

# P-06-1393 Empowering Parental Choice: Opt-Out Rights and Inclusive Involvement in the RSE Program - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee

January 17, 2024

Petitions Committee, Welsh Parliament  
Senedd, Pierhead St, Cardiff CF99 1SN

Dear Petitions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further comments on Petition P-06-1393 in the context of the document provided by the Welsh Government.

Our primary concern remains the alignment of the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum with the principles of modesty in various religious and cultural contexts, including Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and other ethical frameworks. Modesty, or Haya, in an article published on the "SalamIslam" website in Islam, is a comprehensive virtue encompassing behavior, speech, and interactions, particularly relevant in the context of sexual education. It is a principle that emphasizes dignity, respect, and self-restraint, transcending mere dress and appearance to include conduct before God, in society, and even in private. It highlights the importance of modesty as a pivotal ethical principle in Islam, emphasizing dignity, respect, and self-restraint, which is crucial in the context of sexual education (1). Modesty also holds significance in Judaism (2) and Christianity (3), as well as in various cultural and ethical frameworks.

The current RSE curriculum, as implemented, does not seem to sufficiently respect these principles and the diverse perspectives on modesty, culture, and ethical frameworks. There is a significant discrepancy between the Welsh Government's policy of working collaboratively with parents and its actual implementation. Many parents from various communities have reported that the schools are enforcing materials that conflict with their religious beliefs regarding modesty and cultural values. This enforcement not only disregards the cultural and religious sensitivities of students but also potentially exposes children to content for which they are not developmentally ready.

Research underscores the risks of exposing children to sexual content prematurely. A systematic review and meta-analysis involving 16,200 participants indicated a strong association between exposure to sexual content and the likelihood of engaging in problematic sexual behaviors in children and adolescents (4). Early exposure to sexual content can lead to early sexualization, high-risk sexual behaviors, and even the development of sex, love, and relationship addictions, as discussed by Psychology Today (5). The National Sexual Violence Resource Center also highlights the impact of exposure to sexually explicit and exploitative materials on children, emphasizing the need for preventative measures (6).

To address these concerns, we respectfully suggest the following steps:

- Formation of school-based voluntary committees upon the request of parents, with diverse membership representing the community.
- These committees would "supervise" the implementation process and ensure that it aligns with the values and beliefs of our community.
- Committees would actively engage with the school board to collaboratively build the RSE curriculum.
- Prior to any release of these materials to the pupils, we suggest that the unanimous agreement of this committee should be considered essential, as it would reflect the collective wisdom of the community.
- These committees would not only oversee the content but also guide the delivery process to ensure transparency and inclusivity.
- We are also open to the possibility of an in-person meeting to further share our point of view and discuss how we can work together for the benefit of our children.

We strongly emphasize the need to respect children's religion, culture, age, and readiness when delivering RSE content. Parents should have the opportunity to preview materials to ensure they align with their values and beliefs. Many parents have reported that they only see a title before the content is delivered, and

in some cases, the content has been very explicit.

We urge the Committee to consider these aspects in revising the RSE curriculum to ensure it is effective, respectful, and inclusive of all students' cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular attention to the principles of modesty in various religious and cultural contexts.

On behalf of more than 100 concerned families, we request your attention to these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Mostafa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Mohamed Mostafa  
Mohamed Mostafa BSc(Hons) PhD MBCS  
Data Scientist and AI Engineer  
Former Senior Lecturer in Data Science and Program Director

## \*References

- [1] Salamislam. (n.d.). Modesty in Islam. Retrieved from <https://salamislam.com/articles/lifestyle/modesty-islam>
- [2] Wikipedia. (n.d.). Tzniut. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzniut>
- [3] ResearchGate. (n.d.). The Conceptions of Modesty and Modest Dress in the Scriptures of Abrahamic Religions. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343554835> *The Conceptions of Modesty and Modest Dress in the Scriptures of Abrahamic Religions*
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- [6] National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nsvrc.org>