

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/00155/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
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Cardiff Bay
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21 February 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 29 January regarding Petition P-05-802 Protecting Class Sizes in Design and Technology Classrooms and Workshops from Mr Aled Dafis.

Health and safety is not devolved to the Welsh Government and the responsibilities in schools are derived from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the associated Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Legislation requires the employers (governing bodies/local authorities) to assess and manage risk in the case of schools this is usually enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Responsibility for the health and safety of pupils lies with the governing body of the school, either as the employer of school staff or because it controls school premises; in many instances the governing body is both. It is expected that schools will follow guidance on health and safety issued by the HSE. BSI Standards represent the condensed knowledge of a group of people who have experience or expertise regarding a given subject; they are often written voluntarily. The one cited by Mr Dafis is a code of practice which offers advice and guidance; there is a cost associated with this publication.

The organisation of the classes is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body they have a key role in making sure risks are managed effectively on site. It is expected that appropriate risk assessments will be made of the area and number of pupils that can be taught.

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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.

The number of pupils that may be taught in a school or school work area is determined in Wales through a capacity calculation exercise as detailed in the **Measuring School Capacity in Wales guidance**. This calculation is intended to provide a robust and consistent method of assessing the capacity of schools.

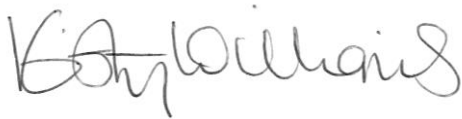
In the case of secondary schools, capacity is based on the size of teaching spaces; all types of rooms which can be used for teaching or study are included. The capacity calculation depends on the type of room, with more space per pupil allowed in rooms used for practical subjects. The formula applies an utilisation factor which varies with the age range of the school. This reflects the fact that, in secondary schools, not all rooms can be fully used all the time because of the variety of subjects taught and the varying sizes of teaching groups, particularly in sixth forms.

The pupil place is a notional unit of measurement based purely on the size and type of the space. It does not prescribe the number of pupils (or staff) that could use a space for teaching or study.

The guidance was revised in October 2011 (a link is attached below).

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/0906measuringcapacity/?skip=1&lang=en>

Yours sincerely

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

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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Cabinet Secretary for Education