

# NSS welcomes greater powers for Ofsted to tackle illegal schools

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The National Secular Society has welcomed a bill granting new powers to inspectors to tackle illegal schools.

The [Schools Bill](#), announced in the Queen's Speech today, will give education watchdog Ofsted greater powers to crack down on unregistered schools that are operating illegally. This includes strengthening the definition of what constitutes an illegal school.

Other measures in the bill include establishing a compulsory register for children not in school and a requirement for schools to publish an attendance policy.

These measures will help protect children from being illegally educated in settings that are not monitored to ensure children's education and welfare needs are being met.

Two other bills supported by the NSS, the [Assisted Dying Bill](#) and [Education \(Assemblies\) Bill](#) that would end compulsory religious worship in schools, have now fallen.

## NSS campaigning against illegal faith schools

The NSS has long worked to raise awareness of religious groups' use of illegal schools and [campaigns](#) to end them.

Some religious groups operate unregistered schools in order to prioritise religious inculcation while avoiding scrutiny under the independent school standards.

In 2020 the NSS responded to a Department for Education [consultation](#) in support of proposals to change how independent educational settings are regulated. The [analysis](#) of the consultation responses showed broad support for the proposed reforms.

NSS campaigns officer Ella Sen said: "The government has made a significant step in the right direction to ensure all children's rights to decent education in safe settings are upheld.

"Too many children in insular religious communities are effectively 'missing' from education because they attend unregistered settings that offer nothing but a narrow, religion-based curriculum. Greater powers to crack down on such settings, combined with a register for home educated children, will help to bring an end to these illegal schools."

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