

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE  
COMMITTEE BY THE DEPUTY OF TRINITY**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON 6th JULY 2004**

**Question 1**

Is sex education in our schools (and other agencies such as the Brook Advisory Centre which are supported by the States) aimed at teaching pupils to delay sexual relations until attaining the age of consent (or, preferably, until marriage) or does it seek to undermine the law and their childhood, and endanger their sexual health, by promoting “safe sex” albeit under-age?

**Answer**

The main objective of sex and relationship education in our schools is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development.

At an appropriate age, pupils are taught to understand human sexuality, to appreciate the value of stable relationships, to learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and to recognise the benefits to be gained from such delay.

As part of the programme, secondary pupils are given advice on matters relating to sexual health and factual information about safer sex. To encourage responsible behaviour, they are also made aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and informed about locally available confidential services.

**Question 2**

Is it considered that the above matters serve to promote under-age sexual intercourse and encourage teenage pregnancy and the significant increase in sexually transmitted diseases that is being witnessed?

**Answer**

Effective sex and relationship education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It helps young people to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to deal with the many different and often conflicting pressures they face today. Given the problems associated with teenage pregnancy and the reported increase in sexually transmitted diseases, it is appropriate for secondary schools to provide education about contraception.