Thank you for your letter of 24 October regarding puberty in Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.

We know that puberty, including menstruation, is an important issue for young people. We want to ensure they develop the knowledge and understanding about the changes they are to experience as they grow up and relevant issues associated with puberty. That is why we have emphasised this topic in the draft guidance which, as you know, goes further than the current guidance on Sex and Relationship Education.

We are clear that schools’ lessons on this topic should include possible implications for health resulting from the changes triggered by puberty. This should complement the year 5 programme of study for science which includes teaching about puberty, where menstruation should also be covered. Under the topic of intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, for secondary pupils, the draft guidance sets out that pupils should develop knowledge about the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

We will consider the Committee’s suggestion that the guidance cover the specific issue of prevalence and impact of endometriosis on girls alongside other consultation responses.
We know how important it is that schools are able to deliver high-quality teaching, and we are using evidence collected through the consultation to determine what resources, training or other support should be provided.

With best wishes.

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