

Subj: **Homosexual Video for Schools in UK**
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Schools video tells children to try gay sex

BY Rosie Waterhouse and James Clark

A VIDEO that encourages schoolchildren as young as 14 to experiment with gay sex has caused outrage among MPs and family campaigners. The film, now available in 180 schools, also asks pupils aged 14-16 to discuss whether a fictional 15-year-old boy - Michael - should have unprotected gay sex with his boyfriend.

The Department of Health faced furious calls last night to step in and block the teaching pack, which was paid for by Avon health authority using public money.

The pack - called Beyond a Phase: A Practical Guide to Challenging Homophobia in Schools - is being cited by campaigners as a prime example of why Labour should abandon plans to scrap section 28, the law that forbids the promotion of homosexuality in schools. The 14-minute film would be a clear breach of the law if health authorities were not exempted from section 28.

In it a young college student called Karl tells his audience of school pupils that to obtain sexual satisfaction they should "try experimenting with both boys and girls to see who you feel most comfortable with".

Valerie Riches, of the Family and Youth Campaign pressure group, said: "This puts concepts and activities into the minds of youngsters they would not normally think about."

Last night Liam Fox, the Conservative health spokesman, said few parents would want their children "exposed" to the film and said he would demand that the Department of Health investigate.

The video shows young people talking about "coming out" and their experiences of homosexual relationships and includes images of young gay couples kissing. At one point, pupils are asked: "Michael is 15 and his boyfriend wants him to have sex. He really wants to, but he is nervous. Michael knows he should use a condom, but doesn't know where to go for help. What should he do?"

The teaching pack plus video was produced last year by Health Promotion Services Avon in Bristol, which runs health and sex education programmes for the health authority. It cost about £9,000 to produce the £30 video.

Health Promotion Services Avon said: "The video and teachers pack promotes the values of olerance and understanding and that everyone has a right to be accepted whatever their sexuality."

A spokesman for Avon health authority said: "We have reviewed Beyond a Phase and in our view it treats a difficult subject with great sensitivity. Local teachers consider it a valuable resource and we fully support its use in schools."

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