



Women's Rights Network NI

Reforming Relationships and Sexuality Education in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Assembly: Committee for Education - Mini Inquiry into Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Schools

Submitted by: Women's Rights Network Northern Ireland

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women's Rights Network Northern Ireland (WRN NI) is grateful for the opportunity to make this submission to the Committee for Education. We raise concerns about aspects of current Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Northern Ireland regarding safeguarding, educational standards and the prioritisation of ideology over child welfare.

Sex education traditionally focuses on biological facts, reproduction, health and consent. In contrast, 'sexuality' education introduces contested concepts from gender identity (transgender) ideology, social justice and adult sexual rights movements. Many RSE guidelines and sex/sexuality education providers include materials which confuse and sexualise children.

This approach aligns with problematic UNESCO and WHO Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) global standards. The *NI CCEA RSE Progression Framework*¹ cites the UNESCO *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (p.1) as a key reference.² We draw your attention to *Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO and WHO Standards 2023*.³ This review shows that these standards do not take a safeguarding first approach. The CSE global standards promote gender identity ideology and use anti-safeguarding concepts: e.g. children's sexuality, sexual rights and children's rights to sexual knowledge and experience.

We identify ideological and inappropriate content in Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment's (CCEA) RSE resources. CCEA rightly reminds schools of the safeguarding duty to check any resources used in teaching. However, this does not excuse CCEA from including and signposting inappropriate content. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Northern Ireland's RSE policy and delivery must take a safeguarding first approach. It must be fact-based and age appropriate with full transparency for parents.

We present seven areas of concern:

- **Gender Identity**
- **Age Inappropriate Content & Sexualisation**
- **Sexual Orientation & Queer Theory**
- **Pornography**
- **Consent Education**
- **Privilege-based Frameworks**
- **Surrogacy & Egg Donation**

¹ [Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression Framework](#) & Appendix 3

² [International technical guidance on sexuality education](#) & Appendix 4

³ [Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO and WHO Standards](#)

Recommendations

1. Remove all gender identity content from RSE.
2. Prohibit schools from engaging in social transition (e.g. pronoun changes) of any pupil.
3. Ensure full parental review and oversight of all RSE resources.
4. RSE content should be based on biological reality and age-appropriate teaching.
5. Children must not be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials.
6. External sex/sexuality education providers, online or in school, must be subjected to rigorous safeguarding checks.
7. Use the term LGB or lesbian gay and bisexual to accurately describe same-sex orientation.
8. Do not conflate sexual orientation and gender identity, and remove LGBT/LGBTQ+ terminology.
9. Reject queer theory and other activist and ideological content.
10. RSE must take a porn-critical stance.
11. Schools must be pornography free environments.
12. RSE should not promote the idea that use of or participation in pornography is safe or healthy for anyone - children or adults.
13. Consent must not be taught in isolation.
14. The appropriate age to teach consent must be considered carefully.
15. RSE should emphasise boundaries, including the legal limits of consent in UK law.
16. Eliminate all privilege-based teaching (e.g., male, white, or heterosexual privilege).
17. Emphasise equality, mutual respect, and personal responsibility.
18. Uphold the legal duty to foster the moral and intellectual development of all pupils (Education (NI) Order 2006).
19. Do not promote or normalise surrogacy or egg donation.
20. If discussed, surrogacy should be presented accurately, highlighting the ethical issues and the physical and psychological risks to the egg donor, mother and baby.

Gender Identity

CCEA RSE materials promote gender identity ideology - e.g. *LGBTQ+ Matters Key Stage 3/4 Unit 4: Gender Identity*⁴ - a contested belief system lacking scientific basis. Clinical evidence (e.g. *Cass Review*⁵ 2024 and other clinical and sociological studies⁶) highlight the risks of encouraging and affirming gender identity, including social and psychological harm, and irreversible medical interventions.

The Policy Exchange report *Asleep at the Wheel*⁷ 2023 warns that many UK schools treat gender identity as fact and routinely affirm children's self-declared gender identities without telling parents.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Remove all gender identity content from RSE.
2. Prohibit schools from engaging in social transition (e.g. pronoun changes) of any pupil.
3. Ensure full parental review and oversight of all RSE resources.

Key concerns:

- Teaching gender identity interferes with healthy child development. It prioritises ideology over reality. It leads to confusion, social and psychological distress and safeguarding risks. The Education Authority NI resource *Supporting Transgender Young People*⁸ promotes gender identity and gender affirmation; it does not prioritise safeguarding.
- Gender affirmation concretises an imagined identity which may lead to experimental hormonal and surgical treatment (with damaging, irreversible consequences).⁹
- Gender identity ideology reinforces sex stereotypes and often targets children who may well grow up to be gay or lesbian.
- CCEA signposts to organisations like Educate and Celebrate (see next section) and Gender Identity Research & Education Society (GIREs), which are gender identity lobbyists, not neutral educators.
- Asserting the reality, immutability and importance of sex, and questioning gender identity are labelled transphobic by supporters of gender identity ideology. CCEA aligns transphobia with homophobia. However, questioning gender identity is not analogous to being anti-gay.
- Anti-bullying initiatives often include embedded promotion of gender identity, e.g. CCEA and local external providers foreground 'transphobic bullying' and 'correct terminology'. This is insidious because both pupils and teachers may fear that

⁴ [Gender Identity](#)

⁵ [Cass Review 2024](#)

⁶ [Emerging and accumulating safety signals for the use of estrogen among transgender women; Studies | SEGM & Parent Resource: Protect Children from Gender Ideology](#)

⁷ ["Asleep at the Wheel" \(2023\)](#)

⁸ [Supporting Transgender Young People | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#)

⁹ [Cass Review 2024](#) & also footnote 6

challenging or disagreeing with the underlying concepts will itself be considered bullying behaviour.¹⁰

Legal and Safeguarding Analysis:

- Karen Monaghan KC's legal analysis of a *Trans Inclusive School Toolkit*¹¹ 2024 demonstrates that gender identity-based school policies breach legal duties around safeguarding, child welfare and educational integrity.
- Safe Schools Alliance UK has documented the safeguarding failure of numerous UK providers of sex/sexuality education: *Parents' guide to external PSHE/RSE providers*.¹²

Age Inappropriate Content & Sexualisation

The *RSE Progression Framework* in Northern Ireland indicates children should know the meaning of 'transgender' at Key Stage 2 (p.22).¹³ At age 7 children are being exposed to ideas which contradict safeguarding principles and reality.

'Sexuality education' can be a trojan horse for the sexualisation of children. Some CCEA lessons signpost organisations and resources which include inappropriate and sexualising materials.

Specific Recommendations:

4. RSE content should be based on biological reality and age-appropriate teaching.
5. Children must not be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials.
6. External sex/sexuality education providers, online or in school, must be subjected to rigorous safeguarding checks.

Key Concerns:

Gender Identity:

- Teaching young children 'to know' that someone whom they can tell is a man is 'actually a woman' requires children to deny reality and their own perception and understanding. It prioritises other people's feelings or beliefs over children's safety.
- Teaching that internal feelings override biological sex is scientifically incoherent.
- Teaching children conflicting messages about their bodies or identity creates psychological distress and undermines their ability to recognise harm.
- Gender identity encourages children to interpret nonconformity to sex stereotypes as evidence of being trans or non-binary.

Sexualisation:

¹⁰ [Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic \(HBT\) Bullying & 'All Out' Anti-Bullying Workshops - Belfast](#)

¹¹ [Advice of Karon Monaghan KC.pdf](#)

¹² [Parents' guide to external PSHE / RSE providers](#)

¹³ [Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression Framework](#) - see also Appendix 3 below

- Sexualisation is the imposition of adult sexuality onto children.
- Some sex education providers/guidelines introduce sexualised material to children at inappropriate ages. Exposing children to sexualised materials can erode their boundaries, and contributes to the sexualisation of children. A 2010 Home Office report *Sexualisation of Young People*¹⁴ argues that the sexualisation of children (particularly in a pornified culture) normalises the idea that children can be related to as sexual objects.
- CCEA provides a list of 'LGBTQ+' links for primary age children: *Primary Links LGBTQ+*.¹⁵ This is an entirely inappropriate framing of a resource at this developmental stage (see next section regarding the terminology LGBTQ+).
- The CCEA resource links include activist, lobbyist organisations such as Educate and Celebrate and No Outsiders. Educate and Celebrate falsely claimed Ofsted endorsement. It closed in 2024 following controversy about its activities. Its highly visible patron Stephen Ireland has recently been convicted of numerous sexual offences including the rape of a child. *"If the council had listened to me, this paedophile would have been stopped": In 2021, reports of a Surrey Pride founder's 'abuse of power' were ignored. Four years on, he's been jailed for a string of sexual offences.* The Telegraph, 1 July 2025.¹⁶
- CCEA links to The Classroom/Schools OUT UK which collaborated (now dead links) with sex education provider The Proud Trust. The Proud Trust produced a highly inappropriate sex education resource called the Dice Game. The game, using two dice, encourages children to imagine and discuss sexual acts involving pairings of: vulva/vagina, penis, anus, mouth, hands/fingers, object. Reviews by Transgender Trend and RSE Review analyse The Proud Trust.¹⁷ (See screenshots Appendix 2).
- CCEA signposts to external groups involved in dangerous sexual advocacy such as The Rainbow Project NI (which offers chem sex and group sex information)¹⁸ and LGBT Youth Scotland (which has alleged safeguarding failures).¹⁹ (See screenshots Appendix 2).

Clinical and safeguarding evidence:

- The *Cass Review*²⁰ 2024 makes it clear that children are not developmentally capable of understanding the long-term consequences of identity-based decisions.
- Safe Schools Alliance UK's *Parents' guide to external PHSE/RSE providers*²¹ presents details of how numerous external providers expose children to gender ideology and to sexualised materials.
- *Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO and WHO Standards*²² demonstrates that taking a 'sex positive' approach instead of a safeguarding approach leads to the sexualisation of children.

¹⁴ [Sexualisation of Young People Review](#)

¹⁵ [Primary Links LGBTQ+](#)

¹⁶ ["If the council had listened to me, this paedophile would have been stopped" The Telegraph](#)

¹⁷ [The Proud Trust : Nothing to be Proud of - Transgender Trend](#) & [The Proud Trust – RSE Review | Safe RSE lessons for all children](#)

¹⁸ [What is Chem Sex? - The Rainbow Project](#)

¹⁹ [BBC Children in Need chair resigns over alleged 'institutional failure' at charity](#)

²⁰ [Cass Review 2024](#)

²¹ [Parents' guide to external PSHE / RSE providers](#)

²² [Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO and WHO Standards](#)

Sexual Orientation & Queer Theory

The LGBTQ+ abbreviation used in many CCEA RSE resources conflates two different things: sexual orientation and gender identity. The use of LGBTQ+ also signals the influence of queer theory. Queer theory is a sexually radical academic field that challenges and undermines boundaries, societal norms, the family and safeguarding. It has shaped much of contemporary RSE.

Specific Recommendations:

7. Use the term LGB or lesbian gay and bisexual to accurately describe same-sex orientation.
8. Do not conflate sexual orientation and gender identity, and remove LGBT/LGBTQ+ terminology.
9. Reject queer theory and other activist and ideological content.

Key concerns:

- Because queer is sometimes used as a synonym for gay, it is easy to misunderstand what queer theory is.
- Queer theory deconstructs sex and gender and blurs biological, developmental, social and sexual boundaries. Educational frameworks which blur biological categories and remove clear distinctions between age and sex increase the risk of normalising inappropriate material.
- Foundational texts of queer theory condone 'cross generational' sex (i.e. sex between adults and children). They describe age of consent laws as repressive, question the idea of children's innocence and sexualise children. [E.g. Gayle Rubin *Thinking Sex*²³ and David Halperin *Saint Foucault*²⁴]
- Under the guise of 'sex positivity,' queer theory celebrates sexual practices such as fetishism, 'kink,' public/exhibitionist sex, bondage, domination, sadism and masochism (BDSM).
- Queer theory supports rather than critiques pornography and prostitution. '

Safeguarding Analysis:

- The *Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO and WHO Standards*²⁵ demonstrates the influence of queer theory within sex education and its distortion of child protection protocols.
- *A Review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum in Wales*²⁶ 2022 By Safe Schools Alliance reveals how the influence of queer theory leads to the sexualisation of children.

²³ [Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality](#)

²⁴ [Saint Foucault : towards a gay hagiography : Halperin, David M.](#)

²⁵ [Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review of UNESCO & WHO Standards](#)

²⁶ [A Review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum in Wales](#)

Pornography

CCEA sends mixed messages about pornography. In an Internet Safety resource²⁷ CCEA highlights a Childline website page²⁸ about online porn which normalises children watching porn, trading porn and treating porn as a joke. (See screenshot Appendix 2).

Children watching pornography must not be normalised. We know that pornography is seen by some children and often shared or shown to unsuspecting other children including in the school setting. This must be taken seriously: exposing children to pornography is illegal and sexualises them.

Many RSE providers present pornography as not real, not realistic or as fantasy. This downplays the serious risks of pornography and ignores the reality that pornography is an aggressive international industry built on sexual exploitation and prostitution.

Specific Recommendations:

10. RSE must take a porn-critical stance.
11. Schools must be pornography free environments.
12. RSE should not promote the idea that use of or participation in pornography is safe or healthy for anyone - children or adults.

