

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

13th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday
28 September 2022

PE1937: To give children the respect they
deserve by providing options for privacy when
changing for P.E

Note by the Clerk

Petitioner	Gillian Lamarra
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to implement the option across all schools for primary school children to wear their P.E kit to school on the days they have P.E
Webpage	https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1937

Introduction

1. This is a new petition that was lodged on 17 May 2022
2. The petition seeks to ensure primary school pupils are given the option to wear their P.E kit to school on the days where they have P.E, as was the case while COVID-19 restrictions were in place. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
4. While not a formal requirement, petitioners have the option to collect signatures on their petition. On this occasion, the petitioner elected not to collect signatures.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered. A response has been received from the Scottish Government and is included at **Annexe C** of this paper.

6. A submission has been provided by the petitioner. This is included at **Annexe D**.

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take on this petition.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

PE1937: To give children the respect they deserve by providing options for privacy when changing for P.E

Petitioner

Gillian Lamarra

Date lodged

17/05/22

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to implement the option across all schools for primary school children to wear their P.E kit to school on the days they have P.E.

Previous action

I have contacted Humza Yousaf who agreed the current policy is outdated. I have also raised this issue with the previous and current head of education at Glasgow City Council.

Background information

Some schools brought the option to wear P.E. kit to school into play during COVID but have since reverted back. A lot of primary schools make children undress to their underwear in-front of the rest of the (mixed gender) class, and teacher. Whilst they encourage self respect, privacy and being aware of your body? Such a contradiction.

My family member had met their teacher once after going back to school after covid. They were asked to strip down to their underwear in order to participate in P.E. I teach them about privacy and being aware of THEIR body. My family member refused to do this for obvious reasons and was told that 'all the kids can't just go to the toilet to change'. I contacted my family member's school who agreed and changed their policy.

From there I put a message of concern on social media, the response I received was phenomenal and from that point I knew there needed to be change.

Annexe B


 SPICe


 The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE1937](#): To give children the respect they deserve by providing options for privacy when changing for P.E., lodged by Gillian Lamarra

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

- This petition is calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to implement a national policy allowing primary school children the right to wear their P.E. kit to school on the days they have P.E.
- The petitioner states that, in primary schools, it is common for children to be required to change in front of the rest of their mixed-gender class and teacher. The petitioner goes on to state that there is a need for protections to be put in place to ensure pupils' privacy such as giving the children the option to attend school wearing their P.E. kit. The petitioner highlighted concerns following their family members' experience and noted many other parents shared this concern on social media.
- The petitioner states they have contacted Humza Yousaf MSP and the City of Glasgow Council.
- There is no current national legislation around safe P.E. changing practices in primary schools; it is up to individual local authorities and schools to write their own guidelines. School uniform policy is also set at a local level, with each school having autonomy over their policy to allow schools to accommodate the needs of individual children and schools.

- In 2019, the Scottish Government published its [Learning Estate Strategy](#) which sets out the strategic approach for managing Scotland's learning estate. It states that learning environments should support the well-being of all learners and meet varying needs to support inclusion for all learners. It also states that good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision-making processes should lead to better outcomes for all.
- The Scottish Government is currently [consulting on new Statutory School Uniform Guidance](#), and this includes questions on uniform in P.E. It is not intended that this will create a national school uniform policy that is applied in all schools, rather it is intended that new national guidance will help better inform local authorities and schools' policies. This provides an opportunity for pupils and parents to feed into national guidance and share best practices from their own experiences.
- The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, also stated in her guidance that parents and pupils should write directly to the school's head teacher or the Director of Education in their local authority if they have concerns about their school's local policy.
- In August 2020, the Scottish Government published COVID-19 guidance for Physical Education which stated that, where changing rooms were not in use, young people should be encouraged to arrive at school in their sports kit on days when physical education lessons would take place and, where possible, wait until they got home to shower and change. [The guidance has since been updated; the list of updates can be viewed on the Scottish Government website](#). As there are no longer COVID-19 restrictions in schools, this guidance does not currently apply.

Nicole Beattie
Senior Researcher

[08/07/2022]

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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circumstances at that time. These circumstances no longer apply, as there are no restrictions in schools that don't exist elsewhere in the community.

Where children and young people, or indeed their parents or carers, feel that it would be preferable to be allowed to wear P.E. kit to school on the days they have P.E. classes they should write directly to the school's head teacher or the Director of Education at their local council to ask for this policy to be implemented locally.

With regards to the provision of suitable changing facilities, if a school decides that children and young people must arrive at school in their normal uniform and change for P.E. classes on site, the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a statutory responsibility on all local authorities to manage and maintain their school estate. The Scottish Government therefore expects local authorities to provide appropriate changing facilities for all school users.

Our [Learning Estate Strategy](#), which underpins our Learning Estate Investment Programme and sets out the strategic approach for managing Scotland's learning estate, makes clear that learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners and meet varying needs to support inclusion for all learners. It also states that good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all.

Annexe D

Petitioner submission of 30 June 2022

PE1937/B: To give children the respect they deserve by providing options for privacy when changing for P.E.

The Cabinet Secretary states in her response that:

“The Scottish Government therefore expects local authorities to provide appropriate changing facilities for all school users”.

This is my point exactly, some schools do not have appropriate facilities for kids to change.

My child was being asked to change in front of the rest of their classmates, and when this was queried, the teacher responded by saying this is because “25 kids can’t all just go to the toilet to get changed”.

In my view, it should not be down to the parent to write to the head teacher, this should be enforced by authorities. If children do not have the option to wear their P.E. kit to school then the local authority/school should provide them with changing facilities.

The response from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills only outlines things I already know.

I would like to know what is actually being brought into effect and how this is being communicated to schools moving forward.

As noted in my petition, I have previously contacted the head of education at Glasgow City Council (old and new) who have said their policy will not be changing.