

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your email to the Secretary of State dated 29 March about the proposed change to the Pupil Registration Regulations regarding parents choosing to remove their children from school to home educate. The Secretary of State has asked me to respond.

I would like to reassure you that it is not the Department's intention to change the rights of parents to home educate their children if they wish to do so. Similarly, it is not our intention that any change to regulations should be used to put pressure on parents to return their child to school against their wishes

The proposed change to the regulations was intended to protect those children whose parents have been unfairly encouraged into home education against their better judgement, particularly those pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties who might present a challenge to the school.

Having considered the issue further, however, Ministers are not yet convinced that the proposed change is the best way to address this concern and have asked officials to explore other policy options.

You also expressed concern over the lack of consultation in considering the Regulation change. I should explain that we were originally aiming to bring the change into effect for the start of the new school year in September 2011 as we believed that, along with the other changes, it would benefit both parents and schools. It is for this reason that the consultation was targeted at key representative bodies, and unfortunately it was not possible to include individual schools, local councils or home educators in the time available.

I hope this reply addresses your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

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