# UK Government Proposes New Guidance on Sex Education, Delaying Explicit Discussions Until Year Nine



The UK government has proposed new guidance on sex education, seeking to delay explicit discussions of sex until students are in Year Nine (ages 13 and over). Education Secretary Gillian Keegan is set to announce that sex education for infants will be banned, with lessons permitted to start only from Year Five (ages 9-10). This proposal includes teaching gender identity as a "contested subject" and focusing on "biological" facts. The revised guidance also suggests that topics like contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and abortion should not be discussed until Year Nine.

Currently, Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils from the age of four, focusing on healthy, respectful relationships within family and friends, and including a variety of family structures. While sex education is optional in primary schools, schools are required to cover reproduction in animals in Year Three (ages 7-8) and discuss puberty by Year Five.

The new guidance has sparked significant debate. Critics, including the National Association of Head Teachers and the Association of School and College Leaders, warn that rigid age limits could push children to seek information from unreliable sources. Experts argue that shielding children from sex education could be dangerous, noting that early education helps prevent exposure to harmful online content. They contend that discussions about biological facts and safeguarding topics like safe and unsafe touches should start early. Supporters believe it protects children from inappropriate content and politically contested ideas.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak initiated the review after Tory MPs highlighted concerns over "age-inappropriate and sexualizing" content being taught to children. The proposed changes await consultation and are expected to come into force quickly following public and parliamentary debate.