

Subject: Whole-school framework on misogyny and healthy relationships:
request for clarification

29th September 2026

Dear Department for Education,

Protect & Teach CIC is writing to ask for clarification of the Department's announcement of 26 September 2026, "**Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny**"¹. We are preparing public guidance for parents and governors and want to distinguish accurately between existing statutory duties, forthcoming guidance and policy that is still under development.

We support effective, evidence-based measures to protect children from sexual harassment, abuse and harmful behaviour. The announcement nevertheless raises practical questions for schools, governors and parents, particularly because the approach is described as extending beyond RSHE teaching to "**enrichment activities**", "**pastoral support and interactions beyond the school gates**"².

We would be grateful for clarification on the following points.

1. Status and publication of the practical framework

- When will the "practical framework to tackle misogyny" be published?
- Will it be statutory guidance, non-statutory guidance, departmental advice or another form of document?
- Which schools and other education settings will it apply to?

2. Whether schools will be required to implement it

The press release states that schools "**will be supported with a practical framework**"³. The Guardian reported on 26 September that schools would be required to embed healthy relationships and belonging "**into every part of school life, not just RSHE** [relationships, sex and health education] **lessons**".

The word "required" appears in the newspaper's reporting rather than within the quotation attributed directly to the Education Secretary.⁴

¹ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, "Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny", press release, 26 September 2026.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-unveils-plan-for-schools-to-tackle-misogyny>

² Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, "Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny", press release, 26 September 2026.

³ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, "Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny", press release, 26 September 2026.

⁴ Jessica Elgot, "Labour must reunite progressive voters to win the next election, says Lucy Powell", The Guardian, 26 September 2026.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/26/labour-must-reunite-progressive-voters-to-win-the-next-election-says-lucy-powell>

- Which elements, if any, will schools be legally or administratively required to implement?
- Where a requirement exists, what is its basis: statutory, regulatory, funding, contractual, inspection or other?

3. Relationship with existing RSHE guidance

The revised RSHE statutory guidance came into effect on 1 September 2026, and schools must have regard to it.⁵

- How will the framework interact with that guidance?
- Will the Department distinguish clearly between relationships education and RSE, sex education, health education, safeguarding activity, behaviour policy, assemblies and enrichment, mentoring, and pastoral interventions?

4. Parental transparency

For RSHE, the statutory guidance says schools should ensure that parents are able to view “all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request”. It also says schools “should not agree to any contractual restrictions on showing parents any content” when contracting with external providers, and that copyright “should never be used as a reason to refuse to share” materials.⁶

- Will the same expectations apply where substantially similar healthy-relationships or misogyny-related content is delivered through assemblies, enrichment, mentoring, pastoral programmes, behaviour interventions or external-provider sessions, rather than in identifiable RSHE lessons?
- Will schools be expected to make such materials available to parents in advance or on request?

5. Parental withdrawal

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.⁷

- Where programmes are delivered across a whole-school model rather than solely within timetabled RSE, how will schools be expected to identify content that falls within sex education?
- Will the framework give specific guidance on this boundary?

⁵ Department for Education, “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”, statutory guidance in effect from 1 September 2026 (paras 15c, 16–21, 56–60). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

⁶ Department for Education, “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”, statutory guidance in effect from 1 September 2026 (paras 15c, 16–21, 56–60).

⁷ Department for Education, “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”, statutory guidance in effect from 1 September 2026 (paras 15c, 16–21, 56–60).

6. Definitions

- Will the framework contain operational definitions of misogyny, harmful attitudes, healthy relationships, belonging and negative online influences?
- If definitions have already been agreed, could they be provided?

7. RSHE expert advisory group

The Department has announced £150,000 for a new RSHE expert advisory group.⁸ Please provide, or say when the Department expects to publish:

- the group's membership and the organisations represented;
- its terms of reference;
- the appointment or selection process;
- declarations of interest;
- remuneration or grants, where applicable;
- meeting arrangements;
- and the outputs the group has been commissioned to produce.

8. The two VAWG Prevention Programme pilots

The press release states that “two new programmes have also begun work this week” through the £16 million Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Prevention Programme: one with secondary pupils on attitudes towards healthy relationships, the other with boys on harmful attitudes and negative online influences.⁹ For each pilot, please provide or identify:

- the commissioning body and the delivery organisation(s);
- the geographical area;
- the participating schools, or the number of schools, where publishable;
- the target age group;
- the programme content;
- the total funding;
- and the duration and expected completion date.

9. Evaluation

- What evaluation design will be used for each pilot, and what are the primary and secondary outcome measures?
- Will the evaluation measure behavioural outcomes; sexual harassment and safeguarding incidents; attitudes and knowledge; pupil wellbeing; unintended or adverse effects; effects on girls and boys separately; complaints or disciplinary consequences; and whether any effect persists after the programme ends?

⁸ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, “Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny”, press release, 26 September 2026.

⁹ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, “Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny”, press release, 26 September 2026.



- Will the evaluation protocol be published before or during the pilots?
- Will the evaluation be carried out independently of the organisations delivering the interventions?

10. Funding

The December 2025 VAWG action plan commits “£3 million in a teacher training fund over the next two years” and “£5 million to pilot healthy relationships training delivered by external providers”.¹⁰ As far as we can see, neither the strategy nor the action plan refers to a £16 million VAWG Prevention Programme.

- How does the £16 million programme relate to the £3 million and £5 million commitments, and to any other funding in the strategy?
- Please provide a breakdown of the £16 million, including allocations to individual projects or workstreams where these have been decided.

