# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Ruthin School Update**  |
| **DATE**  | **29 January 2020** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education** |

This statement is to update Members on developments regarding the independent Ruthin School.

As the registrar of independent schools, Welsh Government received information that raised concerns about safeguarding arrangements at the school. In response, I requested that

Estyn, alongside Care Inspectorate Wales, undertake an unannounced focused inspection.

Estyn has concluded that the school does not currently meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. In particular, it does not comply fully with the regulatory requirements for Standard 3 relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

The Council of Management at the school has the responsibility to safeguard pupils and to promote the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Following the Estyn inspection, my officials presented the report to the Council of Management and at the same time requested that they produce an action plan to address the failings identified in the Estyn report.

As a matter of public interest, Estyn has agreed to publish their report today. A link is provided with this statement. <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6636027>

With regard to the Council of Management’s action plan, submitted earlier this month,

Government officials are carefully considering next steps having sought and received Estyn feedback on whether the plan is a fully effective tool in securing the required improvements.

The Welsh Government has no powers to direct an independent school to dismiss a member of staff. That is the responsibility of the proprietor of the school or where there is a Board of Trustees or Council of Management. However, I expect every independent school to act in the best interests of pupils, and to ensure that they meet their legal safeguarding responsibilities.

However, in the event that an independent school does not act to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in a way that Welsh Government and other bodies think is appropriate, the ultimate sanction would be to remove the school from the register of independent schools. This would mean the school could no longer offer full-time education.

In considering such an action, any Minister would have to reflect carefully on the significant and far-reaching consequences for the school, staff, pupils and community.

I will provide Members with a further update in due course.