



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith**

**Minister for Skills**

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House of Lords  
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Dear Baroness Bull, and Baroness Fraser of Craigmaddie,

I am writing following the debate on Independent Schools on Thursday 5 September where I undertook to write to further address your concerns. Thank you for your contribution to the debate. I understand your apprehensions surrounding the impact of this policy and want to reassure you that across government we are working to carefully consider the impact of charging VAT on private schools' fees. We are actively listening to the questions and any concerns being raised.

In response to your request to explore with interested parties the unintended consequences of the current draft legislation in greater depth, particularly performing arts schools, this is already taking place. The technical consultation has convened with various interested parties including: representatives from the performing arts sector, private school associations, special education needs representatives, faith schools, and a much broader range of interested parties. Devolved administrations are actively involved in this process, and we are engaging across government.

Officials have met with all Music and Dance Scheme schools, and all but two Dance and Drama Awards schools in relation to the likely impact of the tax changes and all schools were made aware of the technical consultation and of the 15 September deadline for responses. Two roundtables took place the week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

The schools will be informed of the outcome of the consultation later in the Autumn. The right time to consider any changes to schemes is at the Spending Review. Following scrutiny by the Office for Budget Responsibility, further details of the government's assessment of the expected impacts of these policy changes will be published at the Budget in the usual way.

I would be happy to meet with you both to discuss this matter further if you wish and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith**