



Women and Equalities Committee

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP

Minister of State for Schools

By email

5 July 2023

Dear Nick

RSHE Review

Thank you for your letter of 4 May setting out the Government's approach to the RSHE Review and for your offer to appear before the Committee in the autumn.

As you will be aware, the Committee took evidence on 10 May on RSHE and the Government's review. We heard a range of views but there was a general consensus that children and young people need access to high quality, suitable RSHE that both safeguards and allows children and young people to thrive. However, witnesses to the Committee told us that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are often unable to benefit from RSHE because materials are not always suitably tailored.

We heard there should be a robust, accountable process for the review to hear from children and young people, as the beneficiaries of RSHE. In your letter you assured us that you would work with the Children's Commissioner to ensure the views of children can be fed into the review. We urge you to ensure children and young people, across all ages and backgrounds are central to this process to ensure their needs are being met by the RSHE curriculum.

RSHE has the capacity to safeguard children, enable them to thrive as adults, and help tackle violence against women and girls, however, as we set out in our Report published today on Attitudes towards women and girls in educational settings, we were told that RSHE is not fulfilling its potential in that regard. We look forward to the outcome of the Government's review, we urge that it is evidence-led and builds on the valuable progress made so far.

I would be grateful if you could set out what steps the Government is taking to:

- a. Ensure children and young people's voices are central to the RSHE Review
- b. Specifically review RSHE provision for children with SEND



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- c. Continue to develop RSHE as a method for tackling VAWG
- d. Investigate the claims of inappropriate materials and teaching being used, but also ensure the RSHE Review is not used as an ideological football, and the best interests of children and young people are kept at its heart

We would also like to draw your attention to the experience of Black children, particularly Black girls and the adultification that they experience. We would urge you, both through the RSHE review, and in the Department's wider work to ensure that the particular experience of Black girls is considered.

Gender-identity in schools

It was recently reported that the Government is planning to publish guidance for schools on the treatment of pupils seeking to change their gender. The absence of a formal statement from the Government or the publication of that guidance has given rise to concerns.

I would be grateful if you could set out to Parliament what the Government's plans are in this area and, if guidance is forthcoming, when its publication can be expected.

Thank you for your commitment to appear before the Committee in the autumn. I will ask the clerks to arrange a suitable date and time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours ever,

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee