



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

4 June 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Nick Mathison MLA (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 via teleconference facilities:

Mr Colin Crawford MLA

Ms Cara Hunter MLA



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Apologies: Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting commenced at 2:02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Mr Sheehan.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted that the Department of Education had launched a Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and that the Committee has requested an oral briefing on the review.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

Mr Martin joined the meeting at 2:04pm.

Mr Brooks joined the meeting at 2:04pm.

4. Matters Arising

Ms Hunter joined the meeting at 2:15pm.

4.1. The Committee considered a draft motion calling for action in relation to restrictive practices.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Unions and the Special School Strategic Leadership Group seeking their views on the proposed motion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this matter at its next meeting.



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4.2. The Committee considered a draft motion addressing the matters under scrutiny by the Concurrent Committee of the Committee for the Economy and the Committee for Education on Wednesday 14 May 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the motion as drafted and to submit it to the Committee for the Economy for consideration and if agreed, onward scheduling.

5. Minutes of Proceedings

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 27 May 2025 and 28 May 2025.

6. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill – Oral Briefing by the Competition and Markets Authority

The Committee noted a response from the Competition and Markets Authority to the Department of Education School Uniform Policy Consultation.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 2:29pm.

Mr Gavin Thompson, Director of Advocacy, Nations and External Relations, Competition and Markets Authority

Ms Louise Close, Northern Ireland Representative, Competition and Markets Authority

The witness provided the Committee with a briefing on the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill.

Mr Crawford joined the meeting at 2:57pm

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Competition and Markets Authority seeking further information.



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7. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill – Oral Briefing by Parenting Focus

The following witness joined the meeting at 3:09pm.

Ms Emma Hitchen, Senior Participation and Research Officer, Parenting Focus

The witness provided the Committee with a briefing on the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee adjourned at 4:00pm.

Mr Crawford left the meeting at 4:00pm.

The Committee resumed at 4:06pm

8. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill – Oral Briefing by Menstruation Matters

The Committee noted a briefing paper from Menstruation Matters.

The following witness joined the meeting by teleconference facilities at 4:07pm.

Ms Katrina McDonnell, Menstruation Matters

The witness provided the Committee with a briefing on the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore amendment text regarding a number of issues raised in this briefing and the six others that preceded it.



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9. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill - Oral Briefing by Department of Education Officials

The Committee noted that Officials from the Department are not available to attend the meeting.

10 Correspondence

10.1 The Committee noted a correspondence Index.

10.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Think 1265 campaign on teacher workload.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Think 1265 campaign to provide it with an oral briefing.

10.3 The Committee noted correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council seeking a meeting with the Committee to present data analysis for its area relating to the work of the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council seeking a written briefing on this matter.

10.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education providing a written paper on a proposal for legislation to provide for all learners to participate in education until age 18.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an oral briefing on this matter.

10.5 The Committee noted correspondence from Child Poverty Action Group regarding the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill.

10.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the March Outturn and Forecast Outturn.

10.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office providing a report on the Period Product (Free Provision) Act (NI).

10.8 The Committee noted an invitation to an event from the Integrated Education Fund.

10.9 The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly and Executive Review Committee seeking information in relation to its review of Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to reconsider this at a future meeting.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee discussed a draft forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

14. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee for Education meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 2:00pm in Room 29 Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11pm.

Nick Mathison MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
11 June 2025