Key Concerns:

- Pornography practices and imagery are now common in mainstream culture. Violent and degrading pornography-influenced sexual behaviours are increasingly mirrored by children and young adults.
- The frequent (porn industry motivated) linking of porn norms to LGB interests creates fear of being accused of homophobia if one objects. Thus some well-meaning adults suppress their safeguarding instincts/knowledge and condone inappropriate material.
- CCEA links²⁹ to teaching resources sold by BISH³⁰, a controversial online sex education provider for 14+. BISH is pro-pornography and offers online advice on the sexual practices of pornography (e.g. deep throating and heterosexual anal sex). (See screenshots Appendix 2).
- Boys in school making 'moaning' sex noises (copied from pornography) have been reported by teachers, pupils and parents in the UK, USA and Australia. 'Moaning' is a form of sexual harassment intended to distract, sexualise and humiliate female staff and girls.³¹

²⁷ [The impact of online pornography on young people's lives](#)

²⁸ [Online porn - Childline](#) Also see screenshots in Appendix 2

²⁹ [Post-Primary Links Healthy, Positive Sexual Expression & Relationships](#) Also see screenshots in Appendix 2

³⁰ [LOVE, INNIT - A Teaching Pack About Relationships](#) Also see screenshots in Appendix 2

³¹ [It's just everywhere | National Education Union](#) & ["It makes my skin crawl": sexual moaning rise in schools - Collective Shout](#)

- Ofsted's (2021) *Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges*³² concludes that sexual harassment in schools has become normalised, and it documents a high incidence of rape and sexual assault (mostly of girls) in schools.

Clinical and Social Research:

- Surgeons in the UK report unprecedented numbers of serious injuries among young women caused by porn-influenced anal sex. *Young Women and Anal Sex*³³ in the British Medical Journal 2022 describes the escalation of cases of damage so severe they require surgical intervention. The surgeons connect these cases to the routine incidence of heterosexual anal sex in pornography and its increasingly common depiction and normalisation in mainstream media.
- Researchers at Durham University found that pornography practices like strangulation/'choking' and rough sex have become common among teenagers contributing to normalised violence in adolescent relationships.³⁴
- Clinical research on sexual strangulation/choking outlines the risks: *Frequent and Recent Non-fatal Strangulation/Choking During Sex and Its Association With fMRI Activation During Working Memory Tasks*.³⁵
- The UK government plans to ban strangulation in pornography because it contributes to violence against women and girls.³⁶
- *The Harms of Porn Report*³⁷2020 outlines the relevant social science research, noting violence against women, damaged relationships, and the negative health and social consequences for women in the porn industry.

Consent Education

The consent model risks obscuring deeper issues of coercion, power imbalances and exploitation particularly when children and young adults are influenced by pornography or media representations of risky sexual behaviour.

Specific Recommendations:

13. Consent must not be taught in isolation.
14. The appropriate age to teach consent must be considered carefully.
15. RSE should emphasise boundaries, including the legal limits of consent in UK law.

Key Concerns:

³² [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)

³³ [Young women and anal sex | The BMJ](#)

³⁴ [Sexual strangulation has become popular – but that doesn't mean it's wanted - Durham University](#)

³⁵ [Frequent and Recent Non-fatal Strangulation/Choking During Sex and Its Association With fMRI Activation During Working Memory Tasks](#)

³⁶ [Strangulation in pornography to be made illegal - GOV.UK](#)

³⁷ [Understanding the harms of pornography: The contributions of social scientific knowledge](#)

- Some educationalists believe that replacing the Abstinence Model of sex education with the Consent Model changes the emphasis from a 'no'-based approach to a 'yes'-based approach.
- Consent does not mean the same or function similarly for girls/women and boys/men (due to potential for pregnancy, physical strength, differing male and female socialisation, and sexual objectification).
- Consent education is not in itself a sufficient guard against how pornography and porn culture target, groom and sexualise boys and girls. Specifically, pornography conditions sexual response/arousal in boys and conditions boys to perceive women and girls in a certain way.
- Abusers will manipulate consent to gain access to children and to make a child believe that she or he consented to the abuse.
- The first CCEA Key Stage 2 lesson on consent is called *My Body My Choice*.³⁸ Given its familiarity as an activist pro-choice slogan, this is inappropriate. Confusion with activism and adult sexual rights interests should be avoided. Abusers will welcome children being taught 'my body my choice' because it plants the idea of the autonomous child who can make autonomous decisions (about his or her body) separate/away from the protection of parents/teachers.
- CCEA Key Stage 2 foregrounds and teaches the term consent and the concept of 'how to give consent'.³⁹ At KS2, it is unnecessary to use the word consent for discussions about privacy, boundaries, choices young children can/cannot make, responsibilities children do/do not have. Using the word consent in this way at this age introduces potential confusion about children's agency, and the meaning of consent, given the legal structure of parental consent and the legal meaning of sexual consent introduced later in consent education.
- Clinical and sociological research confirms that children cannot give informed consent to social or medical transition.
- Cultural portrayals of choking, strangulation, bondage, and domination have become mainstream, e.g. on TikTok and Netflix. According to Durham University's 2024 report,⁴⁰ many teenagers believe these acts are acceptable as long as they are 'consensual', despite the serious risks and the frequency with which they occur without full understanding or willingness.

Consent in the Law:

- In the UK, the so-called 'rough sex defence' has been used in high-profile cases where men accused of killing women claimed the death occurred during consensual violent sex. In a Parliamentary research briefing,⁴¹ *We Can't Consent To This* noted that between 1972 and 2020, at least 60 such cases were recorded, and in 45% of them the defence led to reduced charges, lighter sentences, or dropped prosecutions.
- Although BDSM (bondage, domination, sadism and masochism) practices claim to involve structured consent (e.g. safe words), UK law does not permit consent to serious bodily harm for sexual gratification. This was upheld in the *Regina v. Brown*⁴² 1994 ruling, in which the House of Lords confirmed that even mutual agreement does not override legal protections against harm. This legal principle is

³⁸ [My Body, My Choice - CCEA](#)

³⁹ [Unit 2 - The meaning of consent, how to give consent, how to say no and how to seek help](#)

⁴⁰ [Sexual strangulation has become popular – but that doesn't mean it's wanted - Durham University](#)

⁴¹ [We Can't Consent To This](#)

⁴² [Regina v. Brown \[1994\], House of Lords](#)

reinforced by the *Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland)*⁴³ 2021, which recognises coercive and controlling behaviour - including sexual violence - even within relationships, regardless of claimed consent.

- The *Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (NI)*⁴⁴ 2022 introduced a specific offence of non-fatal strangulation, recognising it as a distinct and serious form of violence. Legally, consent does not justify such acts nor other coercive or violent sexual behaviours.

Privilege-based Frameworks

CCEA RSE lessons introduce pupils to the concept of male privilege.⁴⁵ Privilege frameworks do not treat children equally. Instead, they foster stereotyping, identity-based blame and hierarchies between children. CCEA resources also cover white, cisgender and heterosexual privilege.

Specific Recommendations:

16. Eliminate all privilege-based teaching (e.g., male, white, or heterosexual privilege).
17. Emphasise equality, mutual respect, and personal responsibility.
18. Uphold the legal duty to foster the moral and intellectual development of all pupils (Education (NI) Order 2006⁴⁶).

