



August 2024

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education;

Congratulations on your appointment, as well as your role as Minister for Women and Equalities.

We're writing to ask for updates on two areas of education policy that affect GMB's significant membership in schools as well as our LGBT+ members and our members who are parents of LGBT+ children.

As you know, GMB is the largest trade union amongst school support staff including teaching assistants, HLTAs, cover supervisors, nursery nurses, lunchtime supervisors, premises, cleaning, administrative and finance staff.

GMB members unanimously supported motions at our 2024 Congress rejecting the right-wing politicisation of trans and non-binary rights that was allowed to flourish under the previous government. Our members stand in support of the rights of trans, non-binary and gender-diverse children and young people, and urge government ministers across departments to hear the voice of GMB's trans members and allies.

Our members want to know if the proposed changes to relationships, sex and health education statutory guidance which were consulted on by Gillian Keegan before the general election will be scrapped?

Expert organisations in child protection, children's rights, sex and relationship education and violence against women and girls state that the draft guidance "[fell] short of what is required to help keep children safe, healthy and prepared for modern life". Many of our members grew up, and worked under, Section 28 and we now want to see inclusive RSHE that represents and celebrates LGBT+ people and families – in every school.

Further, our members want to know if the draft schools and colleges guidance on 'gender questioning children' will be scrapped?

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The TUC's consultation response, which GMB contributed to, highlighted that as it was drafted it "may leave schools and colleges at 'high risk' of successful legal challenges" and further that "a significant portion of the draft guidance is given over to unnecessary, value-laden narrative" seeking to limit the rights and freedoms of trans, non-binary and questioning children.

Our members want to do the right thing by the children and young people they support. We look forward to hearing that these two pieces of regressive, outdated guidance are scrapped so our members can look forward to the practical, supportive guidance they need.

Yours sincerely,

GARY SMITH
GENERAL SECRETARY

BARBARA PLANT
NATIONAL PRESIDENT