



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

12 May 2021

Meeting Location: Teleconference

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Ms Nicola Brogan MLA
Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Mr William Humphrey MBE MLA
Mr Justin McNulty MLA
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Apologies: Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Emma Magee (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 9:35am in open session

1. Apologies

An apology was recorded for Mr McCrossan.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Proposed legislation on CPR training in schools.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that members had met informally with Colin McGrath MLA and British Heart Foundation (NI) on the background and purpose of a Private Member's Bill to place a duty on the Department of Education for the mandatory provision of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland.

2.2 Interim guidance on restraint and seclusion.

The Chairperson informed members that Department of Education had issued interim guidance on restraint and seclusion and that it would brief the Committee on this at its next meeting.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 5 May 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



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5 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – Department of Education Oral Briefing

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Department of Education on RSE.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:38am:

Ms Karen McCullough, Director, Curriculum Qualifications and Standards
Directorate, Department of Education

Mr Sam Dempster, Head of Curriculum and Assessment Team, Department of
Education

Dr Suzanne Kingon, Head of School Improvement, Department of Education

The witnesses briefed the Committee on Relationships and Sexuality Education in
schools.

This was followed by a question and answer session on Relationships and Sexuality
Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education indicating
its concern that ETI thematic inspections have not taken place since 2013 and 2015
for Primary Schools and Post Primary Schools respectively and urging that the
Department reprises this work as soon as the public health situation allows. The
Committee also agreed to ask the Department:

- To provide with the above thematic inspection reports and the minimum
content order for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE);
- What monitoring of School RSE policies is carried out by the Department or
Education Authority;
- What guidance and support is provided for Boards of Governors in this
respect;
- To provide an update on the work of the education subgroup working on
Gillen recommendations for DE;
- For further information on the funding and timeframe for production by CCEA
of resources on consent; and
- For further information on capacity building work on teacher professional
learning and sexual health training mentioned in the briefing.



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6. The Addressing Bullying in Schools (2016 Act) (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 - Department of Education Oral Briefing

The Committee noted a briefing paper from Assembly Research and Information Service and a briefing paper from the Department of Education on the Addressing Bullying in Schools (2016 Act) (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 11:03am:

Mr Ricky Irwin, Director, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Department of Education

Mrs Julie Humphries, Head of Additional Education Needs Team, Department of Education

Ms Renee McDowell, Additional Educational Needs Team, Department of Education

Ms Gillian Cuthbert, Interim Head of Service of Post Primary Behavioural Support & Provisions, Education Authority

Ms Shauna Collinson, Interim Assistant Director of Pupil Inclusion, Wellbeing and Protection, Education Authority

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the Addressing Bullying in Schools (2016 Act) (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share research it had commissioned on this matter with the Department of Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- Information on its plans to publish guidance to describe a robust monitoring system and support implementation of the legislation;
- details of the roles of the Department, the Education Authority and Boards of Governors in implementation;
- Statistics on suicides attributed to bullying by year over the last 5 years;
- An explanation for discrepancies between data provided by the Department and in the TIMMS report on the extent of bullying in local schools; and



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- Information on the length of time records are kept by schools on incidences of bullying.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

7. Correspondence

7.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

7.2 The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Education regarding mandatory autism training for Teachers.

Mr Lyttle made a declaration that he is a member of the All Party Group on Autism.

Mr Butler made a declaration that he is a member of the All Party Group on Autism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Autism NI and the Assembly's All Party Group on Autism.

7.3 The Committee noted a response from the Minister for the Economy regarding the measures and assistance the Department for the Economy provides to help young people and adults with autism to enter and remain in employment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Autism NI.

7.4 The Committee noted a response from the Transferor Representatives' Council regarding the FETO exemption.

7.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding SR 2021/114 The Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

7.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Construction Employers Federation providing their response to the Strategic Investment Board's call for evidence on a new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Construction Employers Federation to brief it informally on aspects of the response relating to the Department of Education.



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7.7 The Committee noted correspondence regarding Special Educational Needs numeracy support and school transition.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking information on support available for children with Special Educational Needs in regard to numeracy and changing schools.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a response from the Department of Education providing transition and alternative arrangements for the pupils of St Mary's Brollagh to the correspondent.

7.8 The Committee considered correspondence regarding the introduction of legislation in relation to school uniforms.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research on approaches to school uniforms in different jurisdictions with a view to arranging an informal meeting on this matter

7.9 The Committee noted correspondence from Parent Action providing a link to video of the Parent Action conference on 7 May 2021.

7.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education providing Circular 2021/13 - Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion.

7.11 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding scrutiny of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

7.12 The Committee noted correspondence from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) on a study into current provision within CCMS Nursery Schools and Units.

7.13 The Committee noted correspondence from CCEA on its consultation on Proposed Post Results Service for Summer 2021.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its forward work programme as amended.



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9. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed oversubscription at St Bernard's school in Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education, Education Authority and CCMS seeking information on the management of oversubscription at the school.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 May 2021 by video conference at 9:30am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27pm

Chris Lyttle MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
19 May 2021