

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref 613-57704
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/01185/17
Lesley Griffiths AM
Assembly Member for Wrexham
Vernon House
41 Rhosddu Road
Wrexham
LL11 2NS

Lesley.Griffiths@assembly.wales

July 2017

Dear Lesley

Thank you for your letter of 18 July on behalf of your constituent, Sarah Gresty, about the obligation on schools to hold acts of collective worship.

In Wales, collective worship in schools should be sensitive to the range of beliefs held by pupils in the school and should give pupils the opportunity to worship without encouraging them to do something that is against the teachings of their religion. For example, times of prayer may be left open-ended for pupils to say their own prayers silently or to reflect on moral or philosophical issues. Parents are entitled to remove their children from acts of collective worship, in accordance with section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

I am aware of the petition in relation to collective worship and I will be responding to the Petitions Committee over the coming weeks. This will include consideration of whether the collective worship requirement placed on schools breaches human rights law.

Yours sincerely

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

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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.

**To: Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary
for Education**
From: Abi Williams, Curriculum Division
Ext: 616067

KW/01185/17
CC: Claire Rowlands
John Pugsley
David Heath
Manon Jones
Lloyd Hopkin
Pauline Smith

Date: 27 July 2017

KW/01185/17 – Letter from Lesley Griffiths AM about collective worship

1. Lesley Griffiths AM has written to you on behalf of her constituent, Sarah Gresty, about collective worship. Ms Gresty wrote to Lesley Griffiths AM in relation to a petition posted on the National Assembly for Wales' website on 21 April by two pupils from Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, which called for the obligation on schools to hold acts of collective worship to be removed. The petition closed on 18 June, and amassed 1,333 signatures.
2. On 27 June, the Petitions Committee considered the petition. The Petitions Committee has now written to you to ask if the Welsh Government will consider reviewing the current law and guidelines surrounding collective worship, and whether any consideration has been given to the compatibility of the current requirements with human rights law, in particular the right to Freedom of Belief.
3. Ms Gresty was aware that the Petitions Committee would be writing to you, due to press interest, and she wrote to Lesley Griffiths to request her support in backing this change (i.e. for the obligation on schools to hold acts of collective worship to be removed). Lesley Griffiths AM has written to you to ask you to outline the Welsh Government's view on whether the collective worship requirement placed on schools breaches human rights laws.
4. A draft reply is attached for your consideration.