

PE1487/FF

St Andrew's and St Bride's High School Parent Council Email of 6 November 2013

Dear Sirs,

I write to you in response to the [SPTC letter dated October 11, 2013](#) in regard to the petition at the Scottish parliament [PE01487: Religious observance in schools](#).

I write to advise that that the Parent Council of St Andrews & St Brides, East Kilbride **do not** support your position. Moreover I would be certain that all Catholic school parent councils will be advising you similarly.

The SPTC are not a representative body of parent councils nor should your views be taken as such. The Parent council from our school disassociate themselves entirely from the views expressed in your letter.

There was no involvement from our Parent Council with this body in relation to this matter and as far as I am aware you have never canvassed the opinions of our parent council. Your views are simply your own and should not be confused with those of the vast number of Parent Councils throughout Scotland.

The simple position is that our Parent Council, representatives of parents in a Catholic school, wish the status quo to prevail. We reject the petition entirely. Catholic schools and religious observance in schools are part of the traditions of this country and should not be brushed aside on a whim or as a result of some fashionable position.

The safeguards in place for parents and children who wish to opt out are well established and adequate. There is therefore no need to change the present position.

We are concerned that your letter might give the impression that all Parent Councils have been involved in reaching the conclusions contained therein. They have not. Our council and I am sure the vast majority of other school councils if they were made aware of the situation would reject the petition and also the views in your letter.

It would therefore be appropriate for the SPTC to clarify that they do not speak for anyone other than themselves in this regard in order that there is no confusion. I would be obliged if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter. I am also attempting to submit this to the Scottish Government department involved in the Petition.

Yours faithfully

James Toner
Chair St Andrew's and St Bride's Parent Council

Reply to my mail from SPTC-

Hello Jim and thanks for your email

SPTC believes parents should have a key role in defining what religious observance looks like in their school. At no time did we call for the removal of religious observance. We recognise that parents who chose Roman Catholic schools do so for faith or values reasons: we respect these reasons absolutely and the choices they make.

The evidence was prepared in discussion with directors of SPTC, many of whom are parents, and represents the organisations' perspective: we do not and have never claimed to represent parents. We do not believe any organisation could do so, given the range of views and perspectives of parents. Directors added their perspective and spoke to parents at their schools. As a very small organisation we do not have the resources to consult every parent body in Scotland every time we are asked to submit evidence or respond to consultations. In much the same way as individual Parent Councils, our office bearers/committee members play an important role in defining what SPTC submits.

We try very hard to listen to parents and their views, though of course there is always a wide range of views and it is impossible to achieve consensus. Our website is set up so that people can leave comments, or they can contact us by phone or email. If you visit the website you will be able to sign up to our e-newsletter and our Parents Voice Survey group. Through that group we run surveys on a regular basis: it's open to any parent and of course it helps shape our policy work.

I hope the above reassures you on this matter.

Thanks again for your email

Best wishes

Eileen