



Ein cyf/Our ref MA/LN/0191/26

Welsh Youth Parliament
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26 March 2026

Dear Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament,

Thank you for the 'Safe, Included and Heard' report from the Crime and Safety Committee. Your work highlights the real challenges that young people face with behaviour in schools and reinforces the importance of creating safe, respectful environments for learners and school staff. Your commitment to drive forward this important work has ensured the voices of children and young people across Wales are heard, building on the progress following the National Behaviour Summit in 2025.

As Cabinet Secretary for Education, improving behaviour in schools is one of my top priorities. I want every classroom in Wales to be a place where learners feel valued, respected and supported. Your report has provided vital insights into the day-to-day experiences of children and young people. The findings capture their voices and, most importantly, their ideas on how we can build positive and supportive relationships in our schools. I am pleased to confirm that I accept all the recommendations in your report.

By helping us improve behaviour, you are playing an important part in making classrooms safer and more respectful for everyone. Your findings highlight a number of key issues, concerns and ideas. I want to assure you that I and officials have carefully considered your recommendations. Your findings will play an important role in informing the policies we are developing and implementing, as we continue our transformational work to create the conditions for every learner to flourish.

Many of your recommendations link to the [Five Immediate Actions](#) I announced after the National Behaviour Summit. These actions include improving how different services work together to support schools, creating better training and clearer guidance for schools on behaviour and safety, sharing examples of what works well, and ensuring behaviour and safety incidents are recorded and reported in a clear and consistent way.

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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.

These actions, together with my wider commitment to keep children and young people at the heart of this work demonstrate how seriously we are taking the issues you raised. This term, I have already been able to share a number of positive announcements, including work to develop new all-Wales guidance to support school safety and new partnership work with Welsh Police forces.

I will now respond to each of your recommendations in turn, so that you have a clear sense of our position and, where relevant, the steps we plan to take.

Recommendation 1:

As a matter of priority, the Welsh Government should act to improve the experiences of young people from marginalised groups where they receive their education. They should build on our work and engage further with the groups highlighted in this report to identify solutions that will improve their education experiences.

Welsh Government response: Accept

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling inequality so that every young person has the support and opportunities they deserve. Our national mission is to achieve high standards and aspirations for all learners - I recognise that achieving true equity requires more than ambition, it demands the removal of barriers and providing targeted support that meets the diverse needs of every learner.

We have strengthened our approach by deepening our engagement with children and young people who are at risk of marginalisation. Their lived experience is crucial to shaping policies that work in practice.

By funding Children in Wales to operate [Young Wales](#) on our behalf, I have ensured that young people's voices are not only heard, but are directly influencing government decision-making. This has already given me richer insights into the priorities of diverse groups of learners and is informing the development of more inclusive and equitable education policies.

We have made tangible progress by working directly with learners on the inclusive education actions of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, and young people's input has shaped the emerging proposals within the Draft Disabled People's Rights Plan. We are also undertaking focused engagement with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to deliver the commitments within the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

In addition, we are expanding our evidence base through targeted research. We are working directly with learners who speak English or Welsh as an additional language to better understand their experiences and needs. Alongside this, dedicated research is underway to improve our understanding of how young carers can be better supported within education.

We are also planning to publish our updated Rights, Respect, Equality Anti-bullying Guidance in March 2026. This has been revised to strengthen the approach to preventing and tackling prejudice-related bullying, including bullying that can be experienced by groups of children that can be marginalised.

Together, this work demonstrates not only our commitment, but the significant progress we are making towards an education system that is fair, inclusive and responsive to all learners.

Recommendation 2:

Review guidance for schools and colleges about reporting incidents, and security procedures and systems to make sure they're tightened so young people are kept safe.

Welsh Government response: Accept

This recommendation links closely with the actions from the Welsh Government's Roundtable on Safety and Violence in Schools and Colleges in 2025. One of the key outcomes was a commitment to develop new guidance and training to help schools keep learners and staff safe. Since then, we have made important progress to strengthen school safety.

We welcomed Cardiff Council's Weapons in Schools and Educational Settings Guidance as a positive step forward, demonstrating how local areas can take action to protect learners and staff.

To make sure every school and college in Wales has strong and consistent safety measures, I have asked Cardiff Council to lead work with local authorities and partners to develop a national approach to support safety in schools and colleges across Wales. New training, guidance and resources for schools will be made available as soon as possible.

We are also working closely with the four Police and Crime Commissioners and the four Police Forces in Wales. Together, we are helping to build stronger partnerships between police, local authorities and schools.

All of this work links with our Community Focused Schools Programme to ensure that safety and safeguarding are part of the everyday culture of schools and colleges to create places where all learners feel safe and supported.

Recommendation 3:

Continue with efforts to improve mental health support in schools and college, with a focus on tackling stigma around getting support, improving the quality of support available, and making sure safe spaces are available to de-stress. Clear plans need to be in place to support pupils in the lead up to particularly stressful times, like exam periods.

Welsh Government response: Accept

The Welsh Government has made major improvements to support young people's mental health. Every year, over £13 million is invested to strengthen mental health services for learners through our Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing. This includes almost £5 million to expand counselling in schools and communities, provide wellbeing programmes, and offer training that helps staff and learners get the support they need.

We have also provided over £5 million to Local Health Boards so that the national CAMHS school in-reach service can provide more support in schools. Having calm, safe places in school is essential for wellbeing and positive behaviour. Our Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing guidance, which schools are required to follow, highlights how important the school environment is, including creating spaces where learners can relax, reflect, and feel safe.

As part of our wider work to improve behaviour, we are now looking closely at how schools can build supportive, calming environments, including dedicated safe spaces where young people can regulate their emotions and feel more secure. Your recommendations have helped to shape our approach to a new package of support for schools, which launched in February.

This package is exploring ways to support learners who sometimes find the school environment difficult. Through a range of activities, including sport and the performing arts, learners will be supported to explore issues affecting their connection with school, including well-being and self-esteem. Through one-to-one support, group work and interactive activities such as basketball and drama, these approaches will help learners re-connect with school. This is further to an increase of £1 million in 2026-27, to £3 million, to support enrichment activities for learners right across Wales, in and around the school day.

We have been concerned that the school CAMHS in-reach teams are working in different ways across Wales and that there is variation in the support for young people. We are therefore making changes to ensure that there is a Wales wide approach to how the teams operate. We want young people across Wales to have access to consistent, high quality support.

I really welcome the improvements you have highlighted since the publication of the Young Minds Matter Report, but I know that we have more to do and I hope that your voices will keep driving change forward and that you will continue to hold the Welsh Government's feet to the fire on this.

Recommendation 4:

Improve pupil voice, ensure young people across all age ranges are involved in shaping policies and decisions about safety, inclusion, and the overall educational environment.

Welsh Government response: Accept

Your consultation report is a powerful and inspiring example of how learner voice can make real change happen. We are committed to ensuring that young people's views have a strong influence on decisions, and will continue working closely with Youth Parliament members, so that your views shape the policies and practices that affect you.

We would welcome your further views on the most effective approaches identified through your consultation to involve learners in key decisions and share examples of good practice across Wales.

Working together in this way will help us promote approaches that empower learners, strengthen participation, and build a culture where your views are central to improving schools and the wider education system. We look forward to learning more about the examples you have highlighted and building on the positive work already happening in our schools.

As highlighted in response to Recommendation 1, we fund Children in Wales to run Young Wales, which gives children and young people a direct voice in government policy making.

Through our Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing, we have also created a National Youth Stakeholder Group. This group brings together a diverse mix of children and young people who help shape policy and practice to improve wellbeing in schools.

We have also developed professional learning resources to support school staff to understand the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This training is available on [Hwb](#), and includes guidance on the Children's Commissioner's Human Rights Approach. The training also shares tools and resources that help schools strengthen pupil voice and meaningful participation.

I appreciate there is more to do, and we are committed to further strengthening how we listen to children and young people, so every young person feels safe, supported and truly listened to.

Recommendation 5:

Make lessons more engaging, interactive and connected to issues that are important to young people, so pupils feel more involved and motivated.

Welsh Government response: Accept

Learner voice is a core principle of the Curriculum for Wales and is already driving real change in how learning is designed and experienced. The curriculum was created to have learners as active partners in their education, not just participants. Schools are encouraged to work with learners to develop engaging experiences, enabling them to shape the curriculum in ways that reflect their interests, needs, and lived experiences.

To support this, the Curriculum for Wales Framework includes Enabling Learning guidance. This helps teachers plan and deliver an inclusive, appropriate curriculum to respond to each learner. It places strong emphasis on understanding individual needs and circumstances, so that teaching is relevant and accessible for all.

This approach is built around:

- Enabling adults – staff who listen, guide and respond to learners' needs.
- Engaging experiences – learning that is interesting, relevant and challenging.
- Effective environments – not only physical spaces, but an emotional climate where every learner feels safe, respected and able to achieve their full potential.

