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Parents' dismay as they lose right to withdraw children from sex ed classes

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 (<https://www.thecatholicuniverse.com/parents-dismay-as-they-lose-right-to-withdraw-children-from-sex-ed-classes-46581?print=1>)  (mailto:#)

A national parents' advocacy group has condemned the Welsh Government's decision to make Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) a compulsory school subject in all schools in Wales.

From 2021, parents in Wales will no longer be able to withdraw their children from lessons on relationships and sexuality.

The Welsh Government began a project in October collecting feedback on changing the curriculum to remove the option for parents to stop children studying Religious Education (RE) and RSE, Education Minister Kirsty Williams said in a statement.

"After careful consideration of the responses, I can confirm that there will not be a right to withdraw from RE and RSE as part of the new curriculum. This change will require careful and sensitive implementation," she said.

The responses were varied and showed "strong and deeply held concerns.

"These went further than the question of right to withdraw itself, and extended to the appropriate role of the state in education on these matters and what and how learners will be taught," she added.

Ms Williams said significant feedback would be collected and trials undertaken before the new curriculum begins in September 2022.

Calling the decision a "fundamental breach of parental rights", Safe at School said that parents in Wales will be "powerless to protect their children" from teaching on LGBT+ and other sensitive matters.

"This is a staggering move by the Welsh Government," said Antonia Tully of the Safe at School campaign. "88.7 per cent of those who responded to their own public consultation last year said that parents should be able to withdraw their children from LGBT+ classes.

"Once again, parents are being totally ignored," she continued. "The Welsh Government has effectively taken over the education of children and teenagers in the sensitive and intimate areas of human relationships and sexuality.

"This is the task of parents, not the state. And critically, parents are being denied their right to bring up their children in line with their own beliefs and values."

Ms Tully said Safe at School will be supporting and advising parents in Wales about what they can do to work with schools to make sure that the new subject does not expose their children to unacceptable and inappropriate teaching. She also warned that parents are also under attack from Ofsted.

"Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, is now criticising the Government for not doing enough to stop parents from protesting about teaching on relationships which they find unacceptable," she said.

"Parents are being turned into the enemies of their children, as well as the state. If our governments were serious about equipping children for life in 21st century, they would be harnessing the support and active engagement of parents.

"Parents know and understand their children best. Let them teach their own children about relationships and sexuality."

Picture: Children at a primary school. (Danny Lawson/PA).

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