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Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne
By email: willmottk@parliament.uk

Your ref: bnowkew03112020williamson

7 December 2020

Dear Emma,

Thank you for your further letters of 9 October and 3 November, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE). I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

I am sorry for the delay in responding to your letter and concerns. This has been caused by a significant increase in the number of letters we have received alongside the increased workload for civil servants as we continue to tackle the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak for the education sector.

The Department has consulted, and continues to consult, with a wide range of stakeholders on the implementation of the RSHE curriculum, which is now compulsory for all schools.

The content covered by these subjects must be age and developmentally appropriate. Schools should ensure that when teaching these subjects, they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and that their teaching is sensitive and inclusive, respecting the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils. Pupils should also be taught the relevant facts and laws relating to these subjects.

The Department remains committed to supporting all schools in their preparations to deliver the content of these subjects. We are aware that there are many resources in circulation to support schools to teach these subjects and that not all of them are of good quality and some are inappropriate.

The implementation guidance, 'Plan your relationships sex and health curriculum' published on 24 September, includes advice on working with external agencies. It builds on the content of the statutory RSHE guidance and includes clear advice on choosing resources. It states that schools should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure it is appropriate for the age and maturity of their pupils and sensitive to their needs, where relevant. The implementation guidance also advises schools to exercise caution when working with external agencies, ensuring they have full confidence in any agency's approach and the resources it uses.

The Department does not recommend or monitor resources and has no plans to do so. Individual schools are responsible for deciding which resources they choose to support the teaching of RSHE in line with the guidance. The statutory RSHE guidance refers to a list of suggested resources in Annex B, which includes Stonewall's resources on LGBT inclusivity, alongside others. This list is for illustrative purposes only and is not exhaustive.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick', written in a cursive style.