We are seeing these principles in more schools across Wales, and we are committed to strengthening them further. We will continue working with schools, settings and local authorities to make sure this happens. We will also collect and share examples of what is working well, so that we can make sure that more children and young people benefit from these principles.

Recommendation 6:

Make sure schools and colleges have the resources they need to enable more opportunities for pupils to access direct one-to-one support from teachers and staff, and deliver more social activities, and social groups that will help build positive relationships between pupils and staff

Welsh Government response: Accept

We know that clubs, groups, and societies can make a significant difference to how connected and supported young people feel in school. This is why we have invested over £31 million to help schools become Community Focused Schools that build strong relationships with local organisations, communities, and with learners and their families.

This investment is already helping schools create more welcoming environments and offer stronger support to young people.

To help schools do even more for their learners, we have provided additional funding so they can offer a wider range of creative, sporting, cultural and “enrichment activities”. This extra support will help schools provide opportunities before, during and after the school day, including sports clubs, art workshops, music sessions, trips, cultural projects and other activities that help learners feel more connected, confident and involved in school life.

Evidence shows that enrichment activities help to improve learners’ emotional wellbeing, raises their aspirations and achievement, boosts engagement in school, and supports healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity and healthier eating.

As we continue to take this work forward, I am keen to hear your views about other activities, clubs, and opportunities that would appeal to young people. Your ideas will help shape next steps, so opportunities in schools truly reflect what young people want and need.

Recommendation 7:

Provide more lessons for pupils, and training for staff that demonstrate the consequences of serious crimes, how to stay safe, healthy relationships, positive behaviours, and diversity and inclusion to improve the educational experience for all young people including those from marginalised groups. This needs to be seen as a continual, ongoing programme, not a one-time tick box exercise.

Welsh Government response: Accept

One of the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales is to help learners become ‘healthy, confident individuals’ who can build positive relationships and contribute to a respectful, inclusive society.

Within the curriculum, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is compulsory and supports learners to understand and recognise healthy relationships, respect diversity, and develop empathy. It also gives learners the knowledge and skills to challenge harmful behaviours, including bullying, and to promote kindness and inclusion.

A key theme across RSE and the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience is online safety. Learners explore how digital activity can affect relationships, wellbeing, and personal safety. This includes navigating life’s challenges, managing online risks and harms, and recognising harmful behaviours.

To support schools to deliver high quality RSE, we are investing £4.2 million to provide national support for RSE through the [Cwtch Education Project](#). This funding will secure dedicated RSE advisors within each local authority area, ensuring consistent, high quality support for all schools and settings in Wales. The project will also support teachers with practical resources, advice and training so they can create relevant and engaging learning experiences in the classroom.

Schools are encouraged to work with learners to shape the RSE lessons in ways that reflect their interests, needs, and concerns. Through the Cwtch project, schools can strengthen learner voice even further, by placing young people’s views at the centre of RSE planning and delivery to ensure the curriculum is relevant and responsive to their needs.

Recommendation 8:

Provide support and facilitate sharing of good practice and guidance to schools and colleges to improve consistency across the country in respect of inclusion, managing pupil behaviour and bullying.

Welsh Government response: Accept

We have reviewed our Rights, Respect Equality Anti-bullying Guidance following a consultation. The feedback ensured that the new guidance is based on the latest evidence, and insights from learners, practitioners and expert organisations.

The updated guidance published in March 2026, places a strengthened focus on preventing and tackling prejudice-related bullying and making school environments safer and more inclusive for everyone.

At the start of the school year, I launched a new Behaviour Toolkit for school staff, bringing together up-to-date research and the best examples of what works to encourage positive behaviour. Schools across Wales now have clearer, more practical tools to help create calmer, more respectful learning spaces. We are also concluding work on new mobile phone guidance, to help schools manage mobile devices in a consistent way.

Delivering on the actions from our Behaviour Summit, we are continuing to work with young people, school staff and parents to consider further action to improve behaviour and make schools feel safer. We are also working with schools and universities across Wales to explore effective ways to support and encourage positive behaviour in schools. By learning from what works, we can share the most effective approaches with all schools.

By keeping this conversation active and listening closely to your experiences, we can make sure that future policies around behaviour reflect what actually works in real school settings and continue to respond to the needs of learners and communities across Wales.

Please see a response to the additional points for clarification raised in your letter below:

- *Further information on the 4.2 million invested in the CWTCH education project for dedicated RSE advisors in every Local Authority. The Committee would like more detail on what their role will involve, and what young people will see from that investment.*

Please see detailed information provided in response to recommendation 7.

- *On pupil voice the Committee would like to know what will be done to improve the quality of delivery, as we feel schools and colleges are trying to provide but it isn't effective.*

Please see detailed information provided in response to recommendation 4.

- *How will the Welsh Government (and any other relevant bodies) going to be measuring progress, and what timescales for improvements can we expect across the different areas outlined in the report?*

Evaluating the behaviour work programme

We are continually reviewing progress to deliver on the Five Immediate Actions to improve behaviour in schools. This term, I have made a series of announcements to share the positive progress being made, including [our achievements since the Behaviour Summit](#), [a new behaviour support package for schools](#) which launched in February and [a wider conversation on mobile phones in schools](#) in March to help shape next steps.

We are also further developing our approach to measure the impact of wider work on behaviour. The first stage of this evaluation will be supported by universities across Wales. I am committed to continuing to engage with young people and schools and colleges so that every voice is heard and so we can work together to find the right solutions. There is no quick fix, but by working with learners, schools, parents and partners, we can make lasting and positive change.

Monitoring well-being support in schools

We have been working with Public Health Wales for several years to help schools understand their wellbeing needs and create plans to support them. Because this work is so important, the First Minister made it a priority for all secondary schools to have a wellbeing plan in place by the end of the current Senedd term.

The latest information from Public Health Wales shows that by March 2026, 97% of schools had action plans to meet their wellbeing needs. This includes every secondary school in Wales. Public Health Wales is now working closely with the remaining schools to help them put their wellbeing plans in place.

Estyn, our Education Inspectorate monitors how well schools are supporting learners' well-being when they visit schools for inspections. They provide feedback to help schools understand what is working well and what needs to improve.

The School Health Research Network (SHRN) is a partnership between the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, and Cardiff University. SHRN collects information through surveys completed by students and schools in Wales to improve health and wellbeing through national policies. The SHRN School Environment Questionnaire is a survey that asks schools about the things they do to support students' health and wellbeing. This information helps SHRN understand what schools are doing well and where extra support might be needed.

Evaluation of Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

Our Anti-racist Wales Action Plan is being evaluated by researchers in the Welsh Government's Race Disparity Evidence Unit to understand how well the plan is working. This includes a set of measures and a data dashboard that show progress in different areas of the plan.

The evaluation approach is currently being developed. This will look at how the plan is being put into action and what early changes it is making. The findings will be reported in 2026 and 2027. After that, there will be a longer-term evaluation to see the full impact of the plan over time.

- *Can you specify what work streams connected to the themes of the report will be delivered ahead of election, and how can the Committee be involved in those, or in other areas over the coming months.*

In the period ahead of the election, I am committed to progressing a number of work streams directly aligned to the themes in your report, including:

- **Strengthening positive relationships and school culture:** We will continue to support schools to embed whole-school approaches that promote positive behaviour, wellbeing and inclusion through a new behaviour support package which launched in February.

- **Targeted engagement with learners:** We will be working with groups of young people to talk to them about your consultation and to listen to their views. Discussions with learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will take place this term.
- **Improving consistency in behaviour support:** We are accelerating work with to improve guidance and support available to schools on behaviour and safety. New guidance will be made available during the 2026-27 school year.

We would really welcome opportunities to explore the good practice examples gathered during your consultation, especially those linked to pupil voice, and we would welcome your ideas on activities and clubs young people enjoy the most to help them feel more connected with school.

- *The Committee is also eager to be involved in discussions regarding crime and safety that impacts young people outside of what happens in the education setting. We would be grateful if you could provide any opportunities for involvement in those areas too.*

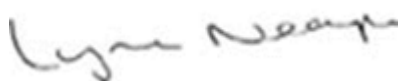
The Welsh Government works with the UK Government, the police and other organisations to help reduce crime, so Wales is safer for everyone. In 2019, we published the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales, which sets out a 'children first' approach. This means we focus on the needs of young people and how best to support them, if they are in the justice system or at risk of entering it.

I hope your consultation and report marks the beginning of the Welsh Youth Parliament's continued involvement in improving safety and behaviour in schools. I am keen to learn more about the good practice you highlighted, especially around learner voice.

Your work, and this report in particular, will play an important role in shaping our ongoing national conversation on behaviour. It will help drive forward our shared ambition for every school in Wales to be positive, inclusive and inspiring. I look forward to our continued work together and will ensure that the Committee is kept fully updated as we drive progress for all learners across Wales.

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education