

Friday 8 November 2019

**Teach,
not preach.**
Secular Education Network (NZ)

Bible in schools on the line as High Court hearing confirmed

The Auckland High Court has confirmed this week that it will hear the case against school-based religious instruction in October next year. The Secular Education Network is appealing to the High Court for a ruling that these classes are discriminatory and contrary to the Bill of Rights Act, and that school time should be reserved for professionally taught education.

Spokesperson Mark Honeychurch says that despite schools being secular by law, Church groups providing religious instruction do so in class time by having the Board of Trustees 'close' the school.

"Our primary schools are not the place for religious instruction, but we've always had this loophole in the law that enables Church members to come in and talk to our children about Christianity; about God, Jesus, Heaven and Hell. While we are not opposed to neutral education about religions and non-religious views, we, along with many New Zealanders, believe that schools are for teaching, not preaching," he says.

Mark Honeychurch says that religious instruction can take up nearly a full week of classroom time over a year, and that many parents are unaware that the classes are happening at their school.

The organisation has today launched its new Teach not Preach website to support parents as they seek information.

"It's quite outrageous to think that any student who does not want to take part usually has to opt out and leave their own classroom. In today's multicultural New Zealand, where children come from many diverse backgrounds, we think this is totally unacceptable."

The Secular Education Network's High Court date has been set for two weeks starting 12th October 2020.

Mark Honeychurch says that his organisation is happy to finally be going to the High Court to have this law change recommended.

"Following our case, which is against the Attorney General, we will be requesting that the Education Act is updated, and single faith religious instruction removed from our state schools."

The Secular Education Network's case is funded by donations from the public, and from the New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists.

Families wanting information or support to approach their school about removing religious instruction can find resources at www.TeachNotPreach.org.nz or on the [TeachNotPreach NZ](#) Facebook page.

ENDS

For more information, please contact Mark Honeychurch: 021 885 216