

Consultation on *The National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Education) Order 2010*

Play Wales is the national organisation for children's play. We are the charity that provides advice, support and guidance for all those in Wales who have a concern or responsibility for any environment where children and young people might play.

We uphold children's right to play. Freely chosen play is critically important in the healthy development of all children and young people. All children are entitled to quality play provision within their communities and we work strategically to achieve this goal on their behalf.

We have been closely involved in drafting the national Play Policy (2002) and in providing recommendations for Play in Wales (2006) the Welsh Assembly Play Policy Implementation Plan. Play Wales membership is drawn from a wide constituency including local and regional voluntary organisations, local authorities and individuals, employers and playworkers.

Play Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Assembly for Wales' Legislation Committee No.4 call for evidence on the *National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Education) Order 2010* relating to School Governance. Our response is as follows:

1. What are your views on the general principle that legislative competence in the areas identified in Matters 5.2A, 5.2B and 5.2C be conferred on the National Assembly?

Play Wales supports the proposed order to provide the National Assembly with the power to make measures within the policy areas defined by the matter. It is our view is that it is coherent with the intent of the Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure in respect of children's play. When we provided evidence for the Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure, Play Wales advised that schools Boards of Governors be included in the list of statutory bodies.

Our members tell us that the response of school governors with regards to children's play varies across Wales. Whilst some Boards take a relatively positive or benign approach to allowing use of school grounds for play during and outside of school hours, there is evidence that others have taken stringent measures to deny children access for play. This is despite the fact that for many communities, the school grounds are the most welcome public open space (sometimes the only open space) for children's play.

New research from Play England finds that time to play at school is seen by both children and their parents as very important if they are to get the most out of education. 90% of parents and 79% of children agree that having time to play at school helps children to concentrate in lessons. The report also found that 88% of parents and 80% of children think that children are better behaved in lessons if they are allowed to play at break time, and this figure rises to 99% for parents of 5-6 year olds. 94% of parents assert that it is important to allocate time for play during school hours.



One day Wales will be a place where we recognise and provide for every child's play needs

Un dydd bydd Cymru'n wlad ble y byddwn yn cydnabod ac yn darparu ar gyfer anghenion chwarae pob plentyn

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 Welsh Assembly Government**



73% of children interviewed by ICM, for Play England, say that school is the main chance they have to play with their friends. 55% of children report that they sometimes rush their lunch at school so they have time to play and 84% of parents say they are against school break times being shortened. It is reasonable to conjecture that were this research undertaken in Wales that the results would be replicated.

Our members tell us that they are aware of schools where decisions by Boards of Governors regarding children's opportunities to play are ill-informed and often based on a misinterpreted and disproportionate response to Health and Safety legislation; or alternatively predicated upon the needs of teaching staff rather than children's needs.

2. What are your views on the terms of the proposed Order? For example, are they too narrowly or too broadly drawn?

Play Wales considers the scope of the proposed order to be relevant. Matter 5.2 A would go some way in ensuring that Boards of Governors are well-equipped to make informed decisions regarding children's access to play opportunities both in and out of school hours. Matter 5.2 B will ensure collaboration which potentially may have long term outcomes regarding the quality of play opportunities afforded to children and young people.

3. Do you have any additional comments relating to the proposed Order?

We feel that the aspects of the proposed Order are crucial to support Boards of Governors to better respond to the play needs of children and young people locally.

We feel that these aspects will ensure that there is good governance which support Boards of Governors to better monitor children's experiences of play at an operational level.

We feel the scope of the order, and the Matters, to be instrumental in supporting local delivery of outcomes of other proposed measures, specifically the Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure.

The opportunity for children to play at school before, during and after school hours is all too easily regarded as a luxury. But children, as well as their parents, are telling us how crucial it is. We know that playing is an essential part of enjoying childhood and that it contributes hugely to children's informal learning and development. Families are now telling us that it is important in helping children to get the most from their experience of school too.

I trust you will find the above comments of use.

Kind regards



Mike Greenaway
Director