



'BLAME IT ON VINCE!'

As Brussels says no to surcharge capping, government conveniently blames GRTU's Vince Farrugia



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85% say teens should be thought about condoms in school

mt survey

JAMES DEBONO

THE vast majority of Maltese people do not share the government's timid approach to safe sex education in schools, a MaltaToday survey confirms.

The survey, in which 300 respondents were directly asked whether "education on the use of condoms and other contraceptives" should be provided in secondary schools, revealed an astounding 85% in favour of teaching students about the use of condoms.

Only 8% opposed it. The survey comes in the wake of the controversy surround-

ing the lack of a national sexual health policy in Malta.

Secondary school children education on contraception is currently limited to Personal and Social Development, a life-skills subject covering a wide array of topics, ranging from bullying and intercultural awareness to sexuality.

Education on contraception and responsible sexual behaviour starts at Form 3.

But in the absence of a national sexual health policy, sex education largely remains at the discretion of individual schools.

Over the past years the Malta Medical Students Association, which actively promotes sexual health awareness and

condom use, was barred from taking their campaign to the Church's secondary and post-secondary schools.

And a recent study conducted among Maltese schoolchildren aged 11 to 15 revealed that 64% of the respondents who admitted to having sex, also claimed to have never used a condom.

Parallel studies reveal that Malta currently enjoys the highest European incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as Chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis; as well as the highest rate of teenage girls dropping out of school on account of pregnancy.

Despite the gravity of the situation, a draft national health policy presented to the Health Ministry in July this year, was returned with practically every reference to the word "condom" deleted.



Former lecturer claims persecution after refusing to doctor marks

DAVID DARMANIN

A former MCAST lecturer who was removed from his post for reasons unknown to him, has written to MCAST Principal Maurice Grech to question whether his dismissal was due to his "refusal to invent students' marks".

The letter, copied to the entire MCAST board, the education minister and also the Prime Minister, reached this newspaper after it revealed the MCAST administration had doctored exam results when it lost the original assignments.

Gervais Marcel Chishahayo, who taught at MCAST's Institute of Business and Commerce (IBAC), wrote to Grech to answer to allegations of not always having corrected his students' assignments.

"Allegations that I did not always correct student's assignments are obviously an overstatement simply made to put me in bad light. I set deadlines to submit assignments

and I do not accept or correct late assignments. This is common practice for it is unfair on students who hand in their assignments on time."

Grech also alleged that IBAC management had found students on their own during Chishahayo's lessons. But Chishahayo doesn't mince his words in his reply.

"Who is IBAC management?" he asked. "Is it one person (IBAC deputy director Mr Josef Buttigieg) who has been persecuting me with impunity for the last five years because of my refusal to invent students' marks after a whole class's assignments went missing while in his custody?"

MCAST staff and officials wrote reference letters praising Chishahayo's professionalism and work ethic. A former colleague pointed out that while Chishahayo, who is black, maintained a positive and professional relationship with his colleagues, he was often the victim of snide racist remarks aimed at him.

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