

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-496  
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01458/13

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

15 October 2013

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 3 October in connection with petition P-04-496. You have asked for my views on the petition.

Guidance to local authorities on matters relating to school organisation proposals, including school mergers and closures, can be found in the School Organisation Code ('the Code'), which was issued in July this year. Section 1 of the Code sets out in detail the factors that those preparing and approving/determining proposals should take into account. Quality and standards of education are given paramount importance but other factors include ensuring, wherever possible, that the balance of provision reflects the balance of demand for schools of a particular type, and home to school journey times.

However, statutory responsibility for the planning and supply of school places rests with local authorities and it is they who determine what pattern of school provision meets the specific needs of their areas. Consequently, the Welsh Government does not seek to promote one type of school over another nor instruct local authorities as to how school provision should be structured. These are issues best determined at the local level in accordance with local needs and circumstances. The Code also provides that proposals for change must be subject to consultation with all those affected.

I am satisfied that the new Code already provides sufficient guidance on the factors that underpin school organisation and I see no reason why further guidance is necessary in relation to proposals involving the establishment of new multi-site schools or those offering both primary and secondary education ('all-through schools'). Furthermore, whilst I recognise that all-through schools can be an effective way of delivering education, for the reasons given above, I do not think it appropriate for the Welsh Government to actively promote their establishment and continuation over the establishment and continuation of other types of schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', written in black ink.

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**

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