Key Concerns:

- Privilege frameworks promote generalisation and group blame, discouraging mutual respect and personal responsibility.
- They encourage resentment among boys and white or heterosexual pupils, creating a culture of shame rather than aspiration.
- Teaching should not assign moral status based on race, sex, or sexual orientation. No child should feel shame for their sex, skin colour, or potential sexual orientation.

Alternative Model:

- Michael Conroy/Men at Work⁴⁷ offers positive, responsible engagement strategies for boys: *12 Dialogues - creating space for boys to be safe and safe to be around*.

Surrogacy & Egg Donation

Surrogacy is introduced in some sex/sexuality education resources (particularly CSE). However, contemporary surrogacy is a business which treats women's bodies as reproductive resources and babies as commodities.

Specific Recommendations:

⁴³ [Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#)

⁴⁴ [Justice \(Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims\) Act \(NI\) 2022](#)

⁴⁵ [Male Privilege and Misogyny - CCEA](#)

⁴⁶ [Education \(NI\) Order 2006](#)

⁴⁷ [Our Training – Men At Work](#)

19. Do not promote or normalise surrogacy or egg donation.
20. If discussed, surrogacy should be presented accurately, highlighting the ethical issues and the physical and psychological risks to the egg donor, mother and baby.

Ethical Issues:

- Even altruistic surrogacy generates financial benefit (for legal, medical, and regulatory industries) from women's reproduction.
- The commodification of women and children contradicts principles of human dignity and reproductive integrity.
- Young women are strategically targeted as egg donors and encouraged to think it is a kind, selfless act to help others start a family.⁴⁸ Egg donation is an invasive hormonal and surgical process which may have long term health consequences.
- The medical processes of surrogacy are invasive and can be dangerous.⁴⁹

References:

- The UN Special Rapporteur on *The Sale of Children*⁵⁰ 2018 warned that certain forms of surrogacy amount to child trafficking, as they treat the child as a commercial good.
- The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network shows how even non-commercial altruistic surrogacy relies on exploitation and emotional coercion of women.⁵¹
- The Law Commission acknowledges public concern about proposed surrogacy reforms in the UK, especially regarding the rights of the surrogate mother.⁵²

⁴⁸ [Advertising for egg and sperm donors by Healthier Scotland: FOI release - gov.scot](#)

⁴⁹ [The Risks of Egg Donation - The Center for Bioethics & Culture Network](#)

⁵⁰ [UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children \(2018\)](#)

⁵¹ [Studies & Reports - The Center for Bioethics & Culture Network](#)

⁵² [Surrogacy – Law Commission](#)

Conclusion

We are women concerned with the education, health and future lives of children. WRN NI does not approach RSE from a political or religious position, but from a safeguarding perspective. (See Appendix 1).

Our submission challenges the guidance of international bodies such as UNESCO and presumed reputable organisations like Childline. We show that they give advice which is not in the interests of the child. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Breaches of safeguarding must not be overlooked just because they come from 'authority figures'.

We are disappointed that the recently published English RSHE Guidance does not maintain the clarity and strong safeguards of the previous draft. Positively, it refers to sex education rather than sexuality education and it asserts that gender identity should not be taught as fact, however, it has weakened the protections for children from ideology and sexualisation.

The Committee must recognise and acknowledge that the unregulated realm of sex/sexuality education provision is a magnet for sexual predators and that the inclusion of sexualised/sexualising materials is not uncommon. Northern Ireland has the opportunity to lead on implementing first class relationship and sex education for our children.

We urge the Committee to:

- **Restore scientific, age-appropriate and safeguarding standards.**
- **Respect parental rights under local and international law.**
- **Ensure RSE protects, rather than politicises or sexualises, children.**

Appendix 1: Safeguarding in NI and UK

WRN NI has not reviewed the full range of Northern Ireland policies concerned with the safeguarding of children in schools. However, we make the following observations in order to highlight concerns.

Northern Ireland Policies

Safeguarding & Child Protection in Schools (September 2024)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Safeguarding%20%26%20Child%20Protection%20in%20Schools%20%28September%202024%29.pdf>

This policy presents the idea of gender identity as if it is credible, appropriate and safe. It places gender identity as an equivalence, variation or extension of sexual orientation. Despite being published in September 2024, it does not reflect the findings of important relevant research such as the Cass Review.

Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour (January 2022)

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Effective%20Responses%20to%20Bullying%20Behaviour%20%28January%202022%29_4.pdf

This document promotes the idea of transphobia and gender identity.

Supporting Transgender Young People [Supporting Transgender Young People | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#)

This guidance is designed to promote policies and practices in schools around the ideas of transgender children and gender identity. During the last 5 years, the Education Authority, the Department of Education, the first Minister and the Education Minister have been approached several times by parents and teachers raising concerns about the safeguarding failures of this guidance.

Examples of More Rigorous Safeguarding Policies

Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers.

https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/supporting_documents/Draft%20RSE%20and%20Health%20Education%20statutory%20guidance.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawLGpw1leHRuA2FbQIxMAABHgdlQVonS9JRra6ue7OsJcsFD7umtofMJUTMRQ0qn3Reoryj93YwX0vx4oRk_aem_pMpl1AJKgZa4BGRulKuRYA

In contrast we draw your attention to the recommendations of the most recent Department of Education of England *Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers.*

(i) This guidance uses the wording sex education rather than sexuality education. (See points above about the ambiguity of the word sexuality in the context of children's education).

(ii) It recognises that parents are the first educators of their children. It requires transparency by schools regarding RSE policies and delivery, and the rights of parents to opt their children out of RSE delivery.

(iii) It directs that 'gender identity' should not be taught in schools.

'Schools should not teach about the broader concept of gender identity. Gender identity is a highly contested and complex subject.' (p.12).

'If asked about the topic of gender identity, schools should teach the facts about biological sex and not use any materials that present contested views as fact, including the view that gender is a spectrum. Material suggesting that someone's gender is determined by their interests or clothing choices should not be used as it risks leading pupils who do not comply with sex stereotypes to question their gender when they might not have done so otherwise. Where schools decide to use external resources, they should avoid materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify this complex concept or that could be interpreted as being aimed at younger children. Schools should consult parents on the content of external resources on this topic in advance and make all materials available to them on request.' (p.12).

(iv) It indicates age limits in relation to topics and content.

'The age limits in this guidance seek to ensure that, as content is introduced that is designed to prepare young people to stay safe and keep others safe, children are not introduced too early to concepts that they may not have the maturity to grasp, or which may be distressing. Age limits are focused on topics which, even when presented in a careful and well-intentioned way, may inadvertently give the message to young people that they could or should be engaging in or exploring adult activities rather than enjoying childhood.' (p.15).

Age limits include not teaching puberty before year 4 (Northern Ireland Primary 5); reproductive sex education before year 5 (Northern Ireland Primary 6); issues connected to sexual harassment until year 7 (Northern Ireland Year 8/First Form); and no explicit discussion of sexual activities, sexual consent and sexual abuse before year 9 (Northern Ireland Year 10/Third Form).

