# Concerns mount over school violence as teacher assaults and exclusions soar in Wales



In a recent debate at the Senedd, Natasha Asghar, the Conservatives' shadow education secretary, expressed serious concerns regarding the rising levels of violence against teachers, following the sentencing of a schoolgirl to 15 years’ detention for stabbing two educators and a fellow pupil at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman. The incident, which took place in Ammanford, has sparked discussions about safety in schools and the increasing prevalence of physical assaults within the educational system.

Asghar emphasised that the alarming statistics surrounding assaults on teachers and the sharp rise in fixed-term exclusions—tripling between 2015 and 2023—indicate a severe crisis. She stated, “This is just the tip of the iceberg,” highlighting what she perceives to be chronic under-reporting of violent incidents in schools. Particularly troubling, she noted, is the statistic that the exclusion rate for students with additional learning needs has more than doubled, reaching nearly 12 per cent.

Cefin Campbell, a member of Plaid Cymru and brother of a teacher at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman who was praised for his bravery in attempting to restrain the assailant, expressed deep personal regret over the situation. Addressing the education secretary, Lynne Neagle, he pointed out that a year has passed since the attack without any governmental solutions being proposed to enhance safety in schools. “We cannot… wait for another similar attack before you respond,” he declared.

Adam Price, representing Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, added to the discourse by stating that the incident has reverberated across staffrooms and discussions in households throughout Wales. He referred to the warnings issued by deputy head Ceri Myers, who had reportedly emailed the Welsh Government seven times between January and the day of the stabbing, seeking guidance on managing challenging behaviour in schools. In an interview with ITV, Myers indicated that his concerns were largely dismissed.

Details surrounding the assailant reveal that the girl had previously brought a knife into the school the year before the attack, raising questions about how such incidents were overlooked. Price asserted, “The signs were there – the system didn’t see them,” underscoring the potential for preventative measures that may not have been adequately addressed.

In response to the concerns raised during the debate, Education Secretary Lynne Neagle noted that Estyn, the education inspectorate for Wales, is set to publish a thematic review on school behaviour on May 8, coinciding with a summit on the subject. This move is aimed at addressing the challenges schools face regarding safety and behaviour management.

The discussions at the Senedd reflect an urgent need for action and reform within the educational system to ensure the safety of both staff and students amid increasing incidents of violence and misconduct.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cl406e1j1mmo> - This article reports on the stabbing incident at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman in Ammanford, where two teachers and a pupil were injured, leading to a lockdown and a review of school safety procedures across Wales.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/24/three-people-injured-at-welsh-school-and-one-arrested> - This report details the stabbing incident at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman, including the arrest of a 13-year-old girl on suspicion of attempted murder and the response from the school and community.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/25/girl-13-charged-with-attempted-murder-after-south-wales-school-stabbings> - This article covers the charging of a 13-year-old girl with attempted murder following the stabbing of two teachers and a pupil at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/26/teachers-injured-in-welsh-school-stabbing-speak-of-incidents-enormous-impact> - This piece features statements from the injured teachers at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman, discussing the impact of the stabbing incident on them and the school community.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2024/04/25/hero-teacher-restrained-teenage-girl-during-stabbing-at-school-in-ammanford> - This article highlights the actions of teacher Darrel Campbell, who restrained the alleged attacker during the stabbing incident at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman.
6. <https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cgmy31ewv3po> - This report discusses the concerns raised by Deputy Headteacher Ceri Myers about student behaviour at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman prior to the stabbing incident.
7. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25131557.welsh-government-ministers-act-school-violence/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data