

# **Relationships and Sexuality Education - Ministry of Education (2020)**

**An Analysis for Parents / Caregivers**



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## Introduction:

The *Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidelines* (or RSE for short) are a new set of proposals produced by the Ministry of Education. In short, these new guidelines want schools to:

- Establish a dedicated Health programme delivered to all children aged 5 and above;
- Find ways to integrate the “teachings” of the new Health programme into the rest of the curriculum; and
- Adopt school policies and practices that reflect, embody, and reinforce these new “teachings”.

They want all of the above, and more, in order to encourage children to advance the values of social justice within, and beyond, the school.

Despite being well-intentioned (with an aim to create more inclusive school environments and reduce bullying), these proposals are for the most part ideological, and while their content is portrayed as scientific, they have no basis in science. This should be concerning to all parents and caregivers.

In an ever-changing, ever-challenging world, where the misinformation surrounding gender and sex is pervasive, children today are unsurprisingly struggling to navigate the complex realities of pubertal development. Whether we like it or not, more children are experiencing gender dysphoria than ever before,<sup>1</sup> and some are making the life-changing decision to transition or take hormone or “pubertal” blockers with the false hope that these interventions will resolve the conflict between their chosen identity and their actual biological sex.

When we take into account that up to 98% of children who experience gender dysphoria outgrow it,<sup>2</sup> in addition to the fact that many of those who undergo sex reassignment surgery experience disproportionately higher rates of suicide than the general population,<sup>3</sup> we begin to understand that teaching our children the *right* information before they make significant and permanent decisions is vital. This is why we believe that an objective and apolitical sex education is the bare minimum that your children deserve.

With the content of the Health programme taught outside of Health class, and accompanied in kind by ideologically-driven school policies and practices, the guidelines put schools at risk of becoming ideological and indoctrinatory spaces.

You may ask why any of this really matters, and assume this misinformation to be harmless. To that we ask you this:

- Do you think children as young as 5 should be taught about sexual reproduction?
- Do you believe children as young as 7 should learn that gender and sex are different, that a child’s sex is ‘assigned’ at birth, and that there are more than two genders (when all such claims are scientifically untrue)?
- Do you think that students “...*should be able to choose a toilet and changing room that matches their gender identity*”?
- Or do you believe children should be allowed to participate in the sports team of their choice, irrespective of their gender or sex?

Unfortunately, this is exactly what the RSE guidelines are gearing schools up to teach and adopt.

Before we continue, let us be absolutely clear: while reducing bullying and creating accepting school environments is a noble aim that all schools should work towards, sexuality education must be objective, absent of political interpretation, and free of ideological statements - this is regrettably not the case with RSE.

Even if you happen to disagree with us, and support these proposals, we should all be able to agree that parents and caregivers have more of a right to teach their children on these matters than both the school, and the government.

In saying that, we encourage all parents and caregivers to read the new guidelines for themselves in addition to this report.

RSE is set to bring significant changes to schools throughout the country. You deserve to be informed of these changes and what effect they will have on your child's education.

For your benefit, the report will be structured in the following way:

- RSE's newly proposed Health class is rife with dangerous misinformation;
- RSE seeks to inject sexuality education into the rest of curriculum;
- RSE wants schools to implement controversial and divisive policies; and
- RSE puts schools at risk of becoming ideological and indoctrinatory spaces.

**Five quick reasons  
parents/caregivers  
should be concerned  
about RSE.**

# Five quick reasons for parents to be concerned about Relationships and Sexuality Education:

## 1. Do you think children as young as 5 should be taught about sexual reproduction?

**We do not.** But the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) guidelines do, explicitly stating that they want 5 and 6 year old children to be able to, “[r]ecognise body parts, including genitals, can name them (in te reo Māori and in English), and understand basic concepts about reproduction.”<sup>4</sup>

While there is certainly a place for teaching about sexual reproduction toward the latter years of primary school, passing this knowledge onto 5 and 6 year old children is unnecessary. At a time where the majority of children are not even thinking about sex, it would be remiss of schools to take that opportunity away from parents – those who should have that opportunity before anyone else does. **Is it really necessary to teach 5 and 6 year old children about sexual reproduction, especially when this same demographic disproportionately believes in Santa, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny?** Balance is vital here. The same logic by which we restrict the freedoms of young people when it comes to driving, voting, or drinking, that is, on the basis of maturity and brain development, applies in this case too. Children deserve the opportunity to grow at their own pace.

## 2. Do you believe children as young as 7 should learn that gender and sex are different, that their sex is assigned at birth, and that there are more than two genders?

**We do not.** But the RSE guidelines do.

- They want 7 and 8 year old children to be “...able to identify gender stereotypes, understand the difference between gender and sex, and know that there are diverse gender and sexual identities in society.”<sup>5</sup>
- They also write that sex is ‘assigned’ at birth – “All babies are assigned a sex at birth, usually determined by a visual observation of external genitalia.”<sup>6</sup>
- They also teach that there are more than two genders, labelling the “..assumption that there are only two genders (girl/boy or man/woman)” “incorrect”.<sup>7</sup>

The first thing to note is that these are all political and ideological statements, and are not in any way based in science. For starters, the claim that all babies are assigned a sex at birth is false. **A baby's sex, that is their biological characteristics (either male or female), is determined at conception when the sperm meets the zygote.** A baby's sex is ingrained and immutable, not only observable in their genitalia, but in their DNA and much much more. These important facts are well established. The guidelines also claim that gender and sex are different, arguing that gender is fluid (and therefore, subjective, and changeable), whilst in the same breath, suggesting that sex is assigned at birth. This claim is simply inconsistent. **One cannot argue that sex and gender are different on the one hand, and on the other hand also maintain that gender and sex are descriptors or attributes that someone can just choose or assign (whether by your own free will or others) without recourse to the laws of biology.** You or the doctor that delivered you cannot change whether you are a man or woman without rewriting your DNA altogether.

### 3. Do you think that students "...should be able to choose a toilet and changing room that matches their gender identity"?

**We do not.** But the RSE guidelines do, stating that:

*"Trans, non-binary, and intersex ākongā should be able to choose a toilet and changing room that matches their gender identity. Trans girls should be able to use the female toilets if they prefer to. Ideally, schools will have at least one gender-neutral toilet available for ākongā, but trans, non-binary, and intersex ākongā should not be required to use this rather than male or female toilets."*<sup>8</sup>

We believe **that the comfortability of a few 'transgender/gender diverse' persons, meaning those who want the benefit of choosing which bathroom they use, should not be prioritised over the comfortability and privacy of those students who exclusively use the bathroom facilities reserved for their biological sex.** There is absolutely no reason that a 'trans/gender diverse/non-binary' person should be able to access the changing room of their choice. Remember, these are children that we are talking about here. Most children who identify as transgender have not gone through gender re-assignment surgery, and **it would be a flagrant abuse of privacy to allow children of the opposite sexes to change in the same space,** irrespective of whether some children feel as though they are something they are biologically not. Frankly, **no child should ever have to face the real possibility of being exposed to the genitalia of the opposite sex or feel as though they are not safe or comfortable to get changed themselves.** Students are entitled to sex-segregated changing rooms, especially when some children, in particular those who are beginning puberty, are experiencing significant physical and biological bodily changes.

#### 4. Do you believe children should be allowed to choose to participate in the sports team of their choice, irrespective of their gender or sex?

**We do not.** But the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) guidelines do, writing how they want schools to ensure *"procedures for sports are inclusive so that all ākongā [Students] can take part, whatever their sexual or gender identities."*<sup>9</sup>

Sports for the most part should remain sex-segregated. Boys should not be included in girls teams and vice versa. As a general biological rule, males tend to be stronger than females, and it would be unfair for female children to have to compete with that of the opposite sex who have particular biological advantages in this area. Again, this question remains: **how far is too far when the will of the few comes at a cost for the many?**

#### 5. Do you believe children should be learning about sexuality in every area of their education?

**We do not.** But the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) guidelines do. Take a look at some of the learning objectives the guidelines propose and judge for yourself.

In **Science**, your child will *"consider how biological sex has been constructed and measured over time"* and *"consider variations in puberty, including the role of hormone blockers."*

In **Technology**, your child will *"identify how gender expectations are embedded in technology, for example, in the design and style of power tools and other tools..."* and *"explore symbols linked to the gay and transgender rights movements."*

In the **Arts**, your child will *"consider plays with roles that do not conform to gender stereotypes."*

In the **Social Sciences**, your child will be encouraged to explore the *"...development and persistence of gender stereotypes (for example, by researching the #MeToo movement)."*

## **Problem 1:**

RSE's new Health programme is rife with misinformation.