'It is important that pupils are not introduced to distressing concepts when they are too young to understand them.' (p.24).

Safe Schools Alliance UK [Safe Schools Alliance UK](#)

Safe Schools Alliance UK is a grassroots organisation which campaigns to uphold child safeguarding in schools. It is led by a group of volunteers with diverse backgrounds including teaching, nursing and safeguarding. The organisation has no religious or political affiliation.

We recommend their many resources, factsheets and commentaries additional to those we have cited above.

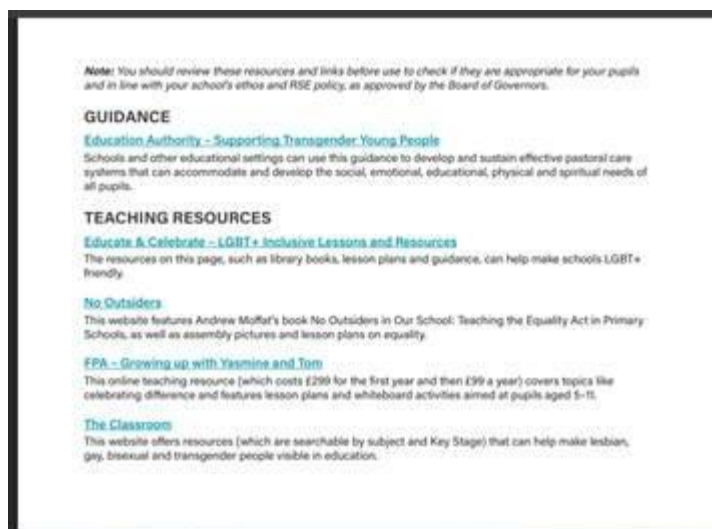
We highlight this one:

A one page summary of what constitutes safeguarding in UK Schools:
<https://safeschoolsallianceuk.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Annex-1-letter-to-Prof-Arif-Ahmed-12.11.23.pdf>

Appendix 2: Evidence of Safeguarding Problems in CCEA Linked Resources

Example screenshots from CCEA resources

Example 1: CCEA PRIMARY LGBTQ+



Educate and Celebrate (See Age-Inappropriate Content and Sexualisation in main submission), No Outsiders and The Classroom exhibit safeguarding red flags and/or failures.

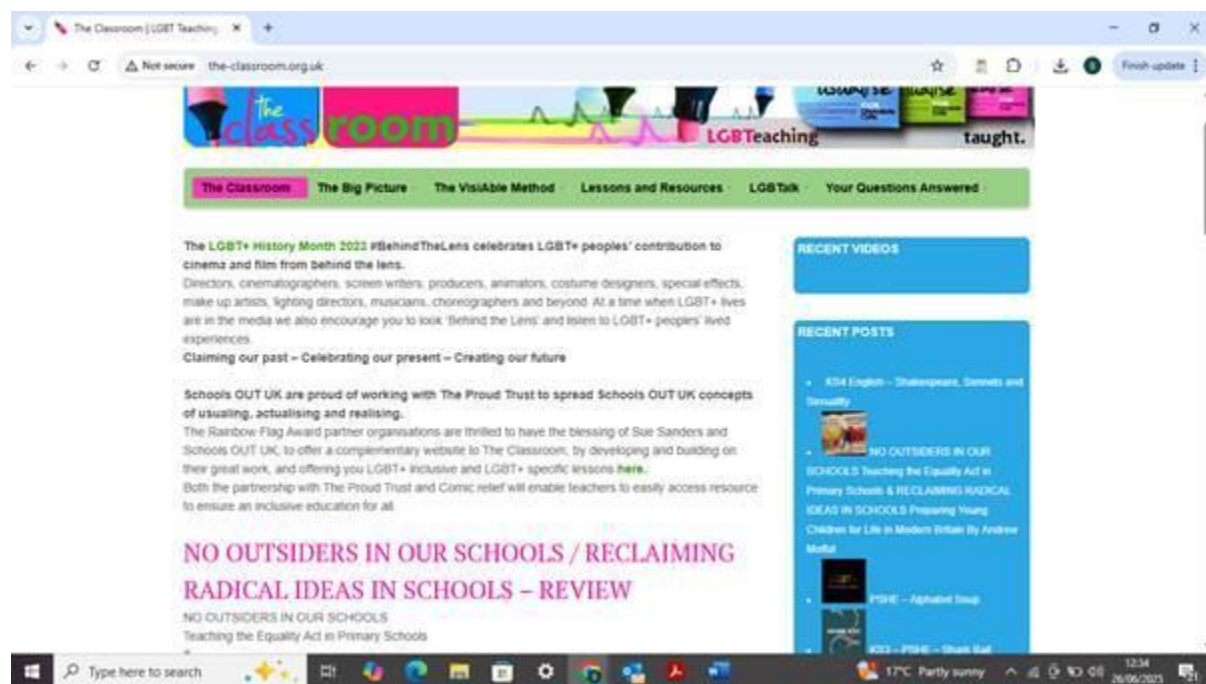
Example 2: CCEA LGBTQ+ MATTERS KEY STAGES 3-4 UNIT 4: TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN THE MEDIA



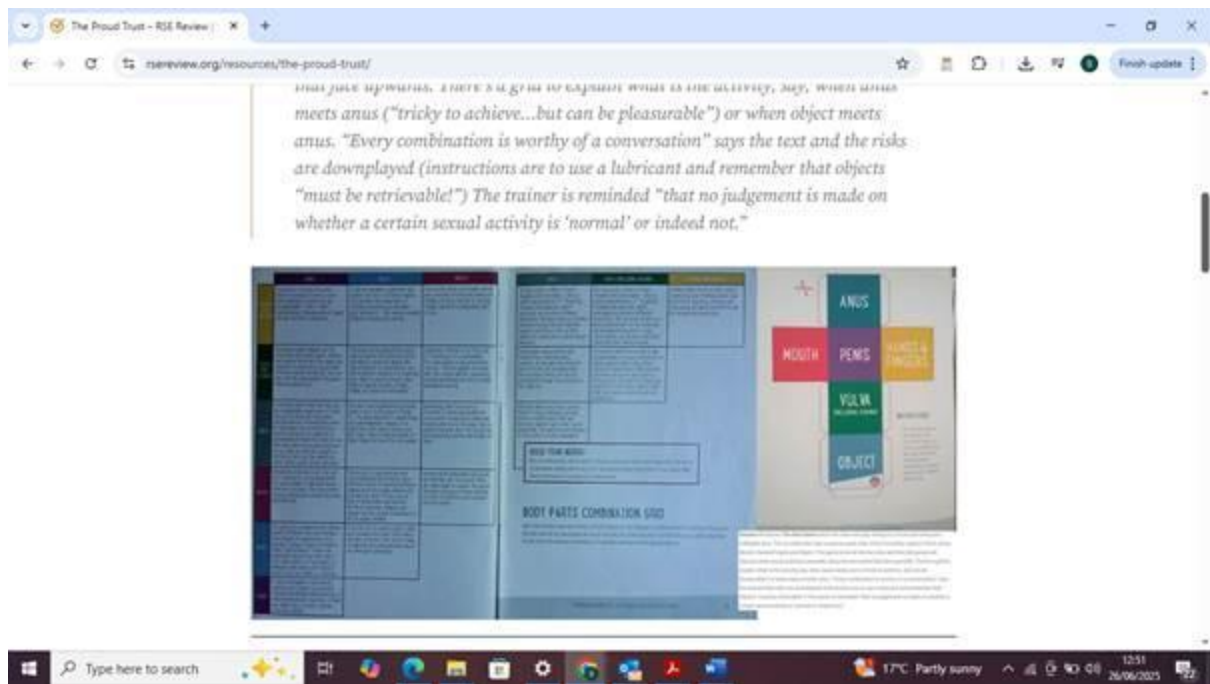
The Rainbow Project is an adult sexual advice and advocacy organisation which hosts advice about risky sexual practices on its website. Transgender NI has hosted dangerous sexual advice for youth who consider themselves transgender. Cara Project delivers schools anti-bully training which promotes gender identity.

Example 3: The Classroom / The Proud Trust - Link from: *CCEA PRIMARY LINKS LGBTQ+* (See above).

- <https://ceea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ceea-asset/Resource/Primary%20LGBTQ%2B%20Links.pdf>
- <http://the-classroom.org.uk/>
- <https://archive.is/uallTl>



The Proud Trust Dice Game Review from <https://rsereview.org/resources/the-proud-trust/>



Example 4: Childline - Link to Childline Online Porn resource in: *CCEA INTERNET SAFETY KEY STAGES 3 and 4. UNIT 4 THE IMPACT OF ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES*

<https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Resource/Unit%204%3A%20The%20Impact%20of%20Online%20Pornography%20on%20Young%20People%26%23039%3Bs%20Lives.pdf>

a friend you are talking to.

Activity 5:
Pornography and the law (Key Stage 4 extension activity)

If appropriate for your pupils, complete the unit by reminding them that it is important to be aware of the law in relation to pornography. A useful summary is available in the [Online Porn](#) section of the [Childline](#) website; this gives advice about what is and is not legal, as well as information on what to do if you access seemingly illegal material. Emphasise the point about talking to a trusted adult about anything that your pupils feel may be illegal.

There is further information specific to Northern Ireland in the 'Pornographic or other sexual images' section in Part 3 of the [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#).

Encourage your pupils to discuss other consequences of viewing pornography such as upsetting someone, sanctions at school or home, or even breaking trust within a friendship or relationship. Remind them to talk to a trusted adult about any upsetting or disturbing images they have seen or if they feel pressured into looking at something they do not want to look at.

Childline link: [Online porn | Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-porn/) <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-porn/> <https://archive.is/BPAwY> Archived 26/06/25



Online porn | Childline

childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-porn/

SHARING PORN

There are a lot of reasons you might want to share porn. You might want to watch porn with a boyfriend or girlfriend, trade porn or share porn with a friend as a joke.

Before you share anything, it's important to think about:

- **What the other person wants**

Don't send any sexual images or messages unless the other person has said it's okay. And don't pressure people to do anything sexual they're not comfortable with. [Find out more about consent](#)

- **What you're sending**

When you send a nude or link you lose control of it. That means someone else can tell anyone what you've sent or share it with other people

- **How old you and other people are**

Sharing porn with anyone under 18 is illegal, even if you're under 18 as well or you're sending a nude of yourself. If you've already shared something and you're worried, try [talking to a Childline counsellor](#) for support

- **What might happen in the future**



Being assertive
Being assertive can help you to explain how you feel and what you need, without being rude.



Sexual harassment

HIDE PAGE
SAVE PAGE

Example 5: The Rainbow Project


<https://www.rainbow-project.org/> (see link above in Example 2).

Children should not be directed to adult sexual advice and advocacy organisations.

Group & Chem Sex - The Rainb...

rainbow-project.org/group-chem-sex/


and all individuals. Looking after your sexual health is just as important as looking after your own mental or physical health. This section explores key questions many MSM ask about their sexual health. It also contains an agony aunt section. Should you have any queries and don't wish to have them answered over the phone message them to us [here](#).



What is Chem Sex?

Information on chem sex and how to manage risk and protect life.


[Read more](#)



Group Sex

Information on group sex for people to look after themselves and their partners.

[Read more](#)



Chem Sex - Dosing

Information on dosing and how to protect yourself when participating in chem sex

[Read more](#)

[QUICK EXIT](#)

Example 6: TransgenderNI

Children should not be directed to organisations which promote dangerous sexual practices. Since 2016 Gender Jam and/or TransgenderNI have promoted a booklet called:

SEXUAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR TRANS AND NON-BINARY YOUNG PEOPLE Northern Ireland Edition. Revised in 2019 as: SEXUAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR TRANS YOUNG PEOPLE.

This guide was available online on the TransgenderNI website until the end of 2022.

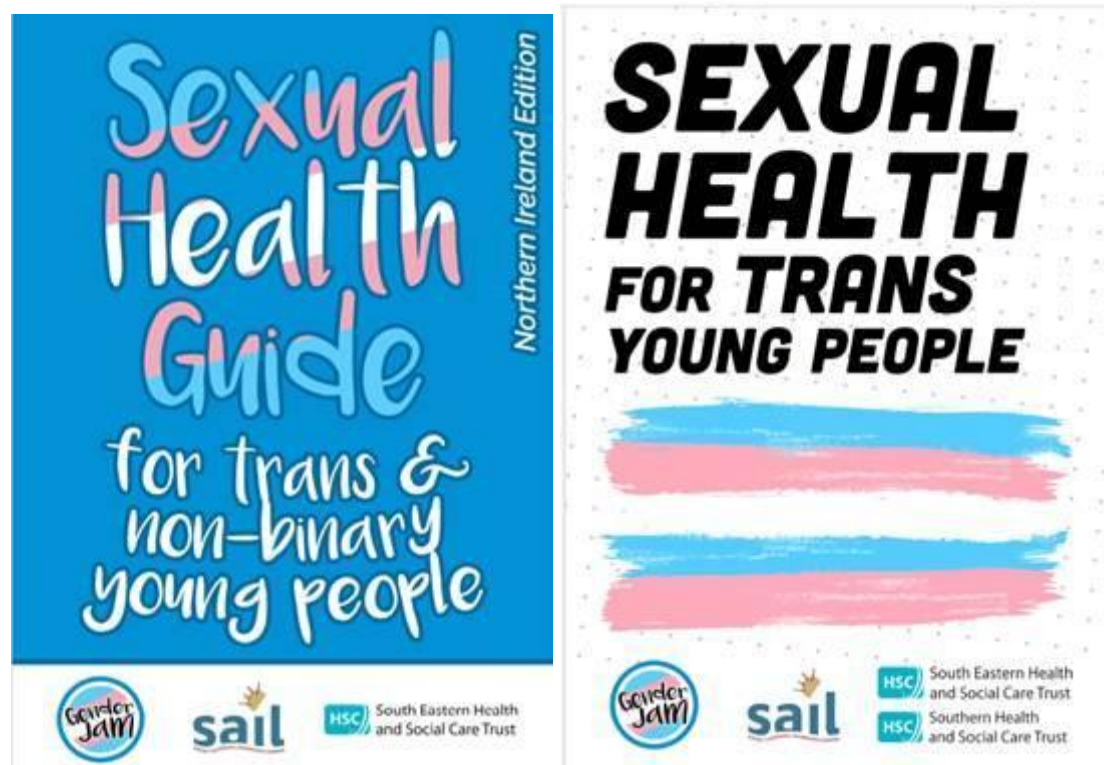
The guide promotes gender transition, medical transition (including hormones, surgery, hormonal self-medication); binding and tucking (binding of breasts and tucking of penis); use



