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# Call to make sex education mandatory in Qld schools

By Kim Lyell

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**Up to one-third of all Queensland school students could be missing out on sex education, putting them at increased risk of sexual abuse, disease and unplanned pregnancy.**

MAP: QLD

Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) says some families are being forced to pay for the lessons on sexuality and relationships, and other schools are not offering any sex education at all.

FPQ education director Holly Brennan says sex education should be mandatory.

"We would estimate that a third of schools get quite comprehensive sexuality education," Ms Brennan said.

"A third of schools get a 'one-off' - the talk before schoolies - and a third of schools would be getting no sexuality education at all.

"Most parents actually think it is in the school and that it's happening.

"Research we did a couple of years ago found parents would be shocked to learn their children aren't receiving the education."

Ms Brennan says research as well as experience suggests those who miss out, are exposed to greater dangers as children, adolescents and adults.

"If children don't receive sexuality education they are more at risk of sexual abuse, they are more at risk of unplanned pregnancies, they are more at risk of getting STDs," she said.

Hilary Backus from the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSSP) says primary schools are already suffering from curriculum overload and are taking on an increasing burden of social responsibilities.

"Governments and societies react to a situation or a crisis and suddenly we find that primary schools can fix that, and it becomes something that is expected that primary schools will fit into their school week," Mrs Backus said.

"Primary schools need to focus on literacy and numeracy - let's get that foundation really solid so children can engage successfully in secondary school and then can contribute to society as successful citizens."

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