

# Schools minister backs explicit sex education for children aged 11: Education Secretary Nicky Morgan gives green light to controversial resource providing schoolchildren with information about pornography and rape

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Education Secretary  
Nicky Morgan

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has endorsed a controversial sex education resource for schools which includes information about rape, domestic violence, pornography, female genital mutilation and online sex abuse.

She has put her name to a document produced by a group of activists, the End Violence Against Women Coalition, which they say is designed to 'fill gaps' in sex and relationship education.

The sheet says it intends to help teachers confront 'harmful attitudes in boys and young men' before they become adults.

But parent groups have raised concerns that Mrs Morgan – who was appointed Education Secretary in July – is encouraging changes to the sex education curriculum 'by the back door'.

Margaret Morrissey from campaign group Parents Outloud warned of the dangers of 'hugely aggressive feminist groups' setting the agenda in schools. She said: 'I'm amazed that the Department for Education are supporting this.'

She added there was a risk of handing 'extremely explicit information' to young people and it should be for parents to address sensitive issues. 'You are putting a lot of information into young heads about things they may not even have thought of,' she said.

'This new Education Secretary... needs to think very hard about what she is putting her name to.'

The factsheet was published this week by the EVAWC and is thought to be aimed at secondary schools in particular, meaning it could be used for 11-year-olds. However there is no mention of it on the Department for Education website. In an apparent reference to sex abuse scandals in Rotherham and elsewhere, Mrs Morgan said 'recent events' showed it was 'crucial' to teach young people about the abuse faced by women and girls. 'Good quality relationship education which teaches the importance of respect and mutual consent should be at the heart of this,' she said.

'The new factsheet from the EVAWC helps to highlight the importance of this issue to teachers.'

The document contains highly politicised and contentious statements such as 'gender inequality is the norm' in Britain, and that 'women ...are simultaneously pressured into and shamed for sexual activity'.

The factsheet also covers abuse in teenage relationships and the dangers of uploading explicit pictures online. In the section on rape it condemns 'sexually harmful attitudes and behaviours of men and boys'.

Announcing the sheet's publication, director of EVAWC Holly Dustin said: 'Savile, Rotherham and other abuse scandals have begun to expose the scale of abuse that children, especially girls, experience. Our new factsheet gives teachers the basics.'

The Liberal Democrats have called for sex and relationship education to be made compulsory in all primary schools. Most state secondaries already offer sex education as part of the national curriculum, but thousands of academies, free and faith schools can drop the subject.

However critics say it should be left to parents, and warn that much of the teaching uses explicit material that is inappropriate for children.

A Department for Education spokesman said: 'Tackling violence against women and girls is a key priority and we are unapologetic in supporting measures to tackle it.'