# 1. **The guidelines teach that gender and sex are different, and that gender is fluid, despite there only being two.**

## What do the guidelines say?

The idea that there are only two genders, the guidelines claim, is based on the "*...(incorrect) assumption that there are only two genders (girl/boy or man/woman)*" (p. 48)

The guidelines write that students should be able to "*...identify gender stereotypes, understand the difference between gender and sex, and know that there are diverse gender and sexual identities in society.*" (p. 31)

## Summary:

The guidelines' argument, at its core is this:

The categories of male and female are superficial, and outdated, stereotypes. And because none of us fit perfectly into such stereotypes, it follows that we must be living in a gender fluid reality, a reality where there are an infinite number of possible identities.

This is not the case.

The existence of diversity in nature, and amongst human beings, is not evidence of a "gender fluid" reality. Rather, it suggests that within the male gender, there exist a diverse range of men, and within the female gender, there exist a diverse range of women, but nothing in-between them - a man cannot be or become a woman, and vice versa.

## Is gender “fluid” and separate from biological sex as the guidelines claim?

*“A person’s identity is fluid and ever-evolving, their gender is not.”*

The guidelines define gender as “...an individual identity related to a continuum of masculinities and femininities. A person’s gender is not fixed or immutable.”<sup>10</sup> By this catch-all definition, the potential number of “genders” is endless and simply depends on how an individual feels at any one time. This definition of gender makes no practical sense. The guidelines would like you to believe that the traditional definition of gender (that it is tied to sex, and that there are only two of them) inadequately captures the true range of “identities” that exist in our society today. But this is not the case, with the reality being rather different.

Under the traditional definition of gender, there are only two possible sexes, and only two possible genders: male or female. Within the male gender, on the one hand, there exist a number of different and unique men each with their own identities, beliefs, and sexual preferences. Within the female gender, on the other hand, there also exist a range of different and unique women, all possessing their own identities, beliefs, and sexual preferences too.

Indeed, some men have more typically feminine characteristics than others. Some women have more typically masculine characteristics than others. Does this fact, the fact that some men have more feminine traits, and some women have more masculine traits, change whether these persons are male or female? Absolutely not. Does this fact suggest that there must be thousands of unknown genders waiting to be discovered? Or is it far more likely that within the two genders there simply exists an array of unique women, and a range of unique men? Absolutely. To what degree you possess either feminine or masculine traits has no bearing whatsoever on whether you are, fundamentally, a male or a female.

Put simply, there is a continuum of different women, and a continuum of different men, within their respective sexes, but there is no continuum between them, as the guidelines would have your child believe. You cannot be a male if you are not one. You cannot be a woman if you are not one. You cannot be anything in between because there is no in-between.

By conflating gender with meaning everything that defines you, as the guidelines do, it is no wonder so many young people are coming to question their gender “identity”, believing that because who they are does not neatly fit into the male or female “archetype” or “caricature” they must be either the opposite gender in the wrong body or

neither male nor female. The fact is the archetypes these young people feel they do not fit neatly into no one perfectly fits into. They are stereotypes, and they are not perfect.

Masculinity as an idea is humanity's best attempt at defining the qualities and attributes that the "ideal" man or male would exhibit. The same goes for femininity. But they are not restrictive checklists that dictate what a man or woman must be. They simply reflect those attributes we have come to expect from the "ideal" man or woman, historically and culturally. What has changed about our world today, is that we have now realised the true harm it can cause forcing a person to fit a stereotype; one which is neither achievable, nor realistic. But this does not change the reality:

Men and women alike exhibit both masculine and feminine traits, and everyone possesses their own unique mix of them, influenced by their environment, upbringing, and genetics.

The guidelines are correct in suggesting that we are all unique, and that stereotypes can be harmful, but this does not mean that there must be more than two genders.

Fortunately, the truth is quite the opposite - a person's identity is fluid and ever-evolving, their gender is not.

## 2. The guidelines claim that sex is assigned at birth, even though sex is determined at conception.

### What do the guidelines say?

The guidelines state that "All babies are assigned a sex at birth, usually determined by a visual observation of external genitalia. A person's gender may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth." (p. 49)

### Is it accurate to say that sex is assigned at birth?

A person's sex, that is their biological characteristics (either male or female), is determined at conception when the sperm meets the zygote.<sup>11</sup> A person's sex is ingrained and immutable, not only observable in their genitalia, but in their DNA and much more.<sup>12</sup> These important facts are well established.