of sexual prosthetics and sex toys; BDSM (sexual practices involving bondage domination sadism and masochism); group sex and sex work.

The organisations involved in preparing and supporting the guide alongside Gender Jam and TransgenderNI include SAIL NI (which has since combined with the discredited charity MERMAIDS) and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

This is another example of ideological interests placed above the safety and welfare of children and young adults.



<https://web.archive.org/web/20200929173606/https://transgenderni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/TYSHGuide-2019.pdf>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20221226213905/https://transgenderni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/TYSHGuide-2019.pdf>

Example 7: BISH

BISH is a supplier of teaching resources and hosts a highly sexualised website offering sex education for 14+. BISH is pro-pornography and pro-prostitution.

Link from: *CCEA Post Primary Healthy Sexual Expression and Relationship Links*

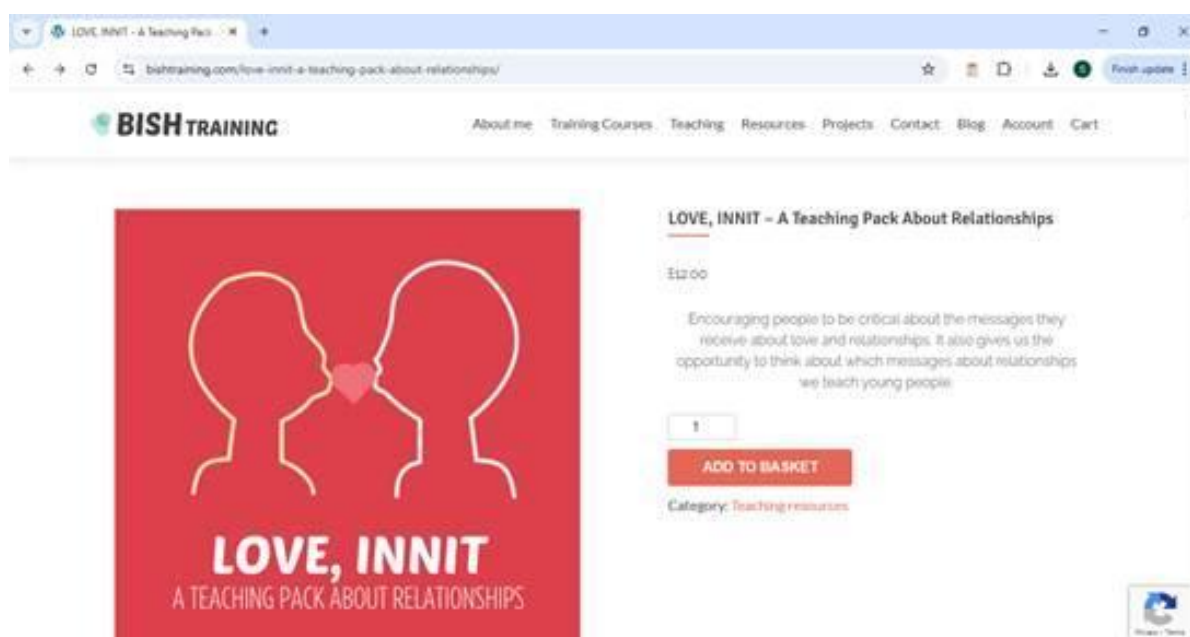
https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Resource/Post-Primary%20Healthy%20Relationships%20Links_2.pdf

KEY STAGE 4 TEACHING RESOURCES

[BISH Training – Love, Innit: A Teaching Pack About Relationships](#)

This resource, which costs £9.50, includes activities that can encourage pupils to be critical about the messages they receive about love and relationships.

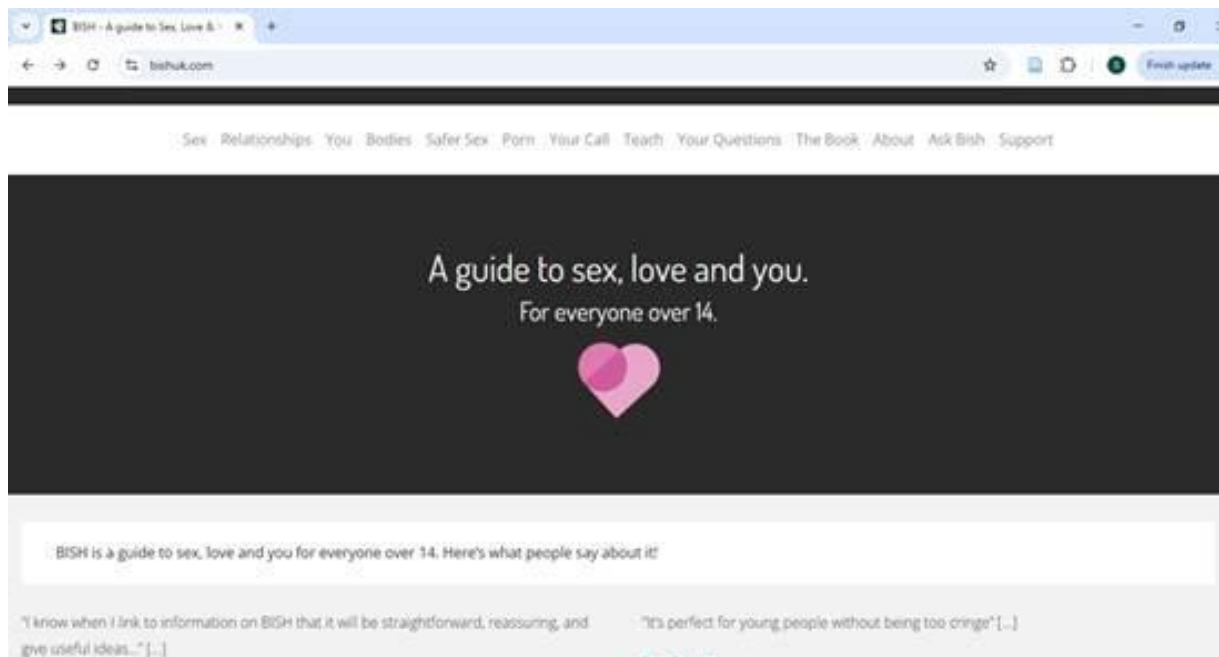
BISH TRAINING / SHOP



This teaching pack includes a game called *The Ideal Partner Auction*.

