

12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Emergency First Aid Education Bill.

There is nothing more important than keeping children and staff safe in our schools. Schools have the opportunity to teach skills such as CPR and more general first aid training as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. While it is up to individual schools precisely what to teach in PSHE, they are encouraged to work with expert organisations to teach such skills.

However, legislating to include a requirement for first aid training in the national curriculum would be the wrong approach. The national curriculum creates a minimum expectation for the school programme. Quite deliberately, it does not represent everything that a school should teach. Rather it is a framework around which schools can construct a programme which works best for them. In addition, schools do not have a monopoly on the provision of education to children, as parents and voluntary groups outside school also play an important role.

There are many similar issues which the Government is frequently called upon to include in the national curriculum, but simply having a long list of compulsory subjects could easily become a box-ticking exercise and prevent schools from focussing on what is important for their pupils and communities. Schools should be encouraged and supported in teaching vital skills such as first aid, but forcing them to do so in law would not be the best way to achieve this.

I am encouraged that a deal to offer an initial 500 defibrillators to schools at reduced prices was announced last year, alongside new guidance which includes encouraging schools to use these devices as an impetus to promote life-saving skills more broadly.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**