

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-802
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00884/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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10 April 2018

Dear David

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the petitioner's additional comments. I appreciate that the motivation behind this petition is the safety and well-being of young people in classrooms. I share that motivation.

I note the regulations in Scotland and Northern Ireland go back some time and long precede the current HSE guidance, the BS4163:2014 Code of Practice as well as Building Bulletins 81 and 99 – all of which address the point of appropriate class sizes for practical Design and Technology lessons. Having reviewed the regulations and the guidance, my view is that the current guidance on class sizes is sufficient. It is a matter for schools to have regard for the health and safety of their pupils and ensure that any class that includes a practical activity is limited based on findings of a health and safety risk assessment.

This view is supported by the Design and Technology Association (a membership organisation supporting teachers of Design and Technology lessons) which believes that risk assessments by professional staff provide the most valid judgement around class sizes. For example, there will be occasions when group sizes of 12 to 14 should be a maximum because of the work being undertaken. This illustrated why additional regulations would not provide the answer.

There is current protection in law. Employees are required by law to work safely. This also includes a duty to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work place where teachers are responsible for learners. If an employer or employee fails to follow advice in a written risk assessment and an incident occurs resulting in injury, that employer or employee may be

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

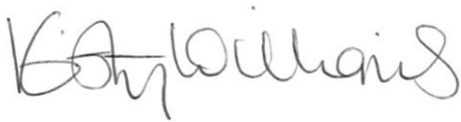
culpable. I reiterate the message that the headteacher and governing body have the key role in making sure risks are managed effectively on site.

In summary, I am of the view that existing processes are suitably robust and that additional legislation is not required.

You will be aware that schools are inspected by Estyn on a regular basis. I would expect any remaining concerns around the safety and well-being of children to be raised in inspection reports.

I will remind Headteachers, Governors and Local Authorities of their duties in the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people in schools, particularly in respect of the need to assess risks of practical classes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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