# Proposed Changes to Sex Education Guidelines in England



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**London, May 15, 2024** – Education Secretary Gillian Keegan is set to announce new guidelines that will alter how and when sex education is taught in English primary and secondary schools. These proposals will be unveiled tomorrow and are aimed at introducing stricter limitations on the subject matter for younger age groups.

Under the new guidelines, sex education will be completely banned for children under the age of nine. This means that lessons on sex education will not commence until Year Five, which includes children aged nine to ten.

Additionally, teaching on gender identity will be restricted, with the government classifying it as a 'contested subject' that should not be presented as fact. Furthermore, parents will have the right to review all educational materials used in sex education classes.

The proposals come in response to concerns raised by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, following reports from Conservative MPs about 'age-inappropriate, extreme, sexualising, and inaccurate' content being taught to young children. The Prime Minister ordered a review that led to these proposed restrictions.

From Year Five, students will be taught basic concepts related to conception and birth for safety purposes. As they progress to secondary school, the curriculum will expand to include topics like contraception, STIs, and abortion by age 13. Other subjects such as domestic violence, coercive control, sexual violence, and the risks associated with pornography will also be introduced at appropriate ages.

The new guidelines stipulate that all educational content must be scientifically accurate and age-appropriate. This revised guidance is poised to become statutory, meaning schools will be required by law to adhere to it.

These changes mark a significant shift from previous guidelines that allowed for 'relationships education' from the age of four, supplemented with age-appropriate sex education.

Education Secretary Keegan emphasized that these changes are in part to ensure transparency and involve parents more directly in their children's education. In October, she called for schools to share sex education materials with parents, stating that parents have a fundamental right to know what their children are being taught.

Conservative MPs like Miriam Cates and Nick Fletcher have supported these changes, asserting that current educational materials often push politically motivated agendas and can lead children towards confusion and harm regarding sex and gender identity.

The final details of the new guidelines will be confirmed after a consultation period, but the overall framework is aimed at creating a curriculum that is both educational and protective of children's developmental stages.