



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

17 November 2021

Meeting Location: Teleconference

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Mr Robbie Butler MLA

Mrs Diane Dodds MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA

Mr Justin McNulty MLA

Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)

Mr Marcus Matthews (Clerical Supervisor)

Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)

Mr Jonathan McMillen (Head of Legal Services) (item 8 only)



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Ms Caroline Perry (Bill Clerk) (items 8, 9 and 10)

Apologies:

The meeting commenced at 9:32am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee considered draft notices calling for evidence on the Education (Curriculum) (CPR and AED) Bill and Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the call for evidence on the Education (Curriculum) (CPR and AED) Bill would be opened on 22 November 2021 and run to 17 December 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the call for evidence on the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill would be opened on 23 November 2021 and run to 18 December 2021.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 10 November 2021 and 2 meetings on 11 November 2021.



4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

5.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly about a Public Petition regarding 'Reassessing Contact Tracing in Schools', laid in the Assembly on 1 November 2021 by Justin McNulty MLA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education seeking a repose to the issue raised by the petition.

5.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education on the launch of the new Safer Schools NI App.

5.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education to the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Office regarding a temporary modification of education duties notice made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 by the Department of Education.

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists NI regarding Communication Access UK (CAUK).

5.6 The Committee considered an invitation from the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium to visit and hold a Committee meeting there.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a visit and meeting at Armagh Observatory and Planetarium in due course.

5.7 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Youth Forum to its have Your Say Day on Education event on 20 November 2021.

5.8 The Committee noted an invitation from the Education Authority to the Joint Consultative Forum on 16 November 2021.



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5.9 The Committee noted the Education Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020.

5.10 The Committee noted correspondence regarding term-time workers and retainer fee payments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking a response to the issues raised

5.11 The Committee considered correspondence about how school closures are carried out. The Committee noted that the correspondent has also written to the Minister and the Education Authority.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and Education Authority asking to be copied into their responses to the correspondence.

Item 5.12 The Committee noted speaking notes of a witnesses from the NICCY youth panel who gave evidence to the Committee regarding the Integrated Education Bill on Thursday 11 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add these to the Committee report on the Integrated Education Bill.

Item 5.13 The Committee noted speaking notes of a witnesses from the NICCY youth panel who gave evidence to the Committee regarding the Integrated Education Bill on Thursday 11 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add these to the Committee report on the Integrated Education Bill.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its forward work programme.



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7. Anti-Bullying Measures - Oral Briefing from the Department of Education

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

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:51am:

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

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

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

The witnesses briefed the Committee on anti-bullying measures.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

The Committee watched a video from the Anti-bullying forum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to thank officials for their briefing and to ask:

- That it detail any anti-bullying strategies being used in schools to tackle the acceptance of violence against women and girls;
- For a watching brief on UK legislation being developed to require social media companies to take down harmful content; and
- That it detail any measures it has taken to address high levels of cyber bullying suffered by pupils 24/7.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with the Anti-bullying forum.

The Committee discussed a recent television interview with Lady Gaga.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Lady Gaga to thank her for extolling the importance of kindness.

The Committee moved to closed session at 11:07am



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8. Integrated Education Bill – Legal Services briefing

The Committee noted legal advice on the Integrated Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Bill Clerk would be present for the legal advice.

The following witness joined the meeting by video conference at 11:07am:

Mr Jonathan McMillen, Head of Legal Services

Mr McMillen briefed the Committee on legal advice regarding the Integrated Education Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witness for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further legal advice on proposed amendments to the Bill.

The Committee moved to public session at 12:24pm.

9. Integrated Education Bill - Oral Briefing from Bill Sponsor, Kellie Armstrong MLA

The Committee noted:

- A response from Kellie Armstrong MLA proposing amendments to the Bill;
- An analysis of responses to the consultation on the proposal to introduce a Private Members Bill on Integrated Education; and
- An Ulster University document outlining the Community Conversation Toolkit.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 12:24pm:

Ms Kellie Armstrong, MLA - Strangford, Northern Ireland Assembly

Ms Fiona McAteer, Research Officer, Alliance Party



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The witnesses briefed the Committee on the Integrated Education Bill.

The briefing was covered by Hansard.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms Brogan left the meeting at 1:00pm

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Mrs Dodds advised the Committee that she was unhappy with timescales and the fact that legal advice was not yet available on the sponsor's amendments.

The Committee moved to closed session at 1:11pm

Mr McCrossan left the meeting at 1:11pm

10. Integrated Education Bill – Informal consideration of the Bill

The Committee noted proposed amendments to the bill from Northern Ireland Humanists.

The Committee discussed the clauses of the Bill.

11. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Thursday 18 November 2021 by video conference at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm.



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Chris Lyttle MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Education

24 November 2021