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Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System
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Ms Andrea Simon
Director, End Violence Against Women Commission
By email: admin@evaw.org.uk

5 May 2021

Dear Ms Simon,

Thank you for your letter of 8 April, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and apologise for the delay in responding.

Sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment in any form is abhorrent. It is essential that children are protected, and allegations of abuse are dealt with appropriately. That is why the Secretary of State has set up a dedicated NSPCC helpline and asked Ofsted to undertake a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools.

I know Departmental officials were hugely appreciative of your organisation's support and input on the departmental stand-alone advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools. I am really pleased to hear that you are now part of the Ofsted review reference group as your expertise will be invaluable. Like you, I want to see more people using the advice and we have given it more prominence in Keeping Children Safe in Education (the statutory guidance for all schools) and promoted it again via an update to all schools and colleges last week.

Amongst other things, the Ofsted review will explore with schools where things have gone wrong, why and what we can do to improve the system. Ofsted will also be exploring good practice and how we can share it.

Thank you for your recommendations, they will be considered alongside the findings of the Ofsted review. However, I have asked officials to get in touch with you to discuss your recommendations further.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ER Berridge". The letters "ER" are written in a simple, blocky style, while "Berridge" is written in a more fluid, cursive script. A long, thin horizontal line extends from the bottom of the signature to the right.

ELIZABETH BERRIDGE

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE