

# Russia's Arkhangelsk Region Bans Halloween at Schools

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The Education Ministry of northwestern Russia's Arkhangelsk region has banned Halloween celebrations at local schools, citing the holiday's harmful effect on children, the FlashNord news agency reported Monday.

The ministry's statement said that Halloween is "incoherent to basic traditional values and causes a negative influence on fragile minds."

The ban was instituted a week after the Russian Orthodox Church in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region called on local authorities to ban Halloween on a similar basis, the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper reported. Priest Maxim Zolotukhin told local STS-Prima television station that children may get depressed after Halloween because they do not understand the difference between make-believe and reality, and so evil will enter their souls.

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In February this year, a school director in Siberia's Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous district was fired for organizing a Halloween party at his school last year, the Snob magazine reported at the time.

And in 2013, the Omsk regional Education Minister Sergei Alexeyev issued a letter against Halloween celebrations in schools. He explained that Halloween includes "death cult propaganda" that can damage student's psychiatric and "spiritual-ethical health," local news website NGS Omsk reported.

In 2014, Public Chamber member Georgy Fyodorov wrote a letter to Russia's Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky asking him to officially ban Halloween. Fyodorov saw the celebration as an "ideological security threat" to Russia and proposed the promotion of traditional Russian festivals instead, the Izvestia newspaper reported.

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