

5,000 PARENTS TAKE WELSH GOVERNMENT TO HIGH COURT OVER NEW SEX EDUCATION FROM AGED THREE!

CLAIMANTS representing over 5,000 parents and grandparents in Wales are taking the Welsh Government to the High Court in an attempt to remove Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) from the mandatory element of the The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 which starts this September.

Campaigners say that because of the mandatory element of RSE, children as young as three will be taught about sensitive and arguably inappropriate topics such as gender ideology, and that parents are being disenfranchised by being denied their time-honoured right to remove their child from sex education.

Parents also claim that their government has misled them, since the original RSE draft in February of 2019 gave a hint that parental opt-out would be retracted at a later date. Furthermore, despite two online polls initiated by the Senedd where respondents voted overwhelmingly to retain this element, the Welsh government disregarded public opinion-announcing its removal in the mainstream media 2020.

Campaigners, include parents of gay and lesbian children, and stress they are not against safeguarding or age-appropriate biology being taught. They fully support minority rights in terms of welfare and freedom of choice. They also recognise that children need sex education but stress it should be delivered in an appropriate way, by professionals, which makes their safeguarding paramount.

Kim Isherwood, a parent of two boys aged 13-17, from Port Talbot, and one of the Claimants said most parents are oblivious to the new changes. She said: *"This new curriculum is not like the stand-alone RSE lessons that pupils and parents are used to. It is embedded into every lesson across the curriculum. The new mandatory element also means that every child, aged 3-16, must take part. It cannot be avoided by anyone, and there are no rights for parents to request information on what will be taught, at what age, or to ask that their child sit out."*

Mrs Isherwood, who holds a BSc degree in Criminology & Social Policy, and a master's degree in applied criminal justice and criminology, said that the group which she heads, Public Child Protection Wales, is already hearing reports from parents where schools are already trailing some of the resources ahead of schedule.

Lucia Thomas, a chartered certified accountant from Porthcawl, another parent who is helping raise funds for the case said: *"A friend of mine witnessed two, six year old girls holding hands and an elderly lady said 'you two are good girls looking after each other', the two girls responded by saying 'we are lesbians and our teacher said that this was ok'. Some teenagers, at the height of hormonal fluctuation, are told they should 'explore' whether they are Transgender, simply because although a female by sex, they prefer boys' games and activities. We are deeply concerned that in our current culture, there is a progressive, aggressive lobby which is seeking to push onto children and young people ideologies which parents would find inappropriate."*

"School is a place to learn about vital biology, learn how to develop relationships (with both sexes) and to develop respect. But, as parents, we believe what is happening here is the sexualisation of children, not the education of children. Parents know their child best, and if appropriate, parents should seek external professional medical or counselling advice to support our child. But we do not believe the changes to the curriculum help children in Wales – quite the opposite. The new Bill plays on the emotions of children and can unnecessarily confuse them. This is nothing short of a breach of Safeguarding – and its being committed by our Government!"

The parents have instructed international human rights barrister Paul Diamond to represent them. Papers have been filed in the High Court in Cardiff. A response is expected in early May and if unsuccessful, the group will appeal, asking for an Oral Hearing. If a Judicial review is accepted, it is likely to be heard before the schools return in September.

At present, PCPW is crowd-funding for the case and has raised £13,000 of the £100,000 they believe will be necessary when the case goes to a full Review.

Parents wanting further information, or to donate should visit www.publicchildprotectionwales.org

Ends

For further information/interview:

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Editor's Notes:-

Public Child Protection Wales (<https://www.publicchildprotectionwales.org>) exists to promote and create a culture in Wales in which all children are valued, safe, and reach their very best potential.

- We do that by providing a 'voice for children', and a 'voice for parents'.
- We are a parent-led charitable group, concerned at the way national and local Governments have often failed children in terms of safeguarding and education. We seek to work positively and creatively with both, promoting a responsible and shared partnership between schools and parents, and between parents and our elected representatives at all levels.
- We seek to envision, encourage, and equip parents to ensure our schools, universities and civic bodies work towards our stated aim. We do that through providing information, educational resources and where necessary, campaigning on behalf of children and parents. We encourage parents to be actively engaged with all levels of civic life – including school governors and standing as councillors and for Parliament.
- We seek the highest standards in Safeguarding our children and will raise awareness of exploitation and abuse, as necessary. To that end, we fight for Compulsory Sexual Safeguarding of Children and Compulsory in-depth CSA, CSE and HSB training for all working with children and vulnerable people.
- We promote safer families and safer services, including fighting for additional investment into Children and Young People's Services.
- We campaign to ensure a wholesome approach to all aspects of Education, ensuring parental/carer involvement remains at the heart of all developments.
- We are non-Party Political, and our parents represent the breadth of society in Wales. Our parents come from all genders, sexual orientations and religious – all three of which we respect and value.