

# Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 27 June 2022

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

Thank you for your email to the Scottish Government dated 23 May 2022 relating to Petition PE1937, lodged by Gillian Lamarra, which calls 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 when they have P.E. I am replying on the Scottish Government's behalf since responsibility for school uniform, the school estate and the provision of physical education in schools all sit within my ministerial policy portfolio.

With regards to Ms Lamarra's first point that some schools brought in the option to wear P.E. kit to school during COVID, we published an advisory note on physical education, music and drama at schools at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic back in September 2020. In this guidance, we advised that "pupils should be encouraged to arrive at school in their sports kit on days when physical education lessons will take place and, where possible, wait until they get home to shower and change".

For reference purposes, this guidance is available through the following weblink: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues: advisory note on physical education, music and drama in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/advisory-notes/pages/advisory-note-on-physical-education-music-and-drama-in-schools.aspx).

I note the petition adds that some schools have since reverted back to previous policies with regards to changing for P.E. classes. The Scottish Government does not make policy decisions on school clothing related matters nationally since we believe these decisions are best taken by schools and education authorities at the local level, given their better understanding of the needs and circumstances of all children and young people in attendance and their families. However, the circumstances which led to the advice on PE kit during the pandemic related to specific 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.