# PM Rishi Sunak introduces new guidance on sex education and gender identity in English schools



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has introduced new guidance on sex education and gender identity in schools in England, aiming to change how these subjects are taught. Effective April 22, 2024, the guidance mandates that sex education will not be provided to students under nine years old, while discussions of explicit sexual activity will be delayed until age 13. Furthermore, the concept of gender identity is labeled as "highly contested" and is excluded from the curriculum.

This policy emerges as Sunak faces significant political pressure, with critics arguing the move is politically driven ahead of the general election due by January 2025. Education Secretary Gillian Keegan emphasized that teaching must focus on facts rather than "contested views" and confirmed the inclusion of clear age limits to prevent children from being exposed to "inappropriate content" too early. Keegan admitted there is no comprehensive data on the prevalence of such teaching.

The draft guidance, which is under consultation until mid-July, has sparked controversy. Educators and rights groups have voiced concerns, warning that it may lead students to seek information from unreliable online sources, while some organizations liken the proposal to the discredited Section 28 that once prohibited discussions of homosexuality in schools. Critics argue the policy could stigmatize transgender individuals and leave children less informed about sexuality and gender issues.

Sunak defended the guidance, linking it to ensuring "common sense" in education. Meanwhile, the Labour Party has called for age-appropriate education that accurately reflects the reality of transgender people. The guidance aims to strike a balance, keeping parents informed while protecting children's innocence.