

Sex and Relationships Education Guidance

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:
19 April 2010

Your comments must reach us by that date.



department for
children, schools and families

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential. ☐

Name **Paul Pettinger**
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Address: **1 Gower Street, London, WC1E 6HD.**

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Holly Turner on:

Telephone: 01325 392256

e-mail: holly.turner@dcfs.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: consultation.unit@dcfs.gsi.gov.uk

Please select the category which best describes you.

<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority/PCT	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent or carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil Referral Unit
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Professional/Organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Sector Organisation/Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> School (Please state whether Primary, Secondary or Special)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state)		

Please Specify:

Q1) Does the introduction clearly set out the importance of SRE?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Q2) Does Section 2 clearly describe SRE? If not, what do you think is missing?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Q3) Is Section 3 helpful in setting out the range of processes that need to be in place and the roles that different partners have in planning and teaching good SRE?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Although this section is generally well detailed and thorough, we have the following concerns.

Section 3.1 Principles Underpinning SRE, p20

We believe that it is vital that the guidance clearly communicates the role that PSHE has in challenging prejudice and discrimination so as to prevent ambiguity.

We recommend that sentence three of the penultimate paragraph on p20 is strengthened as below. The words in bold are ours:

'Many people still face ~~unacceptable~~ prejudice and discrimination on the basis of their sexuality, or what they look like, **which is unacceptable**, and intolerance towards difference needs to be challenged.'

'Case-study: Meeting the needs of children and young people in a multi-faith setting', section 3.10, p46.

The case study uses the exclusive and inappropriate language of 'faith', rather than 'religion and belief'. Non-religious groups are not faith groups and should not be described as such, so the terminology used here should change.

Q4) Is Section 4 helpful in describing how the whole-school should be involved in SRE?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

Comments:

Section 4.1 The whole school approach

We welcome the penultimate paragraph on p52, which stresses the requirement for head teachers and schools to tackle sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying in their provision of SRE. We believe it is crucial that this paragraph should feature in the final guidance document.

Section 4.3 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We are unclear what distinctive rights schools with a religious character have compared to other maintained schools when drawing up a confidentiality policy, as referred to on p55, paragraph 4, sentence 4. Given this confusion, the sentence either needs further clarification, or should be removed.

Q5) Is Section 5 helpful in describing what can be used for teaching SRE?



Yes



No



Not Sure

Comments:

Q6) Are the messages in the guidance clear, workable, and good enough to be put into practice?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

Comments:

Overall, we believe the proposed guidance is a vast improvement on the guidance that it replaces. It emphasises the importance of broad and balanced SRE and is more detailed than its predecessor, but still largely avoids specialist terminology, so will be accessible for both governors and teachers.

However, the guidance repeatedly fails to put civil partnerships on an equal footing with marriage. We are confident that this is simply an oversight. As such, the references to 'marriage' on pages 1, 9, 21 (twice), 34, 45 (twice) should all be replaced with 'marriage and civil partnerships'.

Section 1.6

Section 1.6 seeks to represent the changes to SRE that are proposed by the current Children, Schools and Families Bill. We are very concerned that this section stresses the freedoms that schools will have in determining their approach to SRE, without informing them of their new responsibilities.

Both Vernon Coaker MP (the Minister of State for Schools and Learners) and Baroness Morgan of Drefelin (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Children, Schools and Families) have made clear in parliamentary debate about the Children, Schools and Families Bill that all state maintained schools, including faith schools, will have a duty to comply with the principles set out in sections 4.5 to 4.7 of Clause 11 of the Bill (please see columns 258-259 at <http://tinyurl.com/VernonCoakerclarification> and columns 125-126 at <http://tinyurl.com/BaronessMorganclarification>).

Sections 4.5 to 4.7 of Clause 11 of the Bill require that the SRE provided in schools be accurate and balanced, be appropriate to the ages of the pupils concerned and their religious and cultural backgrounds, that it reflect a reasonable range of religious, cultural and other perspectives and endeavour to promote equality. Encourage acceptance of diversity and emphasise the importance of both rights and responsibilities.

There has been a lot of contradictory coverage in the media about what extent "faith schools" will be permitted to determine the content of the SRE they provide. The guidance should therefore help provide clarity and set out the principles in sections 4.5 to 4.7 that all maintained schools will have a duty to adhere to when providing PSHE in future, as has been made clear by Ministers. It is vital that the guidance presents the Bill as accurately as possible, as it will be read by many teachers and governors at a time when they will be preparing

for PSHE to become part of the National Curriculum.

Consequently we suggest that a new bullet point be included after the third bullet point of section 1.6, which could read:

- governing bodies and head teachers at all maintained schools will be required to ensure that the SRE taught in their schools is accurate and balanced, is appropriate to the ages of the pupils concerned and to their religious and cultural backgrounds, reflects a reasonable range of religious, cultural and other perspectives, and endeavours to promote equality, encourages acceptance of diversity and emphasises the importance of both rights and responsibilities.

Q7) What do you think would be the best ways of getting these messages to young people and parents?

Comments:

It is apparent that new, simpler and shorter guidance should be produced for these audiences, setting out the rights and entitlement to SRE that both pupils and parents have.

Q8) What are the particular issues the guidance needs to add/highlight?

Comments:

As highlighted in our response to question 6, section 1.6 should set out the principles to which all maintained schools will have to adhere when providing SRE. This will reinforce a clear message and hopefully counter high profile and contradictory ones that have appeared in the media on this issue.

9 a) Is the appendix provided in the guidance useful?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

9 b) Would you like the contents to be part of the guidance or left as an appendix?

☐ Left as Guidance

☐ As an Appendix

☒ No Preference

Comments:

Q10) What extra appendices are needed?

Comments:

Q11) Case studies have been included. Are they enough or do we need to cover other areas?

☐

Case studies
sufficient

☒

Other areas need
covering

☐

Not
sure

Comments:

As mentioned in our answer to question 3, the case study under section 3.10 is an inappropriate example of inclusive working between religion and belief groups and should be amended.

Q12) Do you have a case study you would like to send us? If so please let us know the subject and provide contact details.

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Q13) If you have further comments to make on the content of this draft or on how we might publish and circulate the final document, please give them below.

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ☒

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DCSF public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DCSF consultations are conducted, please contact Donna Harrison, DCSF Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 794304 / email: donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 April 2010

Send by post to: Consultation Unit, Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

Send by e-mail to: SREGuidance.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk