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Edward Timpson MP
Minister of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Professor Eric Anderson
By email: ProfessorEricAnderson@gmail.com

Professor Allyson Pollock
By email: A.Pollock@qmul.ac.uk

Dear Eric and Allyson,

5 May 2016

Thank you for your open letter, received in the department on 14 April, about the potential risk to children when playing rugby at school. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I read your letter with care and note your concern about the risk of injury to children when playing sports at school. The government, however, has no current plans to ban tackling in school rugby.

Team sports, such as rugby, play an important role in children's development, as they help children develop positive traits such as fair play, leadership and resilience. This is an important part of our commitment to prepare children for life in modern Britain. Sports also provide an opportunity for physical activity and help children develop healthy habits for life.

There is no definitive list of the activities or sports that schools should offer their pupils. Schools have the flexibility to organise and deliver a diverse and challenging PE curriculum which best suits the needs of their pupils. We expect schools to be aware of the risks associated with all the sporting activities they provide, to provide a safe environment for their pupils, and to ensure that their teachers and other staff have the appropriate training.

Expert advice is available for schools to help them make sure that all sporting activities are safe. The Association for Physical Education and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents provide advice to schools on how to manage activities safely and reduce the risk of injuries and accidents.

Kindest regards,

Edward

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