

Nasionale Nuusbrieff 19/2017 National Newsletter

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GODSDIENS IN SKOLE: Wat is die posisie van die SAOU?

RELIGION IN SCHOOLS What is the SAOU's position?

V: *Nou dat die SAOU onttrek het as 'n vriend van die hof in die saak van die OGOD, waar staan die SAOU oor godsdienstebeoefening in skole?*

A: (a) Die SAOU se bestuurstrukture tree in die belang van al sy lede in hulle verskeidenheid van gelowe op. Godsdienstebeoefening is 'n hoogs emosionele saak wat wêreldwyd tot erge konflik gelei het – en dit is steeds die situasie in die Midde Ooste. Suid-Afrika is in die hoogs voordelige posisie dat ons nog nooit hier erge vorme van godsdienste-onverdraagsaamheid beleef het nie.

(b) Die onderwyssektor het 'n uiters belangrike rol om deur godsdiensteonderwys en -beoefening kennis oor en begrip vir die verskillende godsdienste te bevorder.

(c) Die SAOU bly sterk ten gunste daarvan dat elke skool se beheerliggaam die grootste mate van vryheid moet behou om self te besluit oor die godsdienste-karakter van die skool binne die raamwerk van die Nasionale Beleid oor Godsdienste en Onderwys van 2003 en Artikel 15 (2) van die Grondwet.

(d) Die huidige beleid het die afgelope 14 jaar die nodige ruimte in balans geskep vir skole om hulle eie besluite oor godsdienstebeoefening te neem.

(e) Die SAOU **wil nie, kan nie en sal nie** voorskriftelik wees teenoor skole oor hulle selfstandige besluite oor godsdienstebeoefening nie, maar is wel beskikbaar om te help en te adviseer waar skole dit vra.

Q: *Now that the SAOU has withdrawn as friend of the court in the OGOD case, where does the SAOU stand regarding religious observance in schools?*

A:(a) The SAOU management structures work in the best interests of all its members and the variety of religions that they represent. Religious observance is a highly emotional matter that has led to serious conflict worldwide. This continues to be the reality in the Middle East. South Africa is in the highly advantageous position of never having experienced extreme forms of religious intolerance.

(b) The education sector has an extremely vital role to play in the promotion of the knowledge and understanding of the various religions through religion education and religious observance.

(c) The SAOU remains strongly in favour of the governing body of every school retaining the greatest measure of freedom to decide upon the religious character of the school, within the framework of the National Policy for Religion and Education of 2003 and Section 15(2) of the Constitution.

(d) For the past 14 years, the current policy has provided the balanced space required for schools to make their own decisions regarding religious observance.

(e) The SAOU **does not wish to, cannot and will not** prescribe to schools in regard to them independent decisions about religious observances but it is certainly available to help and advice in that regard, should schools seek such help and advice.

<p>V: <i>As die SAOU steeds sterk volhard met sy standpunt van 14 jaar, hoekom het hy hom hoegenaamd bemoei met die hofszaak?</i></p> <p>A: Die SAOU het geoordeel dat hy as 'n professionele liggaam wat deur sy lede 'n magdom praktiese kennis het van waarde kon wees as die SAOU as 'n vriend van die hof toetree. Daar is op geen stadium met OGOD wat in wese 'n ateïstiese benadering het, gekommunikeer of hulle saak gesteun nie. Die SAOU se vrees was juis dat hulle aksie in die hof kan lei tot 'n strengere omskrywing van reëls (onderskeibaar van beleid) wat dan die vryheid van skole kan inperk om self te besluit oor 'n godsdienstbeoefeningbeleid.</p> <p>Die SAOU wou uitspel hoe die huidige beleid versoenbaar is met die Grondwet, dit goed werk, vryhede toelaat, maar belangrik, ook diskriminasie beperk.</p> <p>Die SAOU het onttrek as vriend van die hof omdat 'n persepsie ontstaan het dat die SAOU die saak van OGOD ondersteun. Niks is verder van die waarheid nie.</p>	<p>Q: <i>If the SAOU strongly maintains the position it has taken over the past 14 years, why did it concern itself with the court case?</i></p> <p>A: The SAOU was of the considered opinion that as a professional body it has a vast practical knowledge through its members and could thus, have added value if it acted as friend of the court. At no stage did the SAOU have any communication with OGOD – which in reality has an atheistic approach - or support their case. The SAOU's fear was that their action in the court could lead to a more stringent formulation of rules (distinguishable from policy) resulting in a restriction in the policy on the freedom of schools to make their own decisions regarding religious observance.</p> <p>The SAOU wanted to spell out the fact that the current policy is completely in line with the Constitution, that it works well, allows freedoms and, more importantly, limits discrimination.</p> <p>The SAOU withdrew as friend of the court because of a perception that was created that that the SAOU supported the case of OGOD. Nothing could be further from the truth.</p>
<p>V: <i>Wat beteken die SAOU se verklaring in opvolgbetoogshoofde dat openbare skole daarteen moet waak om hulle te "belyn" met 'n bepaalde godsdienst?</i></p> <p>A: Die bepaalde punt is in die hofstukke deur die regsvertegenwoordigers ongelukkig op onsensitiewe wyse verwoord. Na raadpleging wil ons stel dat net soos die staat, kan geen openbare instelling soos 'n openbare skool homself nie uitsluitlik definieer as 'n Christelike, Moslem, Joodse of 'n skool van welke godsdienst ook al nie. Dit sou strydig wees met Artikel 15 (2) van die Grondwet waar dit uitdruklik gestel word dat godsdienstbeoefening toegelaat word mits dit volgens die reëls van die openbare gesag (na ons oordeel die Nasionale Beleid) en die reëls van die beheerliggaam op billike basis plaasvind en dat bywoning vry en vrywillig is.</p> <p>Maar die Grondwet laat die ruimte, en ook die Nasionale Beleid vir Godsdienst en Onderwys van 2003, dat skoolbesture en beheerliggame die vryheid het om geleenthede te skep vir godsdienstbeoefening. As die meerderheid van</p>	<p>Q: <i>What does the SAOU mean in follow-up submissions when it says that public schools must guard against aligning themselves with specific religions?</i></p> <p>A: This particular point in the court documents was unfortunately, not sensitively formulated by the legal representatives. After taking advice, we wish to state that, like the state, no public institution like a public school, can define itself as a specifically Christian, Jewish, Muslim, (or any other religion), school. That would be in conflict with Section 15(2) of the Constitution which specifically states that religious observances are permissible in terms of the rules of the public authority (which in our judgement is the National Policy) and the rules of the governing body, applied in a reasonable manner, and that participation is free and voluntary.</p> <p>Notably, the Constitution, as well as the National Policy for Religion and Education allows school managements and governing</p>

<p>leerlinge, onderwysers en ouers van 'n bepaalde skool Christene is, sal die beoefening daarvan die skool sigbaar natuurlik 'n bepaalde karakter gee. Maar daar moet steeds voorsiening gemaak word dat billike geleenthede geskep word vir ander leerlinge van welke godsdienste ook al om hulle godsdienste op dieselfde wyse te kan beoefen.</p>	<p>bodies the freedom to create the opportunity for religious observance. If most learners, educators and parents of a school are Christian, its religious observances will naturally be reflected in its character. However, provision still be made for other learners to practice their religious observances, of whatever nature, in the same manner.</p>
<p>V: <i>Beteken dit dat skole bv steeds met skriflesing en gebed kan open en dat 'n predikant 'n boodskap kan lewer?</i></p> <p>A: Ja, daar is geen beletsel daarop nie solank dieselfde geleenthede vir leerlinge van ander godsdienste geskep word en hulle nie gedwing word om Christelike byeenkomste by te woon nie.</p>	<p>Q: <i>Does this mean that schools can still open with, for example, scripture reading and prayer and that a minister/priest/pastor can deliver a message?</i></p> <p>A: Yes. There is no restriction on this so long as the same opportunities are created for other religions and that they are not forced to attend Christian gatherings.</p>
<p>V: <i>Die betoogshoofde van die SAOU bevat die omstredende stelling dat dit in die beste belang van leerlinge is dat 'n skool nie uitsluitlik belyd moet word met 'n bepaalde godsdienst nie. Bly die SAOU daarby?</i></p> <p>A: Die SAOU gee toe dat ook hierdie punt meer sensitief geformuleer kon word. Die standpunt wat die SAOU stel is dat, soos hierbo genoem, dat 'n skool nie homself uitsluitlik byvoorbeeld as 'n Christelike skool kan verklaar nie. Dit staan elke leerling volkome vry om sy bepaalde voorkeur t.o.v godsdienste te beoefen sonder diskriminasie. Sou die meerderheid van leerlinge in 'n bepaalde skool Christene wees, moet ander leerlinge nie behandel word as uitgeworpenes nie. Dit is voorwaar in die beste belang van leerlinge dat behoorlike godsdiensterwys as integrale deel van Lewensorientering by skole plaasvind sodat hulle van jongs af begrip en verdraagsaamheid teenoor ander godsdienste kan aanleer.</p>	<p>Q: <i>The SAOU's submissions contain the controversial statement that it is in the best interests of the learners, for a school to not align itself exclusively with a specific religion. Does the SAOU stand by this statement?</i></p> <p>A: The SAOU admits that this point could also have been stated more sensitively. The SAOU's position is that a school cannot declare itself to be exclusively a Christian school, for example. Every learner has the full right to engage in the religious observances of his or her choice without discrimination. If most learners in a school are Christian, other learners must not be made to feel alienated in any way whatever. It is undoubtedly in the best interests of the learners that proper religious education forms an integral part of Life Orientation teaching in schools so that tolerance regarding other religions is inculcated from an early age.</p>
<p>V: <i>Die SAOU is self nie skaam om sy vergaderings met skriflesing en gebed te open en 'n Christelike karakter te vertoon nie. Dit blyk strydig te wees met die beleid wat die SAOU in skole voorstaan.</i></p> <p>A: Die SAOU is nie 'n staatsinstelling nie. Dit is 'n privaat professionele liggaam vir beroepslui. Die voorskrif van die Grondwet (Art 15(2)) en die staat se Beleid is dus nie netso van toepassing nie. Die SAOU het verskeie lede van ander gelowe en ons verteenwoordig almal op gelyke</p>	<p>Q: <i>The SAOU opens its meetings with scripture reading and prayer and reflects a Christian character. This appears to contradict what the SAOU proposes for schools.</i></p> <p>A: The SAOU is not a state institution. It is a private, professional body for professional people. The prescripts in the Constitution (Sec 15(2)) and the state's Policy do not, therefore, automatically apply to the SAOU. The SAOU has many members from various</p>

basis sonder diskriminasie. Godsdiensvryheid en vryheid van geloof is gewaarborg in die Grondwet. Die SAOU is daartoe verbind in letter en gees. Sou daar 'n versoek wees van enige lid van 'n ander geloof by 'n SAOU-geleentheid om sy/haar geloof op dieselfde wyse uit te oefen, sal dit gerespekteer word.

religions and it represents everyone on equal basis without discrimination. Religious freedom and freedom of belief is enshrined in the Constitution. The SAOU is bound to both the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Should a request be made by any member from another religion to have his/her belief observed in the same manner, the request will be respected.

V: *Wat gaan vorentoe gebeur en wat moet SAOU-lede doen?*

A: Vir die huidige hoef lede niks te doen nie. Daar moet net normaalweg voortgegaan word om godsdiensoefening binne die beleid van die skool, die raamwerk van die Nasionale Beleid en voorskrifte van die Grondwet toe te pas. Die SAOU sal die verloop van die hofsak gedurende Mei monitor en na behoefte reageer met inagneming van sy lede se belange. Lede sal voortdurend op hoogte gehou word.

Q: *What will happen in the future and what should SAOU members do?*

A: For the present, members need do nothing. Simply continue to implement religious observances according to the school's policy, and within the framework of the National Policy and the prescriptions of the Constitution. The SAOU will monitor the court case during May and react as required and in the interests of its members. Members will be kept informed throughout.

LEKKERKUIER IN DIE WINTER BY TO STRAND

2017 JUNIE & JULIE VAKANSIE PROMOSIE

BESPAAR TOT 35% OP KAMPERING EN TOT 25% OP SELFSORG CHALETS AS JY VIR 10 DAE OF MEER TYDENS DIE 2017 JUNIE/JULIE SKOOLVAKANSIE BESPREEK

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