

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-925
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/07435/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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6 November 2019

Dear Janet,

P-05-925 Don't leave Wales behind - teach menstrual well-being in schools

Thank you for your letter dated 30 October in relation to the above Petition on menstrual well-being which has been received by the Committee.

Health and Well-being will be one of six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) which will be central to the structure of the new curriculum. This AoLE will support young people to develop the skills and knowledge they need to maintain good physical and mental health social and emotional well-being. This is an innovative part of the new curriculum and aims to ensure learning and support around issues such as physical and mental health and social and emotional well-being are provided to all young people in Wales. The Health and Well-being AoLE has been designed to support the development of the fundamentals of health and well-being in learners, while allowing professionals to shape specific content as appropriate to their learners.

Following the conclusion of the recent feedback phase and engagement with a number of key stakeholders we are working to refine the new curriculum. As part of this, we are looking to ensure that learning within this AoLE supports learners to recognise symptoms or issues with their physical health and seek information and support to respond to these.

The learning within the What Matters statement 'Developing Physical Health and Well-being has lifelong benefits' has been amended specifically to ensure that women's health conditions in can be identified.

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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.

Within this there is learning which includes references to conditions and situations which affect health and well-being and this includes reference to physical changes (to include puberty) and a range of health conditions. The progression ensures learners will understand how conditions, situations and physical changes interact to affect health and well-being and ensures learners know how to respond to and manage these conditions and when and where to look for help and advice. This revised learning will allow for menstrual well-being to be considered by schools when designing their curriculum.

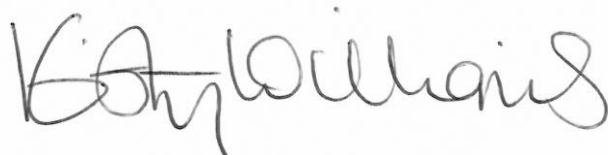
In addition we will be refining the guidance so that it supports learners to recognise changes in their physical health and to seek help and support, which will cover a range of conditions.

The Curriculum for Wales encompasses a high level national framework to enable school-level curriculum design, with a focus on individual schools' context and locality ensuring flexibility. We will also be creating a clear legislative framework to underpin the new curriculum. It will offer much greater flexibility about what to teach and how it is taught with clear national expectations for scope and progression.

The current curriculum was becoming overcrowded and the volume of specified content was becoming difficult for our teaching profession to deliver. For this reason, the new curriculum will not consist of a detailed list of topics for professionals to teach. We are moving away from a prescriptive list of what children should know at key stages in their education, because teachers tell us this is not the best approach. This does not mean that children will lose out on developing important life skills or knowledge. Instead, Curriculum for Wales 2022 will provide a framework of statutory guidance to support and guide professionals.

The Welsh Government will set a high level national framework, but schools will develop their own school level curriculum supported by statutory guidance to ensure that learners get a broad and balanced education. Practitioners will be given more flexibility to choose the specific content and resource which meets the needs of their learners in their specific context. However, the clear direction of the What Matters statements in both Health and Wellbeing and the Science and Technology Areas of Learning and Experience will ensure that there are opportunities for all learners to glean valuable information in respect of puberty and the range of conditions that can be associated therewith.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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