



WE Party Conference

Kettering 7 – 9 September 2018

Title: Provision for Parental-Engagement Programmes in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Proposed by: WE Camden

Proposer of the motion: Leah Jewett

Type of motion: Policy motion

Motion text:

1 The Women's Equality Party conference notes that:

2 Parents are the missing link in their children's relationships and sex-education learning – and sex
3 education at school is reinforced and implemented well if it's also developed at home through
4 parental engagement.

5 The Women's Equality Party calls on the Department for Education to allocate schools in England
6 and Wales a minimum of three hours a month of government-funded parental-engagement
7 programmes.

Motion rationale:

8 Parents are the missing link in their children's relationships and sex-education learning.¹

9 Relationships and sex education (RSE) was supposed to be mandatory in secondary schools, and
10 relationships education in primary schools, in England as of September 2019 but is delayed until
11 2020².

12 Best-practice RSE encompasses such issues as gender stereotyping, body image, self-esteem,
13 LGBTQ+ inclusivity, sexting, pleasure, consent and the impact of porn.

14 RSE promotes gender equality.

15 A whole-school approach should incorporate parents as children's primary sex educators.

16 An effective home-school partnership leads to better outcomes for children.

17 In some schools parents have been trained as peer parent sex educators.³

18 Parental engagement in sex education empowers parents in:

- 19 ● safeguarding children by encouraging them to become critical thinkers,
- 20 ● improving children's mental health and resilience,
- 21 ● strengthening the parent-child connection.

22 Department for Education (DfE) research shows that children want their parents to be their first
23 teachers about sex.³

24 Although both children and parents want to be able to talk with each other about sex-ed issues⁴,
25 parents often find this challenging. They express an explicit need for guidance, resources and a
26 framework to talk to children about sex.¹

27 Parental-engagement programmes – such as facilitated focus groups – can fill this gap.

28 They are a safe, supportive space to initiate conversation among parents so they can:

- 29 ● acquire information, skills, tools, language, confidence,
- 30 ● compare notes with peers,
- 31 ● start conversation around sex-ed topics at home.

32 They incorporate values around gender equality and children's rights even within a diverse group.
33 For some cultures, gender-separated groups might be advisable – they can also be a valuable tool
34 for eliciting a different atmosphere or level of disclosure.

35 Sex ed in England is placed within the UNCRC (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) rights
36 framework stipulating children/young people's entitlement to comprehensive sex education.

37 There is tension between children's right and the wishes of the vocal minority of parents opposing
38 sex ed.

39 However, children are under alarming pressure. For example:

- 40 ● the average age at which children see porn is 11,
- 41 ● 88% of popular porn scenes contain violence⁵,
- 42 ● from 2013-17 there was a 71% rise child-on-child sexual assaults⁶,
- 43 ● 59% of young women aged 13-21 faced sexual harassment at school in 2014⁷.

44 "From a public-health perspective, the best protective factor for anything to do with kids is having
45 well-educated, skilled parents," declared Professor Gail Dines⁸, the anti-porn sociologist behind
46 Culture Reframed's Parents Program⁹.

47 The DfE affirms: "Parents need support in their role as sex educators."³

48 Citing the benefits of parental involvement, School-Home Support (SHS) suggests developing "a



49 space for parents to work together”, declaring: “Encouraging peer support among parents is
50 important.”¹⁰

51 This policy motion supports WE’s parental-care and social-infrastructure objectives and
52 corroborates three “Equality in Education” principles (WE Manifesto, page 19):

- 53 ● promote the whole-school approach on gender equality... [including] parents’ involvement,
- 54 ● encourage fathers to engage more closely with their children’s education,
- 55 ● address sexism and sexual harassment in schools.

References:

¹https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/dfbec9_1d7216e469bf4beebc58844dfc93c7a7.pdf

²sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/blog/tired-waiting

³<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130403224457/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0116-2000%20SRE.pdf>

⁴sexeducationforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/SRE%20and%20parents%20-%20evidence%20-%202011.pdf

⁵endsexualexploitation.org/articles/on-international-womens-day-we-must-address-the-role-of-pornography-in-fostering-inequality/

⁶bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41504571

⁷publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/91.pdf

⁸drrobysilverman.com/2018/06/12/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-porn-with-gail-dines/

⁹culturereframed.org/parents-program/

¹⁰schoolhomesupport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/SHS-Parental-engagement-toolkit.pdf