

Private and Confidential
For the Attention of Mrs Jane Hutt
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong
Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
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RJH/RT

5th March 2008

Dear Mrs Hutt

Holocaust Memorial Day

I am writing on behalf of Caerphilly Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) to express our disappointment at the low profile given to Holocaust Memorial Day this year by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). At our last SACRE meeting we discussed the very good work that the Local Education Authority (LEA) and many of its schools were doing to promote the themes of Holocaust Memorial Day. However, SACRE members did express their disappointment at the lack of promotion of the event, guidance and advice provided by WAG to schools and LEAs.

As you are aware Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is an annual event that takes place on 27th January and was established in the UK in 2000/2001. National Holocaust Memorial Day seeks to change the future by learning from and remembering the past through commemoration of the events of the Holocaust and more recent genocides. HMD provides a framework to explore issues of morality, human reactions, individual experiences, responsibilities and larger questions of the role of governments and democracies.

We, as a SACRE, are concerned that there appears to be many initiatives and support structures in place in England that are not replicated in Wales. For instance, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust produces materials specific to the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day with free educational resources made available (without request) to schools in England. This excellent pack of resource material, containing lesson plans, collective worship/assemblies and worksheets suitable for primary to post 16 students, is not made available to schools in Wales unless requested personally by schools or LEAs. It is disappointing that the WAG is not also providing this pack of materials to schools in Wales. Also, the Holocaust Educational Trust has informed schools in England of the Government - funded opportunity of sending two sixth form students and a teacher to visit Auschwitz to learn lessons from the past. The schools of Wales were not originally informed of this but after some enquiries from schools, advisers, teachers and LEAs in Wales the Trust has now included a visit to Auschwitz for students in Wales. This will take place in May 2008. However, it was a very hurried mail shot to schools in Wales with a very short deadline date, which again results in inequality of opportunity for students in Wales.

We, as a SACRE, take our responsibilities very seriously and would wish to draw the attention of the Welsh Assembly Government to this matter so that this issue can be rectified in future years and that WAG and its LEAs can serve well the interests of Welsh school children. We await a speedy response to our letter.

Yours sincerely

Councillor D.M. Gray
Caerphilly SACRE Chairman