



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1545
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00924/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

29 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 31 July 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms.

Wales has led the way on children's rights, enshrining them in law through The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. Wales was the first country in the UK to do so. The Measure requires Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child when exercising any of their functions.

We recognise the importance of listening to children and young people and taking their views meaningfully into account. We fund Children in Wales to operate Young Wales on our behalf, enabling children and young people to have their voices heard in government policy making. This provides a forum for children and young people to raise with us the issues that concern them most.

Safeguarding of learners is of paramount importance to the Welsh Government. All education settings in Wales have a legal duty to ensure that children have access to a safe learning environment; we expect these safeguarding responsibilities to be taken seriously.

The Welsh Government has issued statutory guidance [Keeping Learners safe](#) to support schools in creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children. This guidance must be read and followed by local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools), voluntary-aided and foundation schools, and further education institutions, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

All schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. The arrangements that local authorities and governing bodies have in place to comply with these statutory duties need to ensure reasonable measures are taken to minimise risks of harm to children's well-being and that appropriate actions are taken to address concerns about the well-being of a child or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The [Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 1999](#) regulation 3 states that schools must provide readily accessible changing accommodation (including showers) for pupils who are aged 11 or over and who are receiving physical education. There must also be separate washrooms for male and female pupils who are aged 8 and over.

I acknowledge that changing areas could be places where young people are more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse such as bullying or harmful sexual behaviour, especially in secondary schools where there is less supervision. School staff need to be able to keep children safe while allowing them privacy, I'd expect schools to make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of all children.

Experiencing unacceptable behaviour or being placed in situations where children may feel uncomfortable has the potential to seriously impact the wellbeing of children and young people and the well-being of every learner is a priority for me. In my [Oral Statement](#) in May 2024 I outlined that well-being should be the foundation on which our education system in Wales will be built.

In March 2021 the [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being](#) was published. The framework is statutory guidance and must be followed by schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), Special Schools and local authorities.

The framework is designed to support the assessment of the well-being needs of learners, staff, and the whole school population by identifying principles that education settings should follow. It provides complementarity with the Curriculum for Wales, specifically the Health and Well-being Area of learning experience, which seeks to support children in building healthy relationships.

I hope this provides the committee with the information required to consider the petition.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education