



Ein cyf/Our ref SF/LA/0033/12

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Children and Young Persons Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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9 January 2012

Thank you for your letter of 5 December 2011 following a meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Committee, which has considered a petition from Tenovus regarding the provision of free sunscreen to all children under the age of 11 in Wales.

You advise in your letter that you have written to the Minister for Health and Social Services separately about the Welsh Government's approach to sun protection.

I also note that Committee Members have raised the issue of shelters in schools and you ask whether any provision has been made within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Programme to provide such shelter and is there any guidance in respect of the refurbishment of older school buildings.

Section 542 of the Education Act 1996 requires standards to be prescribed to which the premises of maintained school in England Wales must conform. The prescribed standards for schools in England and Wales are set out in the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. Whilst these regulations do not prescribe standards regarding exposure to sunshine, there is a general duty placed on responsible bodies that school buildings and land provided for the school must provide reasonable assurance of occupants' health and safety.

The Welsh Government has worked with Cancer Research UK to develop Sun Protection policy guidelines for Primary and Secondary schools in Wales. The guidelines are intended to outline ways in which the community can work towards minimising harmful effects from over exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. It advises schools to develop their own policy taking account of the individual needs of the school and its pupils.

Schools are advised to consult with the whole school community including parents, school governors, Healthy School practitioners, school nurses, Health & Safety co-ordinators and pupils when looking to develop the sun protection policy. The guidance for schools also advises that pupils wear suitable clothing whilst outside, including wide brimmed hats and a uniform that offers suitable protection from the sun.

When considering the physical aspects of school buildings, local authorities can, through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, access guidance and best practice when developing the design of new school buildings or refurbishment of existing school buildings via the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Website [<http://21stcenturyschools.org>].

The website outlines current statutory requirements but also provides links to important documents, such as Building Bulletin 85 (BB85) School Grounds and a guide to good practice which addresses the issues and principles affecting school grounds. The website also contains a link to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE); this provides excellent guidance regarding school grounds and how school design should respond to the topography, **climate** and ecology of the school site.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme moves forward we will continue to improve and enhance the guidance further by working/consulting with organisations such as Tenovus.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Leighton Andrews*

**Leighton Andrews AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills