

PE1487/T

Scottish Parent Teacher Council Letter of 11 October 2013

Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1487 on religious observance in schools

Scottish Parent Teacher Council has reviewed and discussed this petition and, predictably, received competing and conflicting opinions. The issue of religious observance has been one which comes to the fore periodically at a policy level but which rarely comes to us through parents.

Overall, the concept of religious observance has been watered down in an attempt to fit it to Scotland as it is today, a multi-faith and no-faith society that has moved a long way since 1980. Generally, we feel the time has come to remove the compulsory requirement on schools for religious observance and replace it by a more secular duty for the development of the whole person, as recognised in the curriculum.

Ultimately, we think the nature, organisation, venue and frequency of school-based religious gatherings should be determined locally, with the agreement of the school community. In some areas this might mean religious observance, with a faith or belief element. In others, the focus might be on more secular "spiritual" development.

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