

Committee:	Standards Committee
Date:	28 February 2011
Title:	Application for dispensation by Councillor Louise Hughes
Author:	Monitoring Officer
Action:	To decide upon the application

Background

1. I enclose as **Appendix 1** an application by Cllr Louise Hughes Gwynedd Council member for Llangelynnin for a dispensation in connection with the reorganisation of primary schools in the Tywyn catchment area. On 1 March 2011, the Full Council will consider a report on *“the statutory consultation on a proposal to establish an area school in Llanegryn to serve the current catchment areas of Ysgolion Abergynolwyn, Brynchrug, Llanegryn and Llwyngwrl. This follows the Council’s decision in December 2010 to close Ysgol Abergynolwyn by 31 March 2011 and Ysgolion Brynchrug, Llanegryn and Llwyngwrl by 31 August 2013.”*

2. The Councillor has declared an interest because her daughter is a pupil at Llanegryn School.

3. The Standards Committee may grant a dispensation of the situation comes within one (or more) of those listed in the relevant regulations (**Appendix 2**).

4. The Committee has developed guidelines to consider in applications relating to school reorganisation:

“a father/mother, grandfather/grandmother, grandson/granddaughter, husband or wife, children, brother or sister would amount to too close a connection to allow dispensation in terms of a specific school, since it would be difficult for the public to gain confidence in the way a decision would be reached.”

5. The Committee granted the Councillor the following dispensation on 9 September 2008:

“to grant Councillor Louise Hughes dispensation under paragraph 2(d) and (e) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensation) (Wales) Regulations 2001 to participate in the discussion and voting on the Schools Organisation Plan, provided that the dispensation did not extend to discussions regarding the future of any school that Councillor Hughes’ child attended”

6. The Ombudsman’s Guidelines on the code of Conduct notes the following in relation to granting dispensations (p.35):

The standards committee will need to balance the public interest in preventing members with prejudicial interests from taking part in decisions, against the public interest in decisions being taken by a reasonably representative group of members of the authority.

Recommendation

7. The Committee is requested to consider and decide upon Councillor Louise Hughes’ application for a dispensation.