

PE1411/B

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Ar faidhle/Our ref: A1914332

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Dear Ms Wilson

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1411

Thank you for letter of 12 December 2011 asking for our response to Petition PE1411 which 'calls upon the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reform School Uniform Policies; by stopping gender-specific uniforms and changing clothes worn for uniforms to more comfortable, less physical-restrictive, more affordable and practical garments'. I have been asked to reply.

Local authorities are responsible for their own school uniform policy, as part of their responsibilities for school rules. Written information on clothing and uniforms must be made available to parents, including the approximate cost of each item of required uniform: this information is usually found in the school handbook.

School rules on uniforms must not disadvantage or discriminate on the basis of gender, race or religion. The Equality Act 2010 places duties on public bodies, including education authorities, to prevent indirect and direct discrimination and discrimination on the basis of perception and association related to 'protected characteristics'. In schools these apply to: Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex (Gender), and Sexual Orientation. Further information on the Equality Act and its duties can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/>



Local authorities should be mindful of the cost of uniforms in setting their policy as this is met by the child or young person's household and should be affordable. As the Committee may be aware, section 54 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty upon local authorities to provide help to parents of pupils whose clothing may be inadequate for the purposes of school education. Across Scotland, this is usually achieved through the provision of a school clothing grant. While it is the responsibility of the local authorities to set the criteria for allocating grants, the grant amount and for the application process, the Scottish Government encourages them to prioritise their resources to those who would benefit most from them, such as households on a low income.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if the Committee has any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Milović