



Carolyn Brown
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Our Reference: 202400431989

7 October 2024

Dear Ms Brown,

Thank you for your email of 15 September 2024 to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, Jenni Minto MSP, regarding teaching of gender identity in schools. I have been asked to reply as I am responsible for inclusive education policy in the Scottish curriculum.

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring all pupils receive high quality relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education. It is for councils and schools to decide how to deliver RSHP education, within the framework provided by Curriculum for Excellence. Young people should experience learning which is factual, objective and enables them to make informed decisions and choices that promote and protect their own and others' sexual health and wellbeing. Therefore, learning and teaching which is factual and presented in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner within a framework of sound values and an awareness of the law, including on types of relationships, is appropriate. Teachers can use a range of resources to deliver age-and-stage appropriate education in a way that enables children and young people to make informed decisions about their lives. This helps empower teachers to deliver relevant and engaging, age and stage appropriate education in a way that enables children and young people to make informed decisions about their lives. This is in line with the statutory guidance on RSHP. As would be usual, if there are any concerns about curriculum content, these should be raised with the school or education authority concerned. RSHP education is not new and has been in place since 2010, the same year Curriculum for Excellence was implemented. Learning [experiences and outcomes](#) for RSHP education are freely available on the Education Scotland website and have been for quite some time. Learning in RSHP education also helps to ensure the curriculum is as diverse as the young people who learn in our schools and that includes learning about gender identity. However the Minister was clear in her response to Parliament that schools do not teach young people about their own gender identity, that is a personal matter for any individual and, in the case of young people, their family.

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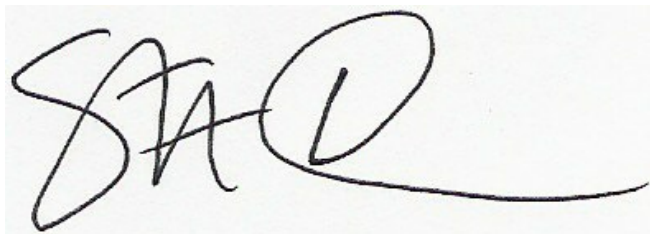


In delivering learning and teaching on gender identity, schools will ensure the specific experiences and outcomes of "*As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.*" (HWB 2-09a) and "*I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.*" (HWB 2-10a) are met in an age and stage appropriate manner, through, for example at second level (P5 to P7) learning that in society, there are some people who identify and express their gender differently from their biological sex, for some people, this is called being transgender. Children will see and hear about these things in the media or from others, it is important they are given good information and allowed to ask questions. Second level is the earliest level learning and teaching about gender identity should take place.

We know the guidance to support transgender pupils in Scotland's schools, which was published in August 2021, is needed. Research tells us Scotland's transgender young people have poorer experiences at school than other pupils. They experience significantly more bullying, are likely to have poorer mental health and wellbeing, and do not achieve similar educational outcomes as their peers. This guidance supports all schools to deliver a safe, supportive environment, regardless of gender, and ensure that everyone's rights are respected. The rights of all pupils, including those of transgender pupils and girls, are respected and protected. Children's rights, including their right to privacy, are fundamental foundations of a child's education. This guidance provides practical measures for schools to ensure every single child's rights are respected. The guidance links to, and draws upon, the guidance on the Equality Act which is already in place to support schools in fulfilling their duties. This non-statutory guidance sets out a range of advice on legislation, policy and practice including these illustrative examples. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that this guidance remains up to date and fit for purpose. As with any significant legal or policy developments, we will consider whether the guidance requires to be updated to reflect upon these.

I hope you find this letter helpful in setting out the Scottish Government's position.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Downes
IAW : Support and Wellbeing Unit

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