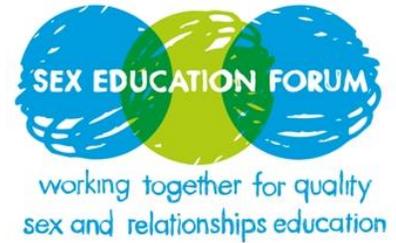


## Sex Education Forum: parents and SRE



### Key findings from OnePoll survey of 1000 parents with children aged 4-16 (poll carried out September 2014 and published November 2014)

Parents were asked to think about **one** child who is currently of school age (4-16) when answering the questions.

- 78% of parents want primary schools to teach their children about the difference between safe and unwanted touch and how to speak up if someone treats them inappropriately.
- Almost two-thirds of parents support primary schools in teaching basic, medically correct terms for sexual organs such as vagina and penis.
- 80% agreed that those teachers that teach sex and relationships education should have training in the subject.
- 7 out of 10 parents would welcome help and support from their child's school about how they can talk to their child about growing up and related issues.

### Questions

- A. Do you think pupils at primary school should learn about **puberty** before they experience these changes?

<b>Yes</b>	65.5%
<b>No</b>	18.6%
<b>Don't know</b>	15.9%

*Two-thirds of parents want their children to learn about puberty before they experience it. This figure increases to 74% answering yes amongst mothers and decreases to 58% answering yes amongst fathers. 16% of parents couldn't make up their mind and answered 'don't know'.*

- B. Do you think primary school children should learn about the **difference between safe and unwanted touch and how to speak up if someone treats them inappropriately?**

<b>Yes</b>	77.8%
<b>No</b>	11.4%
<b>Don't know</b>	10.8%

*More than three-quarters of parents (78%) want primary schools to teach their children about the difference between safe and unwanted touch and how to speak up if someone treats them inappropriately. This figure increased to 83% amongst mothers answering the question and decreased to 73% amongst fathers answering the question. One in 10 parents could not decide – and may need more information about how schools would teach children about this topic.*

- C. Do you think primary schools should teach children about **what to do if they find pictures showing private parts of the body online or are asked to send them?**

<b>Yes</b>	71.6%
<b>No</b>	15.5%
<b>Don't know</b>	12.9%

*72% of parents think primary schools should teach children about what to do if they find pictures showing private parts of the body online or are asked to send them.*

- D. Do you think primary schools should teach **basic, medically correct terms for sexual organs** such as vagina and penis?

<b>Yes</b>	64.5%
<b>No</b>	18.7%

<b>Don't know</b>	16.8%
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*Almost two-thirds of parents support primary schools in teaching basic, medically correct terms for sexual organs such as vagina and penis. A large group of parents (17%) could not decide either way.*

- E. Do you think those **teachers that teach sex and relationships education should have training** in the subject?

<b>Yes</b>	79.9%
<b>No</b>	11.1%
<b>Don't know</b>	9%

*Parents were very clear that teachers need to be trained in the subject, with 80% stating that those teachers that teach sex and relationships education should have training in the subject.*

- F. **Would you welcome help and support** from your child's school about how you can talk to your child about growing up and related issues?

<b>Yes</b>	69.7%
<b>No</b>	30.3%

*7 out of 10 parents would welcome help and support from their child's school about how they can talk to their child about growing up and related issues.*

#### **Variation in responses based on characteristics of parents**

Mothers and female carers were consistently more likely than dads and male carers to want their child to learn about sex and relationships issues in schools, but nearly two-thirds of the dads and male carers responding would welcome help and support from their child's schools about how to talk to their child about growing up and related issues. Dads / male carers were more likely to answer 'I don't know' to all the questions with this answer option.

Parents of the youngest children (aged 4) were least like to answer the questions positively. For example only 48.3% of parents of children aged 4 answered 'yes' to schools teaching children about puberty before they experience it, whereas 74% of parents of children aged 11-13 answered 'yes' to this question.

### **What else do we know about parents and SRE**

The Sex Education Forum has published a literature review (2011) looking at evidence relating to parents and SRE with the following summary of findings:

- Children and young people see parents and carers as an important source of information about sex and relationships.
- Most parents feel they should discuss sex and relationships with their children.
- Many parents fail to discuss sex and relationships with their children as much as they wish to.
- Many parents underestimate how much their children want to communicate with them about sex and relationships.
- Fathers are less likely than mothers to talk to their children about sex and relationships.
- The majority of parents support school SRE.
- Some parents are unaware of what SRE is provided at school.
- A small minority of parents choose to withdraw their children from school SRE.
- There is strong evidence that young people who have good quality SRE that starts early are more likely to be older when they first have sex, to have fewer sexual partners and to use contraception.
- Embarrassment, lack of knowledge and poor experience of own sex education are factors that limit parents' communication with their children.
- Some parents are skilful in discussing sex and relationships education.
- The majority of parents want support with SRE and more involvement with school SRE.
- Many schools are failing to involve parents in SRE – but there are examples of good practice.



conducted online research on 1000 parents of children aged 4-16 in September 2014.

Sex Education Forum (2011) Parents and SRE [http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/333401/parents\\_sre.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/333401/parents_sre.pdf)