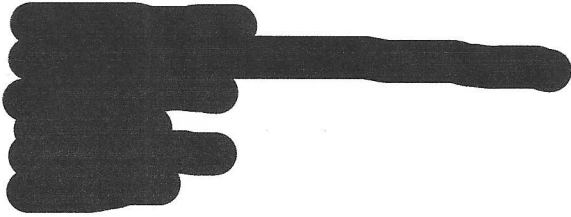


Coalition in Defence of PRIMARY EDUCATORS

UNITED CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES | WWW.PRIMARYEDUCATORS.CO.UK



19 May 2021

Dear [redacted]

We write to you, as Catholic parents, with the responsibility for the moral education and spiritual formation of our children, regarding the British Government's legislation imposing anti-Christian pro-LGBT Relationships and Sex Education on school children in England, and to encourage you, for the sake of all our children, to join us in taking a stand on this issue.

It saddens us to say that, along with many others, we have found it deeply troubling that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) have consistently and publicly supported legislative changes and RSE policy which now deny parents the right to remove their children from Relationships and Sex Education, and that, on our behalf, the Catholic Education Service (CES) has wrongly stated that the Government is committed to protecting the parents' right to withdraw their children from the new subjects.¹ There is only a right to withdraw a child from "sex education" in primary school (though what exactly constitutes that subject, in distinction to "relationships education", has not been officially defined). In fact, there is NO legal requirement to deliver "sex education" in primary schools at all. But there is no right whatsoever to withdraw a child from Relationships Education. It is worse than that in secondary schools where, in fact, parents have the right only to "request" withdrawal from the (undefined) "sex education" parts of RSE, with the final decision to be made by head teachers.

This same legislation, The Children & Social Work Act 2017 (backed by the CES on behalf of the CBCEW), has resulted in Final Guidance (June 2019) and Regulations which include that:²

- Children should be provided with "the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available" and signposted as to where and how to obtain abortion and contraception services without parental knowledge or consent. Carrying

¹ See CES press releases on Government changes to RSE dated [01.03.17](#), [19.07.18](#) and [25.02.19](#).
² Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (June 2019), Department for Education, *Regulations for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (July 2019); <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

an unborn child to term is presented simply as one of the possible “choices” when pregnant, alongside that of having an abortion – “about which pupils should receive medically and legally accurate, *impartial* information” [our emphasis] (p.29).

- LGBT content is expected, “at a timely point”, to be “fully integrated” into the children’s programme of study, which should present homosexual relationships and family structures in a positive manner (pp. 15, 20-21, 25-29).
- Real marriage and the natural family unit are side-lined. Redefined to include same-sex “marriage” (and on a par with civil partnerships), marriage is simply presented as one possible relationship option. The emphasis is on the diversity of different “healthy” relationships and family structures (pp.13-15, 19-21, 25-29).

To give several recent examples from the CES where clarity as to Catholic teaching has been blurred or lost: *Learning to Love* (2017), an RSE guide for Catholic educators refers to same sex relationships as being able to constitute an “exalted form of love (p.17);³ and another CES publication, *Made in God’s Image* (2018), misrepresents Catholic teaching in a scheme of work for children designed to promote *homosexuality* in itself only as something positive, informing pupils that “negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality”, amongst other causes, “may be based on irrational fear” (p.16).

Unfortunately, it is also now the case that all schools, including Catholic schools, may find themselves in the position of being pressured positively to endorse LGBT lifestyle choices and family structures. In addition to the RSE Statutory Guidance (2019), new OFSTED guidance on “Inspecting the Protected Characteristics”, issued on 17 September (updated 7th December) 2020,⁴ effectively states that ALL schools (including primary and secondary schools) may be penalised by receiving a possible “requires improvement” judgement for “personal development”, where they are judged as failing to “promote pupils’ awareness and understanding of all the protected characteristics” (which includes “sexual orientation”, “[same-sex] marriage and civil partnership” and “gender reassignment”); and in secondary schools this will, in addition, be enforced by inspecting the extent to which the Statutory RSE Guidance, which necessitates integrated LGBT teaching, has been complied with (failure to do so would also lead to a “requires improvement” rating for “leadership and management”). There are, however, potentially saving clauses in both sets of guidance and the C&SW Act itself, which make allowance for faith schools to teach according to their values, but that makes the aspect of leadership in this area even more crucial.⁵

³ Department of Catholic Education and Formation Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales, *Learning to Love: An introduction to Catholic Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) for Catholic Educators*, March 2017: <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/Learning2love.pdf.pdf>; Catholic Education Service & Aquinas Centre for Theological Literacy, St Mary’s University, *Made in God’s Image: Challenging Homophobic and Biphobic Bullying in Catholic Schools*, 2018 edition; https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/CES-Project_Homophobic-Bullying-Booklet_JUN18_PROOF-9.pdf

⁴ OFSTED, ‘Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools’ (updated 7th Dec 2020); <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools>

⁵ Ibid ‘Faith teachings on the protected characteristics’; see RSE Statutory Guidance pp.12-13; Children & Social Work Act 2017, P.1, Ch.4, 34 (3) (b).

The enclosed article, "Parents' Rights Under Continued Attack", from Voice of the Family's *Calx Mariae* magazine (September 2020) provides a comprehensive and fully referenced overview of most of the matters raised here.

In response to this grave situation, the Church and Catholic schools must now stand firmly with parents against what the Church itself has taught is a clear overreach by the State into territory which, according to the Divine will, is under parental jurisdiction.⁶ Such teaching — whether categorised under "relationships" or "sex" education — becomes an issue of serious scandal where children and young people are instructed to regard **what, objectively, are mortal sins**, as valid, healthy and positive life decisions that must be respected.

On this issue of Relationships and Sex Education, where both the temporal well-being and eternal souls of our children are at stake, we especially recall our Lord's injunction to avoid causing any of His "little ones" who believe in Him to stumble or sin (Mt 18:6). Scripture is also very clear that we are to be faithful to God in all things, whatever we perceive as the worldly cost, and that He does not condone any compromising of His standards (Deut 4:2; Ps 119; Josh 24:15; Rev 22:18-19). This is both for our own good and that of others, including those outside of Christ, who may come to hear and understand the truth and be saved (2 Tim 2:24-26). We must put faith in God before fear of any government, knowing that He will stand-by, vindicate and deliver the righteous, even though we may go through times of difficulty and persecution (Ps 37: 5-13). We recognise, above all, both the necessity and power of prayer at this time.

We very much want to help all of our priests in supporting the faithful, whether they are parents or teachers, to take an effective stand against what's happening. If you feel that you would like support in this area we would be very pleased to hear from you.

You can also sign up for more information and to join the campaign at www.primaryeducators.org.uk or email info@primaryeducators.org.uk

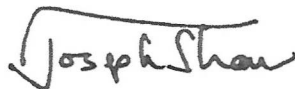
We enclose our letter to His Eminence Cardinal Nichols of 11th May 2021 on these matters.

Thank you for standing with us and we look forward to hearing from you,

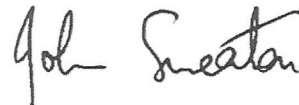
Yours sincerely in Christ,



James Leatherland
Co-Founder of Catholic Man UK



Dr Joseph Shaw
Chairman of the Latin Mass Society



John Smeaton
*CEO of the Society for the Protection
of Unborn Children*

⁶ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 65-67.