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11 November 2016

Dear Christina

Bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools

Thank you for your letter following yesterday's meeting of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

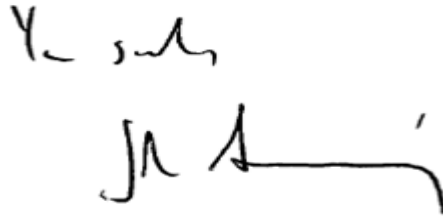
Respect for All, the refreshed national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people, provides an holistic approach to anti-bullying which makes clear that all bullying is unacceptable, including prejudice-based bullying; and I am glad that the committee has taken such a keen interest in this important issue and was able to take evidence from valued stakeholders.

However, it is crucial that that this guidance is carefully considered and therefore I welcome the Committee's input into this process and agree to put the publication on hold to allow for your meaningful engagement. To begin this process, if helpful, my officials can write to you separately outlining what *Respect for All*'s aims are, how it will support local authorities, schools and organisations address prejudice-based bullying; and how we have involved children and young people in its development. I am also happy to meet with you informally to discuss this.

There are a number of commitments over and above the publication of a refreshed anti-bullying policy that this Government is already taking forward with regards to teacher training; collection of data on the health and wellbeing of our children and young people; and improving children and young people's mental health. I will be considering these issues as well as anything further that can be done to support individual equalities groups over and above our holistic approach to anti-bullying; and I would appreciate any comments from the Committee in relation to these issues as well.



I would like to thank you once again for your engagement with this issue and value the support of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee in ensuring that Respect for All: the national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people, is fit for purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Swinney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN SWINNEY

Cc: Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities

James Dornan MSP, Convenor, the Education and Skills Committee