As you can see, the guidelines also claim that gender and sex are different, arguing that gender is fluid (and therefore, subjective, and changeable), whilst in the same breath, suggesting that sex is assigned at birth. This claim is simply inconsistent.

One cannot argue that sex and gender are different on the one hand, and on the other hand also maintain that gender and sex are descriptors or attributes that someone can just choose or assign (whether by your own free will or others) without recourse to the laws of biology. You or the doctor that delivered you cannot change whether you are a man or woman without rewriting your DNA altogether.

Claiming that sex is assigned at birth is just another attempt to make it seem as though the misinformation they teach to your children is grounded in science when it is so clearly not.

### **3. The guidelines want to teach 5 and 6 year old children about sexual reproduction, despite it being unnecessary and too early to do so.**

#### **What do the guidelines say?**

The guidelines want children to *"Recognise body parts, including genitals, can name them (in te reo Maori and in English), and understand basic concepts about reproduction."* (p. 30)

#### **Is it a good idea to teach 5 and 6 year old children sexual reproduction?**

While there is certainly a place for teaching about sexual reproduction toward the latter years of primary school, passing this knowledge onto 5 and 6 year old children is unnecessary. At a time where the majority of children are not even thinking about sex, it would be remiss of schools to take that opportunity away from parents - those who should have that opportunity before anyone else does.

And is it really necessary to teach 5 and 6 year old children about sexual reproduction, especially when most of this same demographic believes in and enjoys Santa, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny? Balance is vital here. The same logic by which we restrict the freedoms of young people when it comes to driving, voting, or drinking, that is, on the basis of maturity and brain development, applies in this case too.

A similar programme to RSE was proposed in the US, and as Vanga (2015) concluded, *"...introducing the concept of human sexuality and same-sex marriage to six-year-olds in public schools by means of anti-bullying prevention programs seems an impermissible infringement on parents' rights to direct the education and upbringing of their children, especially if the parents, in their discretion, have chosen to delay this teaching."*<sup>13</sup> Whilst RSE may not be talking to 5 year olds about same-sex marriage, the guidelines are still very much intending to teach about human sexuality.

Regardless of where you stand on this issue, children deserve the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace, and parents deserve to have an opportunity to discuss these subjects with their kids before the school does. It is clear RSE does not see it that way.

#### **4. The guidelines claim there is a role for hormone blockers in pubertal development, even though they are designed to halt pubertal development.**

##### **What do the guidelines say?**

The guidelines state: "...consider variations in puberty, including the role of hormone blockers". (p. 28)

##### **Is there a role for hormone blockers in pubertal development?**

Hormone blockers are known to have significant adverse effects on children such as weaker bones (otherwise known as bone mineralisation), and potential infertility.<sup>14</sup> It has been noted at length too that we still do not know the long-term effects of hormone blockers on a child's brain development or whether they increase or reduce youth suicide rates (despite what LGBTQ+ advocacy groups like to claim).<sup>15</sup> If that is not enough to convince you of the risks, the UK has all but outlawed the use of hormone blockers on children, given their potential harm to youth.<sup>16</sup>

Let us remember too that there is significant concern with the harmful effects of too much screen time for children, yet our schools want to teach your children that there is a legitimate role for hormone blockers in pubertal development, even though they are significantly more harmful. Let that sink in.

Given the potential side effects for children, don't you think we should fully know the risks before we teach in schools that these puberty-stunting drugs have a "role"? Frankly, there is no role for hormone blockers in pubertal development, and the idea that the guidelines would want to teach children that there is a role should deeply concern all parents / caregivers.

## 5. Implications of the new Health programme for your children

Why parents / caregivers should be concerned about the proposed Health programme.

Do we look at a person with anorexia and tell ourselves that the severe malnourishment and mutilation they inflict upon themselves is just one of many diverse and perfectly healthy potential diets one can choose from? The answer to that question is an obvious no. We do not sit here encouraging and indulging their belief that their diet and lifestyle choices are evidently healthy and natural. Instead, we help them. We treat anorexia as a mental health issue, and we help people with anorexia to accept the truth about themselves through love, support, and the appropriate medical treatment.

**"...your child will be socialised to believe that confusion about one's gender is a sign that they could be stuck in the "wrong" gender..."**

Let us be absolutely clear: it is perfectly normal for a person to on occasion refuse to eat or to not feel hungry when they are upset. It is not normal, however, for a person to embrace and routinely refuse to eat in order to address severe trauma and significant body image issues. When it comes to anorexia, if we enable, normalise, and encourage their behaviour, we should not be at all surprised when the harm they inflict upon themselves sadly becomes more severe and eventually irreversible. The same is true for the issue of "gender".

It is perfectly normal to experience some form of gender confusion during childhood and grow out of it - in up to 98% of situations, this is the case.<sup>17</sup> It is not perfectly normal, however, to experience some form of gender confusion during childhood and double-down on that dysphoria by declaring oneself to be gender fluid so as to feel comfortable in one's shoes and hope to address one's self-worth issues. Unfortunately, the latter is exactly what RSE purports to teach, wanting 5 and 6 year old children to learn to "[u]nderstand the relationship between gender, identity, and wellbeing",<sup>18</sup> and teach 7 and 8 year old children to "[u]nderstand the difference between gender and sex, and know that there are diverse gender and sexual identities in society."<sup>19</sup>

Instead of being taught that their confusion is normal, and that they will come to accept their gender as it is, your child will be socialised to believe that confusion about one's

gender is a sign that they could be stuck in the “wrong” body, and that it is part and parcel of pubertal change for them to want to change who they are in order to become the “right” gender. This is reflected in the year 7 and 8 teaching, where the guidelines want pre-teens to “[k]now about pubertal change (including hormonal changes, menstruation, body development, and the development of gender identities).”<sup>20</sup>

When it comes to gender confusion and dysphoria, if we enable, normalise, and encourage this kind of behaviour, as RSE would have us do, we should not be at all surprised when the harm these young people inflict upon themselves because we refused to tell them the truth, sadly becomes more severe, and in some cases, irreversible.

Do you think our schools should teach that one can be any gender they wish, and that the significant changes they undergo to become the gender of their choice, are just one of many diverse and perfectly normal lifestyle choices/procedures that a young person can choose to make, even if such choices are irreversible?

## **Problem 2:**

RSE seeks to inject sexuality education into the rest of curriculum.

**RSE seeks to inject sexuality education into the rest of curriculum, even in subjects where its deliberate insertion into the curriculum is entirely irrelevant, out of place, and does not in any way help your child learn what they are specifically there to learn.**

As we discussed earlier, the guidelines in essence argue that the categories of male and female are superficial, and outdated, stereotypes. And because none of us fit perfectly into such stereotypes, it follows that we must be living in a gender fluid reality, a reality where there are an infinite number of possible identities, a reality that accounts for all biological variations.

Unfortunately, the guidelines want schools to take every available opportunity to insert this narrative on gender and sexuality into nearly every subject your child will take. To exacerbate the problem, there is nothing within the guidelines about presenting opposing viewpoints - for example, the view that sex is biologically determined, or the view that puberty blockers are highly dangerous, with countries like the United Kingdom ruling that they should not be available to teenagers or children.

If you do not see this as a huge issue, let us remind you that evolutionary theory (and by that we mean naturalism) has been taught without any opposing viewpoints presented, and is now accepted as though it is the only legitimate perspective on the origin of life.

If this is not a textbook case of indoctrination, what is?

Under the new guidelines:

**Science** classes will teach your children to: <sup>21</sup>

- "...consider how biological sex has been constructed and measured over time..." .  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...consider variations in puberty, including the role of hormone blockers." .  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore the role of genetics in constructing debates about gender and sexuality." **Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore what 'male' and 'female' mean in relation to various living things, for example, plants, sea creatures, and fungi." **Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore what 'male', female, and 'hermaphrodite' mean in relation to plants and animals." **Years 9-13**

In Science class, the guidelines are clearly focused on teaching your children that the traditional view of gender and sex is inadequate, by attempting to present a scientific justification for gender fluidity, where none actually exist.

**Technology** classes will teach your children to: <sup>22</sup>

- "...explore symbols linked to the gay and transgender rights movements."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...identify how gender expectations are embedded in technology, for example, in the design of power tools and other tools..."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore the way toys, apps, and online games and activities are designed for a gendered audience."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...engage in a gender-neutral design challenge."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...interrogate the design and sustainability of contraceptives."  
**Years 9-13**

This comes back to relevance and necessity. How is it relevant for your child to learn to "...explore symbols linked to the gay and transgender rights movements"? And are you not just taking another opportunity to impose your worldview on others?

In the **Arts**, your child will learn to: <sup>23</sup>

- "...consider plays with roles that do not conform to gender stereotypes."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore the representation of gender in visual art."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...explore dances and dance styles where there are specific roles for gender and also those where there is no gender differentiation."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...identify ways that colour and language are related to gender and sexual orientation."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**

Here your children will be taught to gender fluidity by learning to embody it in their art.

In the **Social Sciences**, your child will be encouraged to: <sup>24</sup>

- explore the "...development and persistence of gender stereotypes (for example, by researching the #MeToo movement)".  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...consider famous 'rainbow' figures from history."  
**Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**

- "...explore geographical spaces in the school and community in terms of how they relate to gender (for example, are spaces designed according to gender? Who plays on which areas of the playground and why?)." **Years 1-8**
- "...explore the history of rainbow movements and gay rights in Aotearoa New Zealand, for example, law changes over time to address issues from the death penalty to marriage equality." **Years 9-13**
- "...describe the way the media reports on different leadership styles in relation to gender and/or sexual orientation." **Years 9-13**

This is an obvious question, but why should primary school children ever research the #MeToo movement, especially given the sensitive nature of the crimes alleged.

In **Languages**, your child will learn to: <sup>25</sup>

- "...investigate the different words and their meanings used by indigenous peoples in their languages to depict different kinds of relationships or sexual orientations in accordance with their world views." **Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...analyse the use of language in earlier and current media and/or public discussions of sex and gender, highlighting changes and developments in language use." **Years 9-13**

In **English**, the guidelines want your child to learn to: <sup>26</sup>

- "...engage in dialogue and debate in the context of provocative online posts linked to relationships, gender, and sexuality." **Years 1-8**
- "...identify positive and negative gender bias in media stories." **Years 1-8** **Years 9-13**
- "...create texts (oral, written, or visual) to convey ideas about gender and sexuality." **Years 9-13**

As you can see, the content inserted into every other subject is not relevant to their learning, verges on the ridiculous, and is a clear attempt at imposing their worldview on others. This, again, comes back to you the parents and caregivers. It should be your right to choose what to teach your children (especially at the primary school level). Even if you think that what the guidelines propose is valid, you would not want those you disagree with to impose their worldview on your children.

## **Problem 3:**

RSE wants schools to implement controversial and divisive policies.

## RSE wants schools to implement controversial and divisive policies:

For the proponents of these guidelines, it is clearly not enough for the school curriculum to be infused with social justice doctrine alone. Indeed, your child's school must also embody social justice in its policies, practices, and culture top-down.

The RSE guidelines even explicitly state that creating this kind of environment (through school policies, practices, culture, and leadership) will "...help to shape the values, attitudes, and behaviours of akonga." <sup>27</sup> They also go on to write that, "[v]alues are inherent in the practices, policies, and language used by teachers and school leaders." <sup>28</sup> In other words, the guidelines seek to shape the values of future generations - a right that should be yours as parents, not the school or government's.

In the guidelines' words themselves, "[t]he school culture is very powerful." <sup>29</sup> That is why, in order to shape the values of your children, the guidelines want schools to create a culture that embodies the values it projects. Part of this is through the Health class and the rest of the curriculum, as we have discussed. The other part is through school policy, which we will break down here.

While there are some positive policy choices that all parents can get behind, such as:

- the creation of safe physical spaces to access support;
- privacy when accessing health services;
- better procedures for addressing online or offline bullying;
- encouraging an open dialogue about gender and sexuality with parents, iwi, and the broader school community; and
- every child having equal access to the playground equipment regardless of their sexual orientation,

it is these explicitly recommended policies that should concern parents and caregivers, with the guidelines wanting:

- transgender and non-binary persons to have the ability to use the **same bathrooms and changing rooms as the opposite biological sex**;
- school rolls and records reflecting the **child's chosen gender and pronouns**;
- schools to adopt **gender-neutral uniforms** and **avoid categorising uniforms by gender or sex**;
- students having the ability to choose to participate in the **sports team of their choice**, irrespective of their gender or sex (i.e., a trans girl (biologically male) playing in the girls' netball or girls' rugby team);
- teachers to be taught **this new "understanding" of gender and sexuality**.

- students play in active role in challenging school policies that do not align with this “understanding”.

Taken on their own individually, and at face value, such policies seem entirely harmless. But they work collectively to impose political (not scientific) notions of gender and sexuality on your child’s school environment. Remember, children tend to believe what they are told, and subsequently, internalise what they experience in the world around them – even when such a world is largely confined to their home and school.

Put simply, what the RSE guidelines are proposing may as well be outright indoctrination.

### **Should transgender and non-binary persons be able to use the same bathrooms and changing rooms as the opposite biological sex?**

Let us be abundantly clear: we are not arguing that by allowing transgender/gender diverse persons to access the bathroom or changing facilities of their choice, that we will see a dramatic rise in sexual abuse or harassment by such persons against your children.

What we are arguing is that parents, caregivers, and students’ privacy and vulnerability concerns are legitimate and should be respected by their schools. In practice this suggests that the comfortability of a few transgender/gender diverse persons, meaning those who want the luxury of choosing which bathroom they use, should not be prioritised over the comfortability and privacy of the overwhelming majority of students who exclusively use the bathroom facilities reserved for their biological sex.

Whose comfortability should have priority when it comes to the use of female toilets and changing room facilities? Someone who ‘feels’ as though they are female, but are biologically male? Or someone who is biologically, genetically, and undeniably female?

Here is the compromise that could be made:

- the creation of a unisex toilet, in addition to the existing male and female toilets; and
- students and staff, regardless of sexual orientation or gender, can only access either the unisex toilet or the toilet reserved for their *biological sex*.

This kind of solution is fair, and takes into consideration all students, making allowances for preferential and comfortability differences whilst ensuring that the freedom of some does not violate the freedom of others.

On the matter of changing rooms, no compromises can be made.

There is absolutely no reason that a 'trans / gender diverse / non-binary' person should be able to access the changing room of their choice. Remember, these are children that we are talking about here. Most children who identify as transgender have not gone through gender re-assignment surgery, and it would be a flagrant abuse of privacy to allow children of the opposite sexes to change in the same space, irrespective of whether some children feel as though they are something they are biologically not.

Frankly, no child should ever have to face the real possibility of being exposed to the genitalia of the opposite sex or feel as though they are not safe or comfortable to get changed themselves.

Your children are entitled to sex-segregated changing rooms, especially when some children, in particular those who are beginning puberty, are experiencing significant physical and biological bodily changes.

We leave you with this question: how far is too far when the wants of a few come at a cost for the many?

## **Conclusion:**

RSE will result in  
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## Conclusion –

### RSE will result in indoctrination and the politicisation of schools.

Schools are meant to be places of education, not politics. Yet, despite this, the guidelines proposals will see your children become activists, defenders, and sympathisers of social justice ideology. This will be achieved:

- firstly, by instructing schools to expose your children routinely and continually to social justice ideology throughout the curriculum in as many different ways, and in as many different contexts as possible; and
- secondly, by creating a school environment that not only endorses social justice from the top-down, but actively encourages its adoption by all students, staff, and leadership.

As a result, **your children will face significant pressure to conform and adopt social justice as the basis of their own worldview**, with many likely to do so either ignorantly, buying into the tall tales they are sold, or with some accepting it reluctantly, for fear of rejection and isolation from their peers.

The following section of this report will be focused on expanding on the above points, in order to show how the Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidelines are in fact designed to prime your children for political action younger than ever before – yet another significant reason why you, the parents and caregivers, should be very concerned about RSE.

### Indoctrination through overexposure

When a person is subject to prolonged and continual overexposure to false information, it has been widely documented that such a person will come to believe that the misinformation presented is true.<sup>30</sup> This phenomenon is known as the “illusory truth effect”.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, it has also been documented that when repeatedly exposed to misinformation, a person can even develop a preference for that misinformation simply because it feels so familiar. This is what psychologists call the “mere-exposure effect”.<sup>32</sup>

Both these phenomena have a central idea, a key idea that we should keep in the back of our minds when we talk about RSE. That is this: the repeated and prolonged exposure to false information can both lead a person to believing a lie to be the truth, and lead that person to develop a preference for such a lie, simply due to their familiarity with it.

So how does this relate to RSE? Good question.

Under the new guidelines, as we have shown in prior sections, your children will be repeatedly exposed to social justice in as many different ways, and in as many different contexts as possible. By being subjected to repeated and prolonged exposure to social justice ideology, your children will come to believe that its lies represent the truth, and will be led into developing a preference for social justice, above all other ideas.

When significant numbers of children come to identify as something other than their biological sex, it will come as a surprise to no one (except maybe the children themselves) to hear that this daily bombardment of fiction on our children's education and school environments played a critical role.

