



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet meeting: 8 November 2021

Minutes of meeting of the Cabinet on 8 November 2021.

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Contents

Present

Previous meeting

Senedd business

Reform of the School Day and Year

Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS
- Rebecca Evans MS
- Vaughan Gething MS
- Lesley Griffiths MS
- Jane Hutt MS
- Jeremy Miles MS
- Eluned Morgan MS
- Mick Antoniw MS

- Dawn Bowden MS
- Julie Morgan MS
- Lynne Neagle MS
- Lee Waters MS

Apologies

- Julie James MS

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- Hannah Blythyn MS

Officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Will Whiteley, Deputy Director Cabinet Division
- Toby Mason, Strategic Communications
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
- Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
- Daniel Butler, Special Adviser
- Ian Butler, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Sara Faye, Special Adviser
- Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser
- Mitch Theaker, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- Catrin Sully, Cabinet Office
- Tracey Burke, Director General, Education and Public Services
- Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, COVID-19 Crisis Coordination
- Judith Paget, Director General Health
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Skills and Natural Resources
- Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services
- Owain Lloyd, Director Education
- Dewi Knight, Specialist Policy Adviser Education

Item 1: Minutes of previous meetings

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 1 Tachwedd / Cabinet approved the

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minutes of 1 November.

Item 2: Senedd business

2.1 Cabinet considered the contents of the Plenary grid and noted that voting time was scheduled for 7pm on Tuesday and around 5:50pm on Wednesday.

Item 3: Reform of the School Day and Year

3.1 The Minister for Education and Welsh Language introduced the paper, which invited Cabinet to note progress in relation to the Programme for Government commitment to explore reform of the school day and year.

3.2 Work was happening at pace on the separate but complementary policy areas. There was a need to work across Government to address disadvantage and narrow educational inequalities, while supporting learner and staff well-being. The reforms should reflect contemporary patterns of family life and employment and provide greater opportunities for wider social, active and cultural experiences.

3.3 The Winter Wellbeing programme and funding would be utilised to develop and deliver a targeted programme to test an approach to a reformed and expanded school day. A model suggested by the Education Policy Institute think-tank was being used to provide funding and guidance for an extra 5 hours per pupil per week over a 10 week period from February 2022.

3.4 This additional time would provide extra social and cultural activities, aligned to the new curriculum and targeted at disadvantaged communities, which evidence showed had a greater impact on attainment than those that were solely academic in focus. Schools would have discretion, within guidance, on how to design and deliver the extra 5 hours. However, 20% of the time would need to be focused on the core skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

3.5 Work was underway with local authorities to identify schools to participate in the test period, to ensure sufficient evaluation data would be gathered on the impact, academic progression and wellbeing. The aim was to confirm the schools participating in the pilot within the next 2 weeks.

3.6 This exercise would be evaluated thoroughly and would complement wider evidence gathering and policy development work. It would need to be collaborative in its approach to consider the wider impact and benefit on the economy, health and childcare sectors.

3.7 It would be important to work directly with stakeholders, partners and those who would be directly affected, including learners and families. The education workforce, employers, employer organisations and others would all have an opportunity to participate. There had already been engagement with children and young people on how their school time was arranged through an event organised by the Children's Commissioner.

3.8 In terms of school year reform, evidence and international examples were being gathered to inform this work.

3.9 Education officials were already working with colleagues in childcare, tourism, public health and other Departments to assess impact, options and opportunities for ministerial engagement. There were a number of different reform options and initial engagement and research suggested a model with more consistent terms, more regular breaks with a shorter summer holiday should be adopted.

3.10 Cabinet welcomed the paper and agreed it was important to press ahead with these reforms at pace. Not least because many learners had not progressed as much due to the pandemic. Furthermore, evidence demonstrated that disruption to education, such as over the long summer holidays, had a detrimental impact on the quality of the learning experience and the loss of social interaction affected pupils' well-being and confidence, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.11 Cabinet approved the paper.

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