

15 October 2025

Dear

**ATISN 25173 - Use of online platforms for homework and support for literacy in schools**

**Information requested**

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, received on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

You asked a series of questions regarding the use of online digital platforms for homework in schools, and the Welsh Government's actions relating to digital device use and literacy.

It's important to note that the Freedom of Information Act gives individuals a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority at the time the request was received. It does not require an authority such as the Welsh Government to provide views or opinions where those views are not already recorded. This is confirmed by the Information Commissioner's guidance 'The Guide to Freedom of Information', page 7:

*"The Act does not cover information that is in someone's head. If a member of the public asks for information, you only have to provide information you already have in recorded form. You do not have to create new information or find the answer to a question from staff who may happen to know it."*

While we can provide general information on relevant Welsh Government policy and guidance, we do not hold detailed data on how individual schools set homework or which specific platforms they use. Responsibility for decisions of this nature rests with schools and local authorities. Our responses to each of your questions are provided below:

**Does the Welsh Government require all schools in Wales to use online digital platforms such as Hwb and Google Classroom for homework?**

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. Each school has the autonomy to determine its own approach when assigning homework to learners. There are no requirements that homework should only be hosted online. Parents and schools should discuss how homework can be provided in a way that best meets the needs of the learner.

**If no, please can you let me know which schools in Wales do NOT use Google Classroom for homework?**

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. As

explained above it is a matter for individual schools to determine how they set and provide homework.

**If yes, please can you let me know if parents still have a right in Wales to ask for homework to be provided on paper to their child instead of their child only being able to access homework online on digital platforms?**

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. This is a matter for schools to determine in discussion with parents, to ensure arrangements meet the needs of learners.

**Please provide information of any action the Welsh Government is taking to decrease use of online digital devices for learning in respect to school children.**

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. There are no Welsh Government policies in place related to the amount of time learners spend online for learning.

Digital competence is one of the cross-curricular skills within the Curriculum for Wales, and digital tools can provide important support for teaching and learning. However, decisions about classroom practice and the balance between digital and non-digital learning approaches are made by schools and practitioners.

**Please provide information of any action the Welsh Government is taking to increase reading and writing skills for school children.**

The Welsh Government does hold information of this description.

Raising the standards of literacy is a top priority for the Welsh Government. We are committed to ensuring every child has the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills needed to engage with and make sense of the world around them.

We work closely with a range of partners across Wales to provide support to schools to improve literacy outcomes for all learners. This support is as follows:

- Literacy skills are explicitly taught in the [Languages, Literacy and Communication \(LLC\)](#) area of learning and experience of the [Curriculum for Wales](#) that was introduced into schools in September 2022. This [statutory guidance](#) supports schools to plan for the development and application of these skills across the continuum of learning. In January this year we updated our statutory guidance to reinforce our expectations about the teaching of reading. In line with evidence on how learners develop reading and wider literacy skills, this includes a clear emphasis on the systematic and consistent teaching of phonics alongside vocabulary building and comprehension. This is vital to ensure learners can understand and make sense of what they read and become fluent and effective readers.
- In July 2024 the Cabinet Secretary for Education [announced](#) a number of actions we are delivering on to ensure schools can design high-quality,

stretching curricula through the provision of intensive support on issues like literacy and numeracy. Further detail is publicly available on this support literacy which was provided in a [written statement](#) of 4 October 2024.

- In November 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced in an [oral statement](#) an additional £1.1 million of investment in programmes to drive up attainment. At that time, we also launched a new area on [Hwb](#) to provide schools and practitioners with resources and case studies on literacy in Curriculum for Wales. We also published an updated version of a playlist resource on Hwb, Listening, speaking and reading in the Curriculum for Wales: supporting high standards in schools and settings which provides a package of support for schools to encourage and reinforce a culture where oracy and reading are part of all aspects of school life, involving parents, carers, volunteers and the wider community. This is publicly available through [this link](#).
- The Cabinet Secretary for Education published a publicly available [letter](#) to schools and settings leaders and practitioners outlining her priorities for improving educational standards in Wales, which included literacy.
- In November 2024 we established the [Literacy Expert Panel](#) bringing together a breadth of expertise to ensure all our support is firmly based on clear evidence on how learners develop reading and wider literacy skills. The panel which has met on seven occasions to date, is developing evidence-based national principles for teaching of language and literacy. These principles will guide professional learning and resource development ensuring effective teaching approaches. Publicly available information about this group can be found [here](#).
- Our publicly available 2025-26 [funding letter](#) to Adnodd, a Welsh Government arm's length body that oversees and coordinates the provision of educational resources, has a focus on the provision of resources to support schools with the teaching and learning of literacy.
- Through our new Curriculum for Wales Grant Support Programme we have awarded £13.2 million over the next 3 years on [literacy projects](#) that will provide Wales wide support to schools to raise the standards of literacy. The grants remit and funding information are publicly available and can be found [here](#).
- In July's [written statement](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced £2.5m of additional funds have been allocated to Local Authorities to improve their capacity to support schools with literacy and numeracy.
- From 1 September we have established the new professional learning and leadership body for the education sector, [Dysgu](#). Aligning with the Curriculum for Wales and progressing key priorities, such as literacy, will be key for Dysgu. It will work with a wide range of key stakeholders to ensure that activities are research-led, practice focused and responsive to the needs of school practitioners, leaders and improvement advisers.

- The Cabinet Secretary for Education gave an [oral statement](#) in September where she outlined her continued support for literacy as a priority.
- We continue to review the publicly available [Literacy and Numeracy Framework](#) to ensure that it supports all our teachers on the application of literacy skills across the curriculum. The review will ensure that our expectations for literacy are stretching, reflect the evidence of how we learn and are applied consistently across Wales.

However, we also hold information captured by your request that we believe should be withheld under the Section 35(1)(a) exemption provided by the Freedom of Information Act – it relates to the “formulation of government policy”. The information being exempted relates to the ongoing development of government policy on literacy.

This exemption is subject to the public interest test, this means that in order to withhold information under it, it must be shown that the public interest in withholding outweighs that in releasing.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the inherent public interest in openness and transparency that release would engender. We also acknowledge release may contribute to a debate on a matter of public interest.

However, the policymaking in this area is a detailed process involving various partners and stakeholders, with discussions and exchanges of ideas to propose, debate, and test ideas. It is important that live policy debates and formulation take place in a ‘safe space’ and are not affected by disclosure of the content of still ongoing discussions, and debates on contentious issues. We believe that release of this information would be detrimental to the policymaking process by having a chilling effect on discussions, meaning that if they were released, officials would likely be less candid in their discussions going forward, which would have a detrimental effect on the quality of policy making. As decisions on this policy have not yet been taken by Ministers, release would not support the public interest in terms of enhancing public scrutiny of decision-making, supporting accountability, or allowing individuals to understand or challenge decisions.

To that end, we believe the public interest lies in withholding the information, and so it is being withheld under s35(1)(a).

### **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government’s handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government’s Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely