

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-630
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01205/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid and West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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22 April 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter dated 7 April providing details of a petition the Committee has received regarding possible Facebook regulations for looked after children. I am responding as my portfolio includes responsibility for looked after children.

I appreciate you seeking my views prior to raising this with the Committee.

There are clear and obvious benefits of computer and internet use among children. Digital literacy is now vital in this modern age. But I recognise with these benefits come risks for all children.

Many parents and carers struggle to understand or keep up with rapidly changing technology and feel daunted by the potential internet risks. The Welsh Government understands these concerns and in response is focussed on supporting and enabling parents and carers to encourage safe and responsible use of the internet and raise awareness of the risks such as bullying and grooming. As corporate parents foster carers, social workers and others responsible for the care of looked after children have a duty to act as a responsible and conscientious parent.

We have created a dedicated e-safety area on our digital learning hub 'Hwb' which provides resources, advice and guidance for the children and young people themselves and, those who work with or care for them such as teachers, parents and carers.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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We are also working with the South West Grid for Learning to raise awareness of e-safety. Through training and the provision of advice and resources we are supporting schools in developing e-safety policy documents which consider all current and relevant issues, in a whole school context, and link with other relevant policies in place such as those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying. More recently the Welsh Government supported local authorities and schools in the promotion of safer internet day. Held on 10 February the event focused on safe and responsible use of online technology and mobile phones.

Furthermore the all-Wales Child Protection Procedures Review Group has developed and is currently reviewing guidance for professionals who work with children and young people who may be at risk of or experiencing abuse via digital channels. You will wish to note looked after children are referred to specifically.

You will also be aware of the broader actions we are taking forward to improve the delivery of care and support in Wales through the new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We have already consulted on the first set of draft regulations and codes of practice which covered amongst other themes safeguarding. Next month we will launch the consultation on the next set of draft regulations and codes of practice. This will include Part 6 of the Act concerned with looked after and accommodated children.

I look forward to hearing what the Petitions Committee conclude in due course.

Best wishes,

Mark

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