### **How will RSE "overexpose" your children to social justice?**

As Fazio et al (2015) put it; "...repeated statements are easier to process, and subsequently perceived to be more truthful, than new statements."<sup>33</sup> In other words, as De Keersmaecker et al (2020) explains, "...people tend to believe information more if it has been previously encountered."<sup>34</sup>

Because it is easier for humans to believe something they are told repeatedly, one can expect that any child who is told false information continually is likely to accept such misinformation as truth without question. It is crucial also to remember that children and teenagers are some of the most impressionable age groups.<sup>35 36</sup>

This is exactly the problem with RSE.

The new guidelines want schools to embrace every opportunity at their disposal to teach their version of sex education (RSE) within nearly all classes your child participates in, even in subjects where its deliberate insertion into the curriculum is entirely irrelevant, out of place, and doesn't in any way help your child learn what they are specifically there to learn.

### **In addition to this, the RSE guidelines make no attempt to include opposing viewpoints in the curriculum.**

Hare (2007) notes that indoctrination results, "...when students lose the ability to assess the merits of the ideas they are studying or coming to acquire and find themselves locked into certain beliefs and assumptions in such a way that they cannot seriously consider alternative views because their minds have been closed."<sup>37</sup> The type of school environment that RSE will create is one where presenting opposing viewpoints is viewed as being anti-inclusion, or unkind. It is very difficult to see any child wanting to be socially isolated through being labelled anti-inclusion, unkind, 'transphobic', or 'homophobic'.

### **Parental rights:**

This all comes back to your rights as parents. Whilst you do have the ability to remove your child from the Health class RSE proposes, that does not mean your child won't face pressure to conform and embrace this new gender and sexuality ideology. They will still need to go to classes that preach it, and will still grow up in an environment where possessing any other view than the socially-accepted narrative, will result in social punishment.

## Advice for Parents/Caregivers: What can you do?

So how can you, the parents, and caregivers, respond to the RSE guidelines?

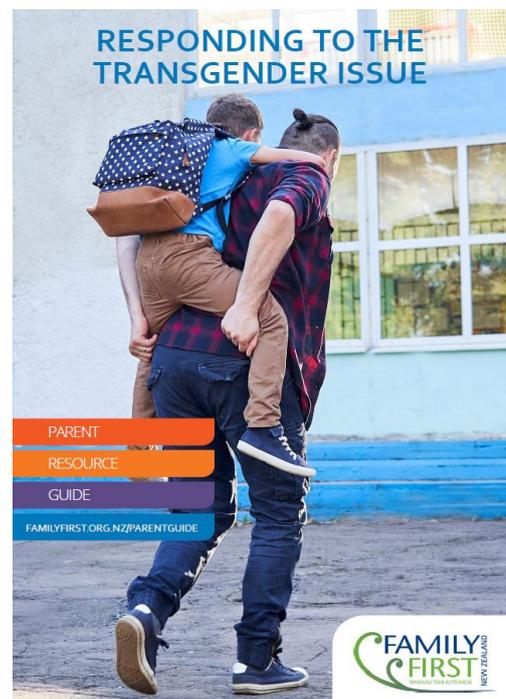
Parents and caregivers should be rightly concerned. As such, here are four things you can do in response to the new guidelines:

- Contact your child's school and ask what content their classes will be covering.
- Liaise with the School's Board of Trustees, let them know (respectfully) why you are concerned.
- Closely monitor the classroom material - be aware of what your child is learning, what homework/assignments they may be asked to complete.
- If all else fails, you can withdraw your child from specific classes.

We would also encourage you to read our 2020 resource - *"Responding To The Transgender Issue - Parent Resource Guide"* available to download for free at **[familyfirst.org.nz/parentguide](https://familyfirst.org.nz/parentguide)**

This Guide is designed to:

- help parents understand the basics of the transgender trend and its consequences
- understand the implications of transgender activism and "gender-inclusion" policies in schools
- explain parental rights, and give parents the tools to communicate with school leaders in order to protect their children's rights to privacy
- encourage parents and school officials to work together to create a respectful school environment
- help parents advocate for common sense policies that will respect the dignity of all students
- help schools act with compassion toward everyone involved in the conversation



The Guide offers a wealth of constructive ideas for parents who want to work with their schools in a respectful manner to foster a genuinely inclusive climate based on truth and compassion.

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