

CHILDREN OF 8 ARE 'RACIST' IF THEY MISS ISLAM TRIP

Children Of 8 Are 'Racist' If They Miss Islam Trip: School's Threatening Letter To Parents Is Met With Outrage.

Headmistress Lynn Small wrote to parents about multicultural school trip. Children will attend 'Explore Islam' workshop at Staffordshire University. 'Racial Discrimination' would appear on permanent record if they didn't go. Parents at Littleton Green Community School in Huntington complained. Staffordshire



Littleton Green Community School
Colliers Way,
Huntington,
South Staffordshire,
WS12 4UD
Email: office@littleongreenstaffs.sch.uk
Email: headteacher@littleongreenstaffs.sch.uk



Wednesday 20th November 2013

Dear Parent/Carer,

As part of the National Religious Education Curriculum together with the multicultural community in which we live, it is a statutory requirement for Primary School aged children to experience and learn about different cultures.

The workshop is at Staffordshire University and will give your child the opportunity to explore other religions. Children will be looking at religious artefacts, similar to those that would be on display in a museum. They will not be partaking in any religious practices.

Refusal to allow your child to attend this trip will result in a Racial Discrimination note being attached to your child's education record, which will remain on this file throughout their school career.

As such our expectations are that all children in years 4 to 6 attend school on Wednesday 27th November to take part in this trip.

All absences on this day will be investigated for their credibility and will only be sanctioned with a GP sick note.

If you would like to discuss this further please contact our R.E Coordinator, Mrs Edmonds.

Yours Sincerely

Handwritten signature of Lynn Small, Head Teacher.
Mrs L Small
Head Teacher

© newsteam

County Council stepped in and head had to apologize. Parents were ordered to send their children to a workshop on Islam or have them labelled as racist for the rest of their school career.

They were sent a letter warning that the primary school pupils would have a 'racial discrimination note' put on their records if they did not go.

Families were told to pay £5 per child for the Explore Islam trip next Wednesday to Staffordshire University, which would involve Year 4 and Year 6 children being shown Islamic artefacts.

Mothers and fathers were warned: 'Refusal to allow your child to attend will result in a Racial Discrimination note being attached to your child's education record, which will remain on this file throughout their school career. 'All absences on this day will be investigated for their credibility and will only be sanctioned with a GP sick note.'

Yesterday parents at Littleton Green Community School in Huntington, Staffordshire, said the threat to the pupils aged between eight and 11 was 'ludicrous'. Gillian Claridge, 55, said: 'How dare they threaten to brand the children racist at such a young age? It's going to make them feel like little criminals.

'The very nature of religion is all about choice. On this occasion they were not being given any choice at all. It was a draconian move and it's left a lot of parents fuming.'

Stacy Waldron, 26, whose eight-year-old daughter is a pupil, said: 'I feel my child will be [seen as] racist if I don't allow her to go. This is my choice, not hers, and she shouldn't have to pay for it.'

South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson described the threat as 'bonkers' and 'a very heavy-handed approach'.

He added: 'The idea of attaching a "racial discrimination note" to children's education records saying it will remain on their file for the duration for their school career seems unfair, particularly when it is not the child's decision whether or not he or she attends.'

According to the letter sent last Wednesday, the visit is part of the National Curriculum for religious education and also reflects 'the multi-cultural community in which we live'.

It went on: 'It is a statutory requirement for primary school children to experience and learn about different cultures.

'The workshop will give your child the opportunity to explore other religions.

'Children will be looking at religious artefacts similar to those that would be on display in a museum. They will not be partaking in any religious practices.

'If you would like to discuss this further, please contact our RE co-ordinator, Mrs Edmonds.'

However, the school backtracked just one day later after council officers intervened.

A revised letter sent out on Thursday apologised for 'inaccuracies' and told parents: 'On reflection, disregard a section from the earlier letter.'



Headmistress Lynn Small said: 'We are a mainly Christian school, but we have to cover at least one other religion as part of the National Curriculum. This visit is part of that.

'They would not be taking part in any religious practices. We have had similar workshops on a variety of religions in the past, including one on Islam, with no problems at all and the children have absolutely loved it.

'We have pupils and teachers who belong to the Islam faith and it is right for the children to understand and appreciate their faith as well as their own.'

A spokesman for Staffordshire County Council said it was important for children to learn about different cultures but that parents had the right to withdraw their children if they wished.

'Clearly it is not appropriate for comments about racial discrimination to be made in these circumstances,' he added.

An Ofsted report this year concluded that the school, which has 341 pupils, 'required improvement'.