

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 12 November 2025
17th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE2181: Remove teachers' ability to backdate and alter school records

Introduction

Petitioner Paul Blaker on behalf of Accountability Scotland

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce measures to stop teachers from backdating or altering school records in SEEMiS and any other education management information systems.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2181>

1. This is a new petition that was lodged on 9 September 2025.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
4. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 24 signatures have been received on this petition.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.
6. The Committee has received submissions from the Scottish Government and the petitioner, which are set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
November 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2181: Remove teachers' ability to backdate and alter school records

Petitioner

Paul Blaker on behalf of Accountability Scotland

Date Lodged

9 September 2025

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce measures to stop teachers from backdating or altering school records in SEEMiS and any other education management information systems.

Background information

Scottish schools use the SEEMiS application for school records. It's essential and in the public interest that school records are accurate like other public systems of records such as the NHS or Police Scotland.

Teachers, unlike the police or NHS staff, are able to use functionality to alter a record after it was created. One of our members took a council to court to prove this, after the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman wrongly relied on school records our member knew had not been recorded contemporaneously. Following a court order he discovered that over 10 school records had been created and made to look like they had been recorded before alleged safeguarding failures caused significant harm to his child. We have since discovered that this has been going on for years.

A recent response from the Information Commissioner's Office to a complaint we raised on this matter recognised that, in the above case, the council's practice did not comply with data protection legislation. The practice is also open to abuse, a risk to children, and it must be stopped.

Annexe B: SPICe briefing on PE2181

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petitioner claims that local authorities or schools have backdated records on the support of a child. These records are made on [SEEMiS](#).

The petitioner raised [this issue at the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee in November 2024 during a session on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman](#).

There were [reports in August 2025](#) that East Dunbartonshire Council had been censured by the Information Commissioner's Office for backdating education records. In a separate case, [the SPSO found that a Fife Council](#) school “had not consistently recorded incidents reported in pastoral and other recording systems”.

Legal obligations

Data protection legislation in the UK – the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and some provisions in the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 – govern the use of personal data. Personal data are any data which can allow a living individual to be identified. They include data which do not on their own allow a person to be identified but can be combined with other available data to do so.

School records contain personal data which allow individual pupils to be identified. They are therefore personal data under data protection legislation and subject to the relevant rules and requirements.

There are additional protections for “special category data” – basically data dealing with particularly sensitive subjects, such as health and racial or ethnic background. School records may also deal with special category data and, where they do, they will be subject to additional requirements.

Data protection legislation contains a range of requirements around the way personal data must be dealt with and the rights of the people whose data is being processed. Key to this regime are the “data protection principles”. These are that personal data must be:

- processed lawfully (under one of the grounds set out in data protection legislation), fairly and transparently
- collected for specified purposes and not processed in a manner which is incompatible with those purposes
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept in a form which permits identification of individuals for no longer than is necessary for the purposes they were collected
- processed in a manner which ensures appropriate security (including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing).

In addition, the person or body responsible for processing the data must be able to demonstrate compliance with these principles.

Data protection is a reserved policy area and the Information Commissioner's Office is responsible for overseeing compliance with data protection legislation. Separately, individuals can take court action to enforce their own data protection rights, and some actions which breach data protection law are criminal offences.

From information in a BBC news article on the case relating to East Dunbartonshire Council (Andrew Picken, "[Council rapped after school bullying 'whitewash' claim](#)", 25 August 2025), it would appear that the Information Commissioner's Office has issued a decision about the way the local authority responsible for the incident highlighted in the petition handled the personal data in question.

The Information Commissioner's Office noted that changing the date an entry was recorded as having been made was a breach of the requirement for transparency as outlined in the principles above. It may also impact on the requirement for accuracy.

The Information Commissioner's Office told the local authority to change the functionality of the SEEMiS system to prevent backdating in this way. The BBC article contains a statement from the council stating it has taken action to address this issue.

What is SEEMiS?

SEEMiS Group LLP is owned by the 32 Local Authorities. Each of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland have chosen to become members of the LLP.

Originally SEEMiS was the management information system (MIS) provider for the 12 local authorities that came from the ex-Strathclyde Region. However, over the past couple of decades, the remaining 20 local authorities migrated away from their previous MIS providers to SEEMiS.

SEEMiS holds the core student records for students in Local Authority schools in Scotland. Each Local Authority decides on the functionality within the SEEMiS system they wish their schools to use and will provide the required direction, policy and procedure to their own users of our system on what they should collect and store. The core student record is also used to gather the data aligned to the Scottish Government student and staff censuses.

Pastoral notes on SEEMiS

SPICe asked SEEMiS about the issues raised in the East Dunbartonshire case highlighted above. SEEMiS was aware of the case and, from the information available to them, it appeared that the issue was in relation to Pastoral Notes within the system.

The ability of staff or teachers to backdate or update records in Pastoral Notes is intended to align with the day-to-day practice in schools. Teachers or Pupil Support staff may not be able to update records immediately and may create or update records at the end of the day or at a point in the week where they have non-contact

time. Furthermore, the initial note may have been created by administrative support staff and then further notes input to the system by teaching or support staff.

Previously, local authorities could access a record of the history of an entry, from SEEMiS and it was possible to see when a change had been made to the notes and by whom but not what the note content change was. Following the East Dunbartonshire case, this was identified as an issue and changes were made to the system in December 2023, which means that any request from a local authority will also now include the note content history for notes created after this date.

Ned Sharratt & Abigail Bremner

Senior Researchers

7 October 2025

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written submissions

Scottish Government written submission, 8 October 2025

PE2181/A: Remove teachers' ability to backdate and alter school records

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The Scottish Government expects local authorities and schools to keep factually accurate and timely records on school management information systems, that complies with local authorities' legal obligations including data protection law, and guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

This involves ensuring that staff and teachers understand when information should be being recorded, and that they only have access to parts of any management information system to which they require access, and where required, are enabled to add new or additional information to records, or to make changes to information to existing records that is shown to be inaccurate.

The Scottish Government expects there to be clear audit processes and procedures in place that track who has accessed such systems, what changes were made to pre-existing information, and the reasons for these changes.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring data protection laws are adhered to, and taking any action on advice given to them by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Scottish Government also expects local authorities to work with their school management information system provider to ensure that systems are fit for purpose, and staff and teachers are provided with clear guidance and instructions on how to use the system.

With regards to the recording of bullying incidents, the Scottish Government updated its national anti-bullying guidance, Respect for All, in November 2024, which included updated guidance on recording and monitoring.

What, if any, action the Scottish Government is currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

SEEMiS Group LLP is an Education Management Information System (MIS) provider set up and funded by all 32 local authorities in Scotland. It works closely with its members and other strategic bodies responsible for the education direction in Scotland, and looks to continually improve its product set and support local authorities and their associated schools to deliver their statutory and discretionary responsibilities.

The Scottish Government does not have any contract with SEEMiS Group LLP, but works with local authorities (either directly or via strategic bodies such as ADES,

CoSLA and SOLACE) in relation to matters related to their provision of education services, and any associated gathering and recording of information.

Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

The Scottish Government works with local authorities and strategic bodies to ensure quality and consistency standards are achieved for information being gathered by schools and local authorities in light of any guidance issued by the Scottish Government, particularly for information which is then shared with the Scottish Government for its own statistical and research purposes.

The Scottish Government does not collect information on bullying incidents that are recorded on SEEMiS, but it does support any actions undertaken by local authorities that helps them better support the wellbeing of children and young people.

Education Analytical Services

Information Management, Improvement and Evidence Unit

Petitioner written submission, 9 October 2025

PE2181/B: Remove teachers' ability to backdate and alter school records

Does the Scottish Government grasp the gravity of the current situation?

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is not a slogan — it is Scotland's longstanding national commitment to ensure that every child, young person, and their family receives the right support at the right time. Its core promise is to safeguard wellbeing and enable every child to reach their full potential.

This promise cannot be fulfilled without a reliable foundation: accurate school records. Just as the NHS depends on precise medical records to deliver safe and effective care, GIRFEC depends on truthful educational records to identify risks, coordinate support, and uphold children's rights. When school records are falsified or manipulated, this is not possible. The consequences are not abstract — they are real, measurable, and harmful.

The Petitioner has uncovered a widespread and deeply concerning practice across Scotland: teachers unlawfully falsifying school records for years to conceal failings, misconduct, or safeguarding breaches. This is not isolated, it is systemic. The consequences are severe and ongoing, with children harmed by the erosion of truth, accountability, and appropriate support.

Local authorities are not merely passive observers. Councils are aware of this misconduct and have actively protected staff engaged in it, obstructing investigations and shielding those responsible from scrutiny.

Equally alarming is the stance of the General Teaching Council for Scotland which has refused to investigate teachers caught falsifying records even when presented with clear evidence that a child has been harmed as a result of this. This failure to

act undermines the integrity of Scotland's regulatory framework and signals institutional complicity.

Would the Scottish Government permit the NHS to backdate medical records or alter previously recorded information without retaining original versions? Of course not. Such a practice would violate clinical governance, compromise patient safety, and breach legal standards for data integrity.

So why is the Government prepared to tolerate this exact misconduct in education with no intervention, no oversight, and no accountability?

The Scottish Government must intervene without delay. Failure to act will not only perpetuate injustice — it will compound it by enabling it to continue. Ministers have a duty to uphold the integrity of Scotland's education system and protect children from institutional harm. Anything less is a dereliction of that duty.