



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Education

## Minutes of Proceedings

2 July 2025

**Meeting Location:** Room 29 Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Danny Baker MLA  
Mr David Brooks MLA  
Mrs Michelle Guy MLA  
Mr Peter Martin MLA  
Mrs Cathy Mason MLA  
  
Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Glenda Doherty (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Thomas McConville (Clerical Officer)

**Present by teleconference facilities:** Ms Cara Hunter MLA



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**Apologies:** Mr Colin Crawford MLA

The meeting commenced at 2:05pm in public session.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Colin Crawford.

### **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Committee discussed arrangements for summer recess.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on the releasing or withholding information in any non-routine or contentious Freedom of Information requests received by the Committee over recess.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to delegate authority to agree actions on urgent correspondence received over the recess via correspondence.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to receive a pack containing correspondence received in July at the end of the month.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 24 June 2025, 18 June 2025 and 1 July 2025.



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### 4. Matters arising

The Committee discussed correspondence from the Education Authority regarding Special Educational Needs Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking an update on SEN placements and sharing Correspondence from the Independent Autism Reviewer on this matter.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education sharing Correspondence from the Independent Autism Reviewer on this matter.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Finance regarding funding for the Special School building programme.

The Committee discussed correspondence on staffing at the Department of Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Public Accounts Committee to make it aware of unanswered correspondence.

### 5. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill Consideration of Committee report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 2:33pm.

The Committee was adjourned at 2:43pm

The Committee resumed at 3:01pm

The Committee moved to public session at 3:23pm

The Committee considered the draft report on the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill.

Powers and Membership

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.

List of abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.



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### Executive Summary

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as amended.

### Consideration of the Bill

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as amended.

### Clause-by-Clause Consideration of the Bill

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.

### Appendices

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that a copy of the minutes from today's meeting are included in the report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Report on the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill (107/22-27) is printed.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the report would be published on Thursday 3 July 2025.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that an electronic copy of the Bill report be published on the Committee's webpage and sent to all organisations that provided evidence to the Committee on the Bill.

The Chairperson informed Members that this concluded Committee Stage of the Bill.

The Chairperson recorded the Committees thanks to staff for their work on the Bill.

## 6. End of Session Report

The Chairperson informed members that a draft End of Session report would be considered at its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting following recess.



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### 7. June Monitoring Round – Department of Education – Written briefing

The Committee Considered a written briefing paper on June Monitoring 2025-26.

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing on resource and capital finance from the Department of Education.

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing the Special Educational Needs budget from the Department of Education.

### 8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.

8.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council Bill.

8.4 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the pilot scheme using mobile phone pouches.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking:

- Clarity on the contract;
- A breakdown of the unit cost for the technology being used;
- Information on the Minister plan to ban mobile phone use in schools; and
- The costs to schools associated with the pilot scheme.

8.5 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding its review of Arm's Length Bodies.

8.6 The Committee noted Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta's Annual Report and Accounts 2024.

8.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing Analysis of 2025-26 Outturn and Forecast Outturn.



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8.8 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

8.9 The Committee noted correspondence from the Competition and Markets Authority.

8.10 The Committee discussed correspondence from Pat Sheehan MLA on an Irish Medium Education Workforce Plan Consultation Summary Report.

8.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Independent Autism Reviewer on Special Educational Needs places.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to share the correspondence with the Minister of Education and the Education Authority.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Independent Autism Reviewer thanking her for her engagement with the Committee.

8.12 The Committee noted the 42nd Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

8.13 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education regarding the Careers Action Plan.

8.14 The Committee noted correspondence from The Youth Assembly thanking it for its engagement on the uniforms Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Youth Assembly thanking it for its contribution to the work of the Committee

8.15 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the School Uniforms Bill.

8.16 The Committee noted correspondence from Advice NI Auto-enrolment for Free School Meals.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education and the Minister for the Economy regarding the issues raised.

8.17 The Committee noted correspondence from The Youth Assembly highlighting reports on 'Mental Health in Schools' and 'Young Women's Rights in Schools'.



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Ms Hunter left the meeting at 3:56pm.

### **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the forward work programme as drafted

### **10. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

### **11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next Committee for Education meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 September 2025 at 2:00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04pm.

**Nick Mathison MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**10 September 2025**