



The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

His Grace the Most Reverend Dr G Davies
Archbishop of Sydney
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DGS15/934

Your Grace

Thank you for meeting with me on Friday the 15th May 2015 to discuss the memorandum issued by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) regarding the appropriateness of certain texts for use in Special Religious Education (SRE).

I acknowledge and regret that there was no consultation by the DEC with the Anglican Church prior to the memorandum being issued to Directors Public Schools on 6 May 2015. I'm pleased the Department has now agreed that if similar concerns are raised in the future it will immediately discuss the matter with SRE providers as a first step.

With respect to the texts in question, I appreciate your confirming with me that the main publication of concern, *Teen Sex by the Book* by Dr Patricia Weerakoon, has never been a part of the SRE curriculum and is not authorised by the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney for use in government schools. The DEC has advised that *Teen Sex by the Book* has been used in a small number of schools outside of Sydney, contrary to the authorised curriculum, and therefore it should never have been used in SRE in government schools. I thank you for your support in reminding Anglican SRE providers in the Diocese of Sydney not to use this book or any other material which is not part of the Sydney Anglican SRE curriculum as published on your website.

With regard to the other two books, and their accompanying student handbooks, namely, *You: An Introduction* by Dr Michael Jensen and *A Sneaking Suspicion* by Dr John Dickson, I understand that both of these resources have been part of the authorised Sydney Anglican High School SRE curriculum for many years.

I wish to confirm that there is no ban in place on these books and I have requested the DEC to inform the Directors Public Schools accordingly.

As we discussed, the original memorandum was issued by the DEC on advice that there was a potential risk to students in the delivery of this material, if not taught sensitively and in an age appropriate manner. I was pleased to hear of your assurance that sensitive, age appropriate delivery of SRE is an integral part of the training of SRE teachers in the Diocese of Sydney.

On that basis I am pleased that agreement has been reached that the Anglican Church will continue to work closely with DEC to relieve any concerns associated with the delivery of SRE, given the supreme importance both the NSW Government and the Anglican Church place on protecting the welfare of children.

The NSW Government is supportive of and committed to SRE, as is the Anglican Church, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you on delivering best practice SRE.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Piccoli', written in a cursive style.

Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

18 MAY 2015