



The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith

Minister for Skills

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The Earl of Devon
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Dear Lord Devon,

I am writing following the debate on Independent Schools on Thursday 5th of September. I thought that I might to write to further address some concerns raised that I did not have time to cover in my speech. Thank you for participating in the debate, the range of issues raised by the House better support the consultation surrounding this policy, which I am grateful for.

As I stated in the debate, legal considerations have been incorporated into the process, as is standard for all legislative changes.

The Government gives due consideration to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles when making new policy. State education is accessible to all children, regardless of their financial status and all children of compulsory school age are entitled to a state-funded school place if they need one. Education matters and is at the heart of our mission to break down barriers to opportunity so every child gets the best start in life. We believe that our proposals are compatible with the principles of the UNCRC.

The debate highlighted our shared commitment to ensuring that all children's needs are met, a sentiment I fully support. This Government's ambition is that all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or not, receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life. We are committed to improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, as well as ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

Thank you again for raising this matter with me. I hope these further details have been useful and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith