



RESPONSE FROM DWR Y FELIN SCHOOL



Thank you for your response to our petition. I hope petitions committee members will decide to allow us to come in to give formal oral evidence on our petition before the committee in the near future. We would like to speak to our experiences of the success of the Wellbeing Ambassadors in our school, so that you can fully appreciate the positive change that it has made to our lives, and the school community.

All of the pupils involved in this petition have had personal experiences of being bullied and due to the work of the wellbeing ambassador scheme, have benefitted not just from the support they have received but the development of their own character and confidence. Many pupils have become ambassadors themselves, using their experience to support others. Two have applied to become senior prefects at school, something two years ago they would not have even considered due to a lack in confidence. Culminating further in the confidence to push this petition forward as they passionately believe that every pupil in Wales should have this support and opportunity. I am very proud of the pupils and it is testament to how the scheme does more than just support bullying but allows pupils to develop resilience, build confidence and support the positive building of pupils' character and culture which is our ethos at school.

- In response to your further questions:-
- What are your thoughts on the attached document?
- Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?
- Do you have further questions in response?
- Is there anything additional that you would like the Committee to know at this stage, either in response to this document or as an update to the Committee?

Pupil response:-

We appreciate the National Assembly for Wales highlighting the work at Dwr Y Felin regarding our vision in relation to challenging bullying and our work on the ENABLE project. Our pupil voice is dedicated to creating a tolerant, respectful environment for all learners and we value your acknowledgement of this.

After thoroughly reading your response, we appreciate that you have addressed our petition and the issues of bullying that we raised. Your letter outlines your objective 'strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being' and that wellbeing is going to be important when the 2022 curriculum is introduced. However, we feel that while the Framework indicates that students are empowered to 'both act as their own advocates and to seek additional support when needed' we feel that this overlooks how daunting and challenging this may be for the younger pupils of the school when they have limited options. Younger pupils will struggle to speak up to staff and senior pupils, whereas an educated student who is only one or two years older than they are will appear more approachable. We believe that the introduction of the ambassadors will assist the promotion of 'empowering pupils' as it offers the more timid students a new option. We

also believe that there are positive aspects to the well-being ambassadors outside of anti-bullying that were not given enough attention to; the ambassadors are able to spot students who may be dealing with stress and are able to approach the more vulnerable members of the school. The focus of the committee is not to target the bullies, although reducing bullying in the school is a priority, but to nurture and to assist the victims of this and have an understanding that a senior pupil or staff member may be unable to relate to. Additionally, they promote overall well-being in the school and offer ways that other students can manage stress.

We have no further questions as we feel that we presented our question adequately at that start of this process.

We would like to bring to your attention that while in your letter of response you stated "it is for the individual schools to determine the most effective way to address bullying and implement anti-bullying policies in their school setting" while there is evidence, specifically from Professor Judy Hutchings from Bangor University that this 'should be replaced by a national strategy' after her work with the Finland-funded KiVa anti-bullying programme. Additionally, The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Prof Sally Holland, believes statutory recording of incidents would make schools more accountable. I believe that our proposition is the answer to this as it would both educate students on the impact bullying has on students and offer peer support. We also believe that while you state 'not every school will be in a position to train and appoint its own wellbeing ambassadors' that there are many services, such as the Anti-Bullying Alliance, that offer resources and outlines for free that are easy to adapt to each school to ensure that they can have a committee in place. An example of this may be giving this training to the current prefect and/or school council representatives as an alternative to appoint new pupils. Finally, we'd like to address how you 'reiterate that the main purpose of our new whole school approach Framework guidance will be to help schools devise their own wellbeing solutions to address their own wellbeing issues' the evidence indicates that a nation-wide system is more beneficial than each school taking it upon themselves to draw out their own outline.