideological commitment to compulsory sex education at all key stages, their proposal comes as no surprise. However, the Schools Minister assured pro-family groups in July that they would be given the opportunity to comment on the group’s recommendations before any final decisions were taken. It is very disturbing that the Minister has gone back on his word and taken such a far-reaching decision without reference to parents and groups representing parents’ concerns.’*

The government claims that making sex and relationship classes mandatory from the beginning of primary school will help reduce teenage conception rates and sexually transmitted infections. Norman Wells responded:

*‘There is no evidence to suggest that starting sex education in primary schools is going to reduce teenage pregnancy rates and improve sexual health. We have had 30 years of sex education in secondary schools and it has never been easier for teenagers to get hold of contraception without their parents knowing, yet we still have the highest rate of teenage conceptions in Western Europe, and both abortion rates and sexually transmitted infection rates have continued to rise.*

*‘Up until now, the government has been setting its sights too low with all its emphasis on contraceptive education. The fact is that contraception offers only limited protection against sexually transmitted infections and provides no protection at all against the damaging emotional consequences of casual sex. The so-called “safer sex” message is abandoning young people to the heartache and misery of a series of broken relationships, and exposing them to the risk of disease and mental health problems. All this in turn makes it more difficult for them to establish a truly intimate, trusting and fulfilling marriage later on.*

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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 BSc FRCGP; 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

*'If we want to help young people build stable, lifelong marriages that will provide security for their own children in due course, a completely different approach is required. We need to recover the qualities of commitment, faithfulness, exclusiveness, and permanence which lie at the heart of any successful relationship.'*

Under the government's plans announced today, children as young as five will be required to receive lessons in sex and relationships. Norman Wells commented:

*'The sex education lobby invariably tries to play down what these classes will involve at the early stages. They say it's all about teaching children about different types of relationship and the names for parts of the body. But children already learn about different types of relationship in the context of everyday life in the home, at school and in the community, and parents can be safely left to decide for themselves whether they use the proper biological terms for private body parts or pet names. There is simply no need to formalise and professionalise such things by adding them to an already overloaded curriculum.'*

*'One of the dangers of introducing sex education at an early age is that it runs the risk of breaking down children's natural sense of reserve. Far from being a hindrance, our natural inhibitions and sense of modesty in talking about sexual matters are healthy and provide a necessary safeguard against casual attitudes towards sexual intimacy. Rather than seeking to break down children's natural sense of reserve, parents and teachers would do far better to discuss the self-giving and self-sacrifice that are the hallmarks of true love and to model them in their own lives.'*

The government has yet to decide whether parents will retain the right to withdraw their children from sex and relationship education classes that they are uncomfortable with. Norman Wells observed:

*'The law stresses that pupils should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. It is therefore vital that schools should remain accountable to parents in such a sensitive and controversial area and that parents should retain the right to withdraw their children from sex education classes.'*

**ENDS**

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

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