# Shadow Cabinet Secretary demands release of controversial Bridgend sex education presentation



Shadow Education Cabinet Secretary Natasha Asghar MS has formally requested a copy of the presentation used in Personal, Social, and Health Education (PHSE) lessons in Bridgend County Borough Council schools, following concerns raised about its content. This presentation was developed by ASSIA, a provider engaged by the council to deliver sex education materials aimed at senior school pupils.

Asghar has expressed deep concern regarding the inclusion of references to choking as part of sexual relations in educational content. She remarked, “I remain appalled that anyone involved in educating our children would consider including references to such a dangerous and risky act in educational materials.” Her statement underscores a broader anxiety regarding the safety and appropriateness of material being presented to young people. Alongside her demand for transparency regarding the specific content delivered, she has also called for the council to reconsider its relationship with ASSIA, questioning the initial judgment that defined the presentation as suitable for educational purposes.

This controversy unfolds against the backdrop of a significant transformation in Welsh education regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Since the implementation of a new curriculum in 2022, schools in Wales are mandated to teach topics related to gender identity and sexual education. This approach aims to equip students with tools for understanding consent, respect, and healthy relationships, and advocates for inclusivity, particularly with respect to LGBTQ+ themes. Proponents argue that such education is vital for fostering a safe environment for students, with Education Minister Jeremy Miles stating that the curriculum is intended to “keep children safe.”

Opposition to the RSE curriculum, however, persists. Several parents have mounted legal challenges arguing that the content is inappropriate for primary-aged children. The High Court has ruled on multiple occasions in favour of the curriculum, affirming that it does not breach legal protections against indoctrination and that the materials are tailored to be suitable for children’s developmental stages. Yet campaigners from Public Child Protection Wales maintain their stance, asserting that these teachings should not be a compulsory aspect of education and advocating for parental rights to withdraw their children from such classes.

The push for a review of educational content in Bridgend highlights ongoing tensions over sex education in schools—tensions rooted in differing views on what constitutes age-appropriate material. As the council faces scrutiny over its decisions, the debate over RSE is likely to intensify, with calls such as Asghar’s emphasizing the need for accountability in how sensitive topics are introduced to young learners.

The implications of these discussions are profound, not only for education policy in Wales but also for the future of how children engage with topics of consent, identity, and safety. The balancing act between ensuring comprehensive education and addressing parental concerns is shaping a pivotal moment in the landscape of Welsh education.

As the quest for transparency in Bridgend continues, the wider discourse on sexual education remains fraught, embodying broader societal divides over issues of upbringing, safety, and inclusivity in education.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25120837.bridgend-council-asked-release-sex-education-presentation/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25120837.bridgend-council-asked-release-sex-education-presentation/?ref=rss)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-12-22/parents-lose-legal-challenge-against-teaching-gender-identity-and-sex-in-schools), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/22/parents-wales-lose-legal-fight-gender-sexuality-tuition-primary-schools), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/22/sex-education-given-lgbt-inclusive-overhaul-wales)
4. Paragraph 4: [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-11-17/parents-launch-legal-challenge-over-wales-new-sex-education-curriculum), [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2023-06-08/protesters-lose-high-court-battle-against-wales-new-sex-education-curriculum), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64067393)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25120837.bridgend-council-asked-release-sex-education-presentation/?ref=rss)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25120837.bridgend-council-asked-release-sex-education-presentation/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-12-22/parents-lose-legal-challenge-against-teaching-gender-identity-and-sex-in-schools> - A group of parents lost a legal challenge against the Welsh Government's new Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum, which mandates teaching about gender identity and sex in primary schools. The High Court ruled that the curriculum did not breach the prohibition on indoctrination, and campaigners from Public Child Protection Wales vowed to appeal the decision. Education Minister Jeremy Miles emphasized that RSE aims to keep children safe and promote respect and healthy relationships.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/22/parents-wales-lose-legal-fight-gender-sexuality-tuition-primary-schools> - Parents in Wales lost a legal fight against the teaching of gender identity and sex in primary schools. The High Court dismissed their claims, stating that the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum does not advocate any particular identity or sexual lifestyle over another. Education Minister Jeremy Miles welcomed the judgment, emphasizing that RSE is intended to keep children safe and promote healthy relationships.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/22/sex-education-given-lgbt-inclusive-overhaul-wales> - Wales announced an overhaul of its sex education curriculum, renaming it Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ themes. The new curriculum, effective from 2022, aims to be embedded across the curriculum rather than taught as a separate subject, focusing on consent, domestic abuse, and respecting diversity. Education Secretary Kirsty Williams stated that the traditional approach to sex education was outdated and needed modernization.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-11-17/parents-launch-legal-challenge-over-wales-new-sex-education-curriculum> - A group of parents launched a legal challenge against Wales' new Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum, which includes teaching primary school children about gender identity and sex. The campaigners argue that the curriculum is inappropriate for primary-age children and breaches the European Convention of Human Rights. The two-day judicial review was brought by Public Child Protection Wales, seeking the right for parents to withdraw their children from RSE classes.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2023-06-08/protesters-lose-high-court-battle-against-wales-new-sex-education-curriculum> - Campaigners against the Welsh Government’s new Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum lost their bid to appeal a High Court judgment. The statutory guidance, launched in September, mandates teaching RSE to children from the age of seven. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal, with Lord Justice Males stating that the curriculum does not mandate the teaching or promotion of particular sexual lifestyles in ways that amount to indoctrination.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64067393> - Parents lost a legal challenge against the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Welsh schools. The High Court dismissed the claimants' arguments, stating that the curriculum is age-appropriate and does not breach the prohibition on indoctrination. Education Minister Jeremy Miles emphasized that RSE aims to keep children safe and promote healthy relationships, and that parents can expect schools to engage with them about their plans for teaching RSE.