BISH 'guide to sex, love and you for everyone over 14' is 2 clicks away.

<https://www.bishuk.com/> <https://archive.is/o8bnr> Archived 27/06/2025



BISH porn resources (1 click further on. See below for examples).

<https://www.bishuk.com/porn/>

<https://archive.is/j47AH> Archived 27/06/2025



Here is a small selection of examples of highly sexualised material.

- Questions Page** <https://www.bishuk.com/your-questions/>
 Explicit sexual discussion in response to highly sexual questions. E.g.
How do I do deep throat so he won't leave me.
<https://www.bishuk.com/your-questions/how-do-i-learn-to-deepthroat-so-he-wont-leave-me/> (Justin Hancock gives technical advice and a link about deep throating)
Full Sex Anal Sex and Pregnancy
<https://www.bishuk.com/your-questions/ask-bish-full-sex-anal-sex-and-pregnancy/>
 (Justin Hancock gives technical advice about anal sex in response to a letter from a 14 year old girl).

- **A-Z of Porn** <https://www.bishuk.com/porn/a-z-of-porn-a-2/>
The BISH website has an A-Z of Porn in which lengthy definitions of porn categories are given, such as: Amateur, Anal, Cumshots, Deep Throating, Double Penetration, Facial, Fetish, Gonzo, Hentai, Rimming, Shaved, Shemale, Squirting, Teen, Twink. There is a comments section for each letter of the A-Z containing inappropriate correspondence.
- Concerns about Justin Hancock (creator/owner of BISH) and BISH have been reported nationally: *'Sex work is rewarding, pupils told by education providers'* The Times, 9 July 2022 <https://archive.is/VxnVR>

Appendix 3: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Progressive Framework

When reviewing the [RSE Progression Framework](#) we noted the following incidence of several words and phrases.

In light of the issues raised above, this tally presents a very rough snapshot of the emphasis and priorities of the document.

Incidence of words

- sexuality 80
- abortion 26 (inc. 9 access to abortion)
- contraception 26
- gender 23 (inc. 7 gender identity)
- pregnant/pregnancy 20
- LGBTQ+ 10
- gender identity 7
- transgender 7
- sex 5
- birth 4 (inc. 3 birth/childbirth, 1 stillbirth)
- sexual intercourse 4
- condom 3
- heterosexual 1
- gay 1
- lesbian 1
- bisexual 1
- homosexual 0
- sexual reproduction 0

Appendix 4: UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education

[UNESCO guidance for sexuality education](#) has been described as social engineering. *Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Review* argues that it takes a 'holistically sexualising approach.'

Additionally:

It does not distinguish children and adults in its description of 'sexual rights'

- p. 22 - age of consent laws are referred to as restrictive. Nowhere in the document are age of consent laws acknowledged to be for the protection of the child.
- p.113 - 'the sexual rights of all persons'.
- p.122 - 'enable adolescents... to exercise their sexual rights'.

It uses the term 'young people' ambiguously when it refers to children and conflates children and 'young people's' relation to sexual activity

- It defines 'young people' as 10 - 24 years old - so is ambiguous in the contexts of sex education and sexual activity.
- p.17 'These skills can help children and young people form respectful and healthy relationships with family members, peers, friends and romantic or sexual partners.'
 - Ambiguity about children and sexual partners.
- p.18 'there is diversity in the way young people manage their sexual expression at various ages'.
 - Given that sexualised behaviour in children is regarded as a possible sign of abuse, the implied concept of children's sexual expression here is confusing.
- p.18 'A lack of high-quality, age- and developmentally- appropriate sexuality and relationship education may leave children and young people vulnerable to harmful sexual behaviours and sexual exploitation. Excluding complex issues from CSE renders young people vulnerable and limits their agency in their own sexual practices and relationships.'
 - Ambiguity about children and 'their own sexual practices'.
 - NB Child protection and Safeguarding are the responsibility of adults. Sex education cannot be assumed to be responsible for enabling children to prevent themselves being sexually abused and exploited.

Safeguarding

- The word safeguarding occurs nowhere in the guidance.
- 'Child protection' occurs once. Other instances of the word protection relate to protection from pregnancy, or protection of rights/sexual rights.
- Some goals are written ambiguously and sound as if to fulfill the goal a child would need to be sexually active. Age 12-15: 'demonstrate skills in negotiating safer sex and refusing unsafe sexual practice' (p.79).

Gender identity

- UNESCO embeds 'gender identity' within its definition of sexuality. It invokes a sexual rights related model of gender identity throughout the document.
- It introduces the conceptual foundation for gender identity at age 5: 'Key idea: It is important to understand the difference between biological sex and gender' (p.50).
- It directs that 5-8 year olds should: 'reflect on how they feel about their biological sex and gender' (p.50).

- It explicitly introduces 'gender identity' at age 9.
- It directs that 9-12 year olds should be able to 'define gender identity' and 'explain how someone's gender identity may not match their biological sex' (p.50).
- It embeds the idea that everyone has a gender identity. 9-12 year olds should 'appreciate their own gender identity and demonstrate respect for the gender identity of others' (p.50).
- The indoctrination about gender identity is escalated through subsequent age groups.

Pornography

- Sexually explicit media (pornography) is described as potentially misleading, unrealistic and possibly 'promoting harmful gender stereotypes', 'inaccurate portrayals' 'unrealistic expectations'. (p.57)
 - There does not seem to be any acknowledgement that sexually explicit material sexualises children, can be highly distressing and disturbing for a child to see, and can be used by a predator as a precursor to sexual abuse. Elsewhere it says it can be harmful but does not expand apart from saying it can 'normalize violent or non-consensual behaviour'.

Promotes ambiguous 'digital sex education environments'

- "And they [young people] also require access to new types of digital sex education environments that are realistic, emotionally attuned and non-judgmental". (p.24)

UNESCO works against parental opt out

- 'A more holistic 'whole school' approach.' (p.94)
 - If sexuality education is integrated into other subjects across the curriculum, it is impossible for parents to opt out. This is evident in the Welsh RSE curriculum which takes a whole school approach from which parents cannot opt out.
 - This shows that there are important arguments against compulsory sex/sexuality education.

Incidence of words

- sexuality 456
- sex 126
- gender identity 44
- LGBT/LGBTQ 19
- transgender 17
- gay 13
- lesbian 12
- homosexual(ity) 5
- heterosexual(ity) 3
- straight (in reference to sexual orientation) 1
- sexual reproduction 0