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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Buffy Williams MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament

13 March 2026

Dear Buffy,

Following your recent request, I have set out below the additional information to assist your Committee in developing its Legacy Report for a successor committee to consider in the next Senedd. For ease of reference, each response has been set out in the order the questions were presented.

Exclusions Guidance

At the time of writing, the exclusion guidance does not appear to have been updated since April 2024. Could you confirm whether it remains the Government's intention to review and redevelop the Exclusion from Schools and PRUs guidance, and whether this work is ongoing?

This does remain our intention and the work is underway.

Following the 2025 National Behaviour Summit, the Welsh Government refreshed the membership of Exclusions Advisory Group, which evolved into the new Exclusions and Detentions forum, established in July 2025. The Forum met monthly, from September 2025. The group concluded in February 2026. Members included representatives from schools, partners and stakeholder organisations including:

- Secondary and primary practitioners/head teachers
- Local Authorities, including inclusion officers, Educational Psychologists
- Public bodies (Public Health Wales, Estyn)
- Independent charity organisations
- Professional associations
- Welsh Government policy officials

The members were carefully selected to ensure that all relevant sectors were represented to co-construct the new exclusions guidance and meaningfully inform next steps.

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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.

During monthly meetings from September 2025, a variety of speakers brought a wealth of knowledge to the table and allowed group members to consider a range of issues impacting on exclusions, whilst developing drafts of the guidance. Topics that were discussed included Research and Statistics, Parent Perceptions and Engagement, Poverty Proofing, Disproportionality, Systematic Bias and play in schools.

Following the conclusion of the Forum in February, Welsh Government officials have collated detailed feedback from members, to produce a final draft of the revised exclusion from schools and pupil referral units (PRU) guidance.

The guidance in its final form will ensure that the target audience (teachers, school staff, learners and parents and carers) will have a clearer understanding of exclusions and detentions processes. Final resources will include accessible versions of the guidance, to ensure everyone is fully informed of their rights at each step of the process.

Following the forthcoming Senedd Elections a public consultation on the revised guidance will launch during the summer term. The final version of the guidance will then be published in readiness for the new school year.

Behaviour Summit

Could you outline how the clearer expectations on the use of mobile phones, exclusions and detentions have been communicated to local authorities and schools, or if this is yet to be done? Will this be published?

I have explained the current position in relation to the guidance around exclusions and detentions. In addition to that work, we also established a dedicated forum to look at the issues around mobile phones in schools after the National Behaviour Summit. That group has recently completed their work and provided me with a draft of new guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools.

Given the importance of this issue to schools, and to the wellbeing of children and young people, we will need to formally consult on the draft guidance. A meaningful and appropriate consultation could not be undertaken between now and the Senedd elections, and so the full consultation will take place after the elections. In the interim, officials will be taking forward a programme of engagement with schools, trade unions, local authorities, parents and children to ensure that the guidance is robust and meets their needs.

I issued a [written statement](#) updating the Senedd about our work in this area on 6 March. On the same day I issued a survey to the education workforce asking for more details of their experiences around mobile phones in schools, and the policies they currently have in place. This information will help us tailor our guidance and any additional resources.

I have also clearly stated that I will support any school that introduces a policy to restrict or remove mobile phones.

The recent [written statement](#) issued on 12 February set out the latest progress in delivering the five immediate actions I announced after the Behaviour Summit. Implementation of the full Summit action plan is currently ongoing. This is a substantial and detailed programme of work, which will need to be delivered over the long term, to ensure meaningful and sustained improvements.

The five Summit actions were also underpinned by a commitment to wider engagement with staff in education settings, parents and children and young people.

- A significant programme of work has been taken forward to progress this commitment to listen and work in partnership to find practical solutions to ongoing behaviour challenges.
- The wider programme of engagement on behaviour with practitioners, learners, and parents is currently ongoing and will continue into the summer term, to deliver clear, evidence-based and actionable outcomes.
- Partnership arrangements with Bangor and Wrexham universities, the University of South Wales and Cardiff Metropolitan University are supporting bespoke projects with schools, focused on exploring practical solutions to behaviour challenges to support the wider system.
- Engagement with children and young people has been supported by a range of key partners including the Welsh Youth Parliament, Children in Wales and the Children's Commissioner. The Welsh Youth Parliament published their consultation report – [Safe, Included and Heard](#) in November. We are currently finalising a response to the key consultation recommendations.
- Further bespoke engagement work has recently been undertaken with marginalised learners, including those from Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, with outputs available by the end of March 2026.
- Plans for early engagement with parents are being supported by Parents Connect and Parentkind. Focus groups and a national parental poll will be completed by March 2026.
- HEI partners will support detailed work to synthesise the outcomes of wider stakeholder engagement during the summer term to ensure next steps are evidence informed and meet the needs of our learners and schools.

Behaviour Management

Could you clarify whether updated behaviour management guidance is still planned or if the toolkit is this new guidance (alongside or replacing?) the 2012 guidance?

The Behaviour Toolkit we published in the autumn is the first step in our programme of work to update and reinforce our guidance. Further revisions to wider national guidance on behaviour required by schools will be informed by engagement led by university partners across Wales. This work is being delivered in partnership with Wrexham, Bangor, the University of South Wales, and Cardiff Metropolitan Universities through projects exploring practical, evidence-informed strategies to strengthen behaviour practice in schools, including:

- Professional enquiry projects with clusters of schools focused on behaviour, attendance and learner well-being.
- Practitioner focus groups to explore innovative behaviour management strategies.
- Engaging with early career teachers to better understand their experiences of behaviour management to further enhance existing support.
- Engaging with schools and learners involved in restorative behaviour pilots launched in February 2026, to review the effectiveness of different models.

As well as promoting the sharing of effective behaviour practices, these projects will inform enhanced guidance as well as professional learning, delivered in partnership with Dysgu.

This term, we also announced the development of new all-Wales resources to support school safety. This builds on the guidance launched by Cardiff Council in the autumn, to provide simple and practical advice to schools. Cardiff Council are leading work with local authorities and partners to develop a consistent approach for schools across Wales to manage incidents where children take weapons onto school premises, or are reasonably suspected of being in possession of a weapon on school premises. The new resources will help schools work closely with families and other services so that the right support can be put in place, whilst ensuring safety for staff and learners.

Anti-bullying Guidance

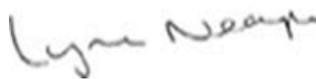
Finally, the Cabinet Secretary consulted on updated anti-bullying guidance in 2025. This guidance has not yet been published. Could you confirm the intended timeline for publication?

The updated *Rights, Respect, Equality: challenging bullying and harassment* guidance is due for publication in March 2026. We consulted on the draft guidance during summer 2025. This draft version was an update to the 2019 publication to reflect new laws, new research and the changing issues facing children and young people.

The consultation summary of responses was published on the Welsh Government website in November 2025. The guidance has since been reviewed and updated in light of consultation feedback received. It places a strengthened focus on preventing and tackling prejudice-based bullying and ensuring that all children feel welcome and safe in their school communities.

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful. Should you require any further clarity or information, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,



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Cabinet Secretary for Education