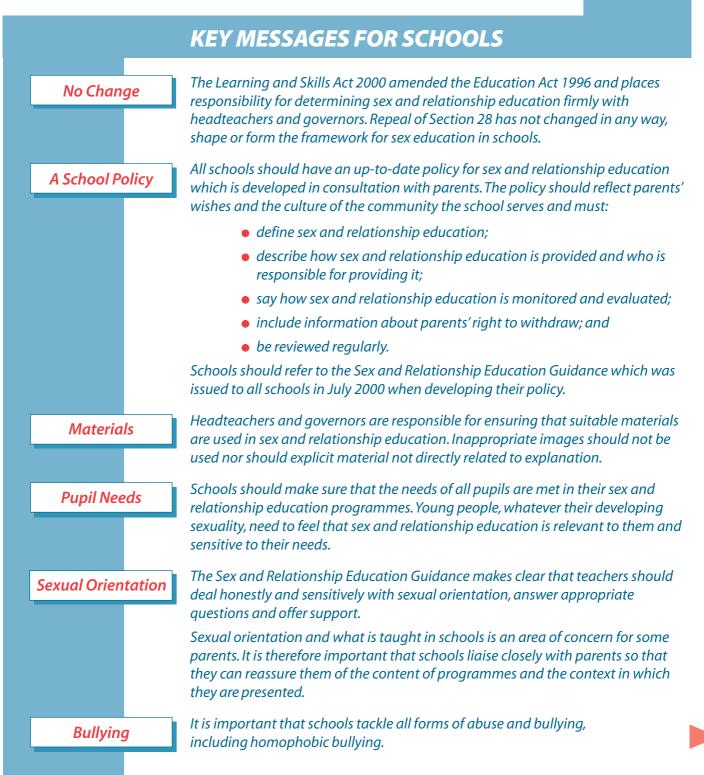
department for education and skills

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SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION -SCHOOLS RESPONSIBILITIES

This factsheet clarifies for schools their responsibilities for addressing sex and sexuality within sex and relationship education (SRE) following the repeal of 'Section 28'. Although Section 28 did not apply to schools, it has caused confusion over what could be taught about sexuality. This factsheet reminds schools of what the Government's Sex and Relationship Education Guidance says about dealing with issues of sexuality and points to further guidance and sources of information.



Q. What should be taught about sex and relationships in schools?

The framework for Personal, Social and Health Education, and the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance issued to schools in July 2000 set out what should be taught.

The OfSTED report on sex and relationship education, published in April 2002, offers useful statements of learning outcomes for sex and relationship education for each key stage.

Q. Who is responsible for choosing the materials used in sex and relationship education; and how can we ensure that inappropriate materials are not used?

Headteachers and governors are responsible for making decisions about teaching and materials and they must have regard to the advice given in the Government's SRE Guidance.

Schools should ensure that teaching and materials are appropriate for the age and cultural background of pupils.

Schools should consult parents regularly on their sex and relationship policies and on sensitive materials. They should take on board any concerns raised about teaching and materials. There should be no reason for schools to use materials which a majority of parents consider unsuitable.

Q. What was Section 28?

Section 28 was the common name for Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1988. This section prohibited local authorities in England and Wales from 'promoting' homosexuality.

Q. Why didn't it apply to schools?

Because the Learning and Skills Act 2000 amended the Education Act 1996 and placed the responsibility for sex and relationship education firmly on teachers and governors. Section 28 was therefore legally obsolete with respect to teaching in schools.

Q. What role do local authorities have in sex education in schools?

Local authorities play an important, supportive role, for example in suggesting materials to aid teachers, but ultimate decisions about sex education rest with school governing bodies, having regard to the Government's Sex and Relationship Education Guidance and in consultation with parents.

Key documents and sources of advice

Sex and Relationship Education Guidance - Issued by DfEE in July 2000 *www.dfes.gov.uk/sreguidance*

SRE and Parents - leaflet for parents including information about their right to withdraw their child from SRE

www.dfes.gov.uk/sreandparents

Sex and Relationships Education - Support for School Governors - factsheet produced by the National Children's Bureau *www.ncb.org.uk/resources*

OfSTED Report on Education about Sex and Relationships *www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications*

DfES Anti-Bullying Pack - 'Don't Suffer in Silence' www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying

Useful websites

www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk www.ncb.org/sef