

P-04-634 End Exclusion in Schools for Children with No Religion

Petition wording:

This petition seeks the support of the Minister for Education and Skills to provide a non-discriminatory education for children of no organised religion in Wales.

This petition has been prompted after personal experience sending my own child to an excellent community primary school in Pontypridd. This school has fantastically supportive teachers and high quality teaching. However, like all community primaries in Wales, it is legally obliged to provide sessions of collective worship and occasionally exceeds its legal obligations under the law by bringing worship into the classroom, the lunch hall and school trips (to places like the Creationist Zoo, Noah's Ark Farm (see existing petition under consideration here:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=10925>).

In our instance parents have never been consulted on whether we wish our child taught a religion as truth, which we do not. Once I heard of the trip to Noah's Ark Zoo in particular, I called the headmaster who told me that I had the option to exclude my child from organised school activities, which I do not wish to as it would damage and reduce my daughter's role in the school community and generally discriminate against her on the basis of religion.

Afterwards, I searched for a nearby school to which I could send my daughter as an alternative and found that not only was there no option locally but, in fact, none in the whole of Wales. I was genuinely shocked to find that this legal imposition meant that there was no school in the country where my daughter could partake as an equal in school activities. In speaking to a number of other parents in the school, I found sufficient support among the religious and non-religious to put forward this petition.

The petitioner does not seek a petition to end religious practice in schools but to ask the Education Minister to ensure a viable, non-discriminatory education is accessible for children of no organised religion.

Petition raised by: Richard Martin

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 July 2015

Number of signatures: 37 Online signatures