



Ein cyf/Our ref SF LA 1590 12

**ROMAN CATHOLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
WALES**

08 May 2012

Dear Head teacher

I have seen a copy of the letter from the Archbishops of Westminster and Southwark which I understand the Catholic Education Service (CES) sent to all Catholic secondary schools in Wales with a covering e-mail.

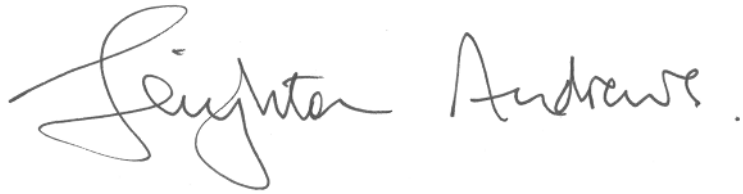
The letter expresses the Roman Catholic Church's view of marriage whilst the covering email asks you to consider asking your pupils to consider signing the petition as part of the Westminster Government's consultation. It is regrettable that the initial correspondence did not mention that only persons over aged 16 should sign the petition although I note that the petition itself makes this clear. I am glad that this has now been addressed by the CES.

Whilst the petition itself is not directly related to a party political matter it does in my view relate to political matters generally as the petition is seeking to persuade people to lobby the Westminster Government to prevent a change in the law.

The purpose of my writing to you is to remind you of your obligations under sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996. These provisions require that head teachers and governing bodies must not allow the pursuit of partisan political activities by any registered pupil who has not reached the age of 12 and must not allow the promotion of such views in any subject taught. Where political issues are brought to the attention of any registered pupil at the school, section 407 requires that pupils are offered opposing views in order to ensure a balanced presentation of issues.

I trust you will ensure that if your pupils have been made aware of this correspondence they will also be made aware of the converse view in order to give them a balanced perspective.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leighton Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills