

Dear Mr. Hutchison,

**Safeguarding Our Schools – Scotland** is a grassroots organisation of parents, teachers' education and child protection professionals who have concerns around the uncritical teaching of gender ideology in schools, mixed sex facilities, safeguarding children and young people, as well as empowering parents, carers and teachers to have often difficult conversations around these issues.

Our focus sits primarily with the protection and safeguarding of children and young people

We have been approached by concerned parents and others who have asked us to contact you on their behalf. They brought to our attention that the school, **North Kelvinside Primary School** in Maryhill, has mixed sex toilets installed and we would like clarification of the following points.

- 1) Please provide us with a copy of the consultation (with results) that you undertook with children and parents prior to making the decision to install mixed sex toilets.
- 2) Please provide a copy of the impact assessment you undertook prior to making this decision. We refer specifically to the impact of using mixed sex facilities on the safety and privacy of female students. For example, what consideration has been given to the specific biological needs of girls?
- 3) What measures are you putting in place to safeguard young girls in an enclosed space with males?
- 4) We have been made aware that the cubicles are open at the top and bottom, with room for a mobile phone to fit through gaps and viewing of a child inside the cubicle. Can you advise how this is conducive of a safe environment for any child?
- 4) How have you assessed the physical and psychological impact on female students of being forced to share toilets with male student? Please provide details of all the steps you will be taking to mitigate the negative impact of mixed sex toilets on female students which have been seen in other areas of the UK where these have already been introduced. I refer to reports of girls missing school during their period and deliberately dehydrating themselves to not have to urinate in the presence of boys.
- 5) Plan UK International have recently found that between 48 and 56% of girls (depending on age) experience period shaming at school. What are you doing to counteract this and how can you ensure that mixed sex facilities will help reduce this? How do you plan to ensure that young girls who are just getting used to menstruation can deal with this in privacy and with dignity? Have you ensured that the mixed sex toilets have private, enclosed wash spaces where girls can deal with accidents relating to menstruation discreetly?
- 6) What have you done to ensure that the installation of mixed sex toilet facilities complies with the Equality Act 2010 which states that children over the age of 8 years are entitled to have access to single sex toilet facilities? This includes separate toilets, wash basins and sanitary disposal units.

7) ERIC, the children's bowel, and bladder charity has pointed out that lack of privacy is one of the obstacles to children using school toilets. Therefore, children can try to limit toilet usage which has a negative effect on their ability to learn, their behavior, morale, and attendance levels. ERIC points to the School Premises and Regulations (2012) as best practice which outlines single-sex toilet provision is essential for over 8-year-olds. Similar provision in Scottish schools is mandated for by the School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 1967.

8) What is the exact number of male only, female only and mixed sex cubicles available and in the case of the mixed sex toilets how many have enclosed washing facilities?

10) How do you plan to keep the mixed sex facilities clean? Are girls expected to wipe urine off seats before using the toilets themselves?

12) Please provide details of any third-party organisations, for example charities, that have been involved in making this decision and why you felt it was appropriate to include them. We would like to see details of the amount of input these organisations have had and what advice they given the school particularly in relation to equality legislation.

13) Can you confirm if there are any plans to have/remove single sex toilet provision from the school completely and if so when parents will be consulted about this.

14) Please confirm whether single sex toilet provision will be available for all students at all times of the school day and if it is equally accessible from all areas of the school.

15) Finally, please confirm whether your mixed sex policy will also be extended to changing facilities and sleeping accommodation on residential trips and the safeguarding and impact assessments you have completed in relation to this.

As we are sure you can appreciate, parents are concerned regarding the safety, privacy, and dignity of their children whilst they are in the care of the local authority and school. Single sex toilets are best practice, for all children, and it would be appreciated if you could address these concerns as a matter of urgency.

We look forward to receiving your responses in a timely manner.

Kind regards,

***Safeguarding Our Schools - Scotland***