

Press Release  
Youth Work Ireland  
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**“Data Protection Commissioners Report Illustrates Some Distance to Go Before Young People Are Treated Equally” Says Leading Youth Organisation**

Youth Work Ireland has said that the latest Report of the Data Protection Commissioner shows there is still some way to go before young people are seen and treated as equals. The organisation which represents 22 local voluntary youth organisations around the country was reacting to the the finding that several schools breached the privacy of pupils particularly in the operation of CCTV cameras for example in toilets and other sensitive areas. The organisation has said this would not happen to, or be tolerated by, any other group in society but young people had to rely on their parents to take action in these instances.

“Privacy is a basic right and should be extended to all people regardless of their age. If a school needs to have enhanced security or cctv it should be done in accordance with the law and in consultation with students and parents. The fact that schools would place cctv cameras in toilets illustrates that young people are simply not treated fairly or equally despite what may be said in the Children’s Strategy or other documents. Proper involvement of young people in the management of the school would ensure that situations like this would not arise. The Education Acts and the Department support Student Councils and these should be present in every school to ensure the rights of young people are upheld” said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

“We can see clearly in these instances complaints by young people being dismissed simply because of their age. When their parents went through official channels the schools had to respond, this not good enough in this day and age. There appears to have been a cavalier attitude to the use of cctv in many schools and the Commissioner’s office has had to be very active in this area suggesting the breaches of young people’s rights have been widespread by several schools. Schools and all public bodies should be aware of the rights of young people and take care not to violate them. Listening to young people and taking their complaints seriously would be a first step on this road” Mc Loughlin added

ENDS

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