11. External providers

The action plan lists “working with external providers to provide whole school sessions” and mentoring among the ways schools may deliver healthy-relationships education.¹¹ The Department’s political impartiality guidance says that schools “should thoroughly assess external agencies before agreeing to any work with them”. It adds that it is important for schools “to look at the wider partisan political views held by the organisation”, and that “ultimately, schools remain responsible for what is said to their pupils”.¹²

- Will the framework include requirements or recommended due-diligence procedures for schools commissioning external organisations?
- In particular, will schools be expected to consider: organisational campaigning or political activity; the evidence behind programme claims; staff qualifications and safeguarding arrangements; access to programme materials; data collection; parental transparency; and political impartiality where political issues are addressed?

12. Data collected from pupils

Will either pilot involve pupil questionnaires, attitudinal assessments, wellbeing measures or any other collection of personal data? If so, please set out:

- what information will be collected, and whether responses will be identifiable;

¹⁰ HM Government, “Freedom from violence and abuse volume 2: action plan”, December 2025 (actions 2(a)-2(c)).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-volume-2-action-plan-accessible>

¹¹ HM Government, “Freedom from violence and abuse volume 2: action plan”, December 2025 (actions 2(a)-2(c)).

¹² Department for Education, “Political impartiality in schools”, updated 21 March 2025 (section “Using external agencies”).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools>

- who will have access to the data, and whether it will be shared with external evaluators or providers;
- how long the data will be retained;
- and what privacy notice, consent or information arrangements will apply.

13. Avoiding the stigmatisation of boys

The Government’s VAWG strategy states: “We will teach about ‘involuntary celibates’ (incels) and misogynistic influencers, without stigmatising boys”.¹³ The same commitment appears in the action plan.¹⁴ The RSHE statutory guidance also asks schools to avoid “gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys”.¹⁵

- How will this principle be reflected in the pilot aimed specifically at boys, and in the wider framework?
- What safeguards will ensure that responses are based on individual behaviour or evidence rather than assumptions based on sex alone?

14. Political impartiality

- Where programmes address genuinely political or contested questions, how will the Department ensure that the framework is implemented consistently with schools’ existing duties on political impartiality?¹⁶
- Will the framework remind schools explicitly that those duties continue to apply when charities, campaign organisations or other external providers are used?

15. “Belonging” and school accountability

The Department has linked the new approach to a culture of “respect and belonging”.¹⁷ The Schools White Paper also states that “by 2029, we expect every

¹³ HM Government, “Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls”, Volume 1, December 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy-to-build-a-safer-society-for-women-and-girls-accessible>

¹⁴ HM Government, “Freedom from violence and abuse volume 2: action plan”, December 2025 (actions 2(a)–2(c)).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-volume-2-action-plan-accessible>

¹⁵ Department for Education, “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”, statutory guidance in effect from 1 September 2026 (paras 15c, 16–21, 56–60).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

¹⁶ Department for Education, “Political impartiality in schools”, updated 21 March 2025 (section “Using external agencies”).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools>

¹⁷ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, “Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny”, press release, 26 September 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-unveils-plan-for-schools-to-tackle-misogyny>

school to monitor pupils' sense of belonging and engagement", supported by a Pupil Engagement Framework.¹⁸

- Will "belonging" in the misogyny framework be linked to any formal accountability, inspection, self-evaluation or improvement mechanism, including the Pupil Engagement Framework?
- If so, how will it be defined and measured?

16. Ofsted, funding and accountability

- Will implementation of the framework be considered by Ofsted, form part of any accountability or improvement measure, be linked to grant or funding conditions, affect academy funding agreements, or become part of safeguarding or compliance expectations?
- If these matters have not yet been decided, please confirm that they remain under consideration.

17. Source of the statistics

The press release cites "new data" showing that half (50%) of girls reported hearing misogynistic comments from other pupils during a week at school in May, and that nearly a third (30%) of Year 10 and 11 pupils had recently heard comments that made them worry about the safety of girls.¹⁹ The release does not identify the source.

- Please identify the survey or surveys concerned, including the publisher, fieldwork dates and sample, and say whether the results have been or will be published.

Next steps

Where information is not yet available because policy is still being developed, confirmation of that position and the expected publication timetable would be very helpful, as would links to any published documents that already answer these questions.

For the policy questions above, we would be grateful for a substantive departmental response. Where the Department holds recorded information relevant to those questions that is not already published, please treat this letter as a request for that recorded information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ²⁰

¹⁸ Department for Education, "Every child achieving and thriving" (Schools White Paper), 23 February 2026. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving>

¹⁹ Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, "Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny", press release, 26 September 2026.

²⁰ Freedom of Information Act 2000, sections 1, 8 and 10. [Freedom of Information Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

For the Freedom of Information elements of this request, we understand the normal statutory time limit is 20 working days. We would be grateful if the policy questions could also be answered within that period where possible.

Thank you for your help.

Yours faithfully,

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Director

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References

1. Department for Education and Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP, "Education Secretary unveils plan for schools to tackle misogyny", press release, 26 September 2026.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-unveils-plan-for-schools-to-tackle-misogyny>
2. Jessica Elgot, "Labour must reunite progressive voters to win the next election, says Lucy Powell", The Guardian, 26 September 2026.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/26/labour-must-reunite-progressive-voters-to-win-the-next-election-says-lucy-powell>
3. Department for Education, "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education", statutory guidance in effect from 1 September 2026 (paras 15c, 16–21, 56–60).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
4. HM Government, "Freedom from violence and abuse volume 2: action plan", December 2025 (actions 2(a)–2(c)).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-volume-2-action-plan-accessible>
5. Department for Education, "Political impartiality in schools", updated 21 March 2025 (section "Using external agencies").
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools>
6. HM Government, "Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls", Volume 1, December 2025.
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7. Department for Education, "Every child achieving and thriving" (Schools White Paper), 23 February 2026.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving>
8. Freedom of Information Act 2000, sections 1, 8 and 10.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>

