The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow School Drops 'Religious Propaganda' Classes Under Pressure from Parents

December 27, 2016



Head of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill **Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti**

A Moscow school has removed compulsory classes on Russian "spiritual and moral culture" after parents complained to the Prosecutor General's office that the lessons amounted to "religious propaganda."

Moscow school No. 2065 will replace the classes with lessons on "societal ethics," the Takie Dela news outlet reported Tuesday.

“I got a call from the school council,” Irina Gerasimova, one of the activist parents, told Takie Dela. “They offered us [the parents] a chance to take a look at a textbook they would use in the ‘societal ethics’ classes. We reviewed it and had no objections.”

Earlier this month, Gerasimova told the media that the textbook on “spiritual and moral

culture” was unduly biased toward the Russian Orthodox Church and was inappropriate for a class with Jewish, Catholic, Adventist, Muslim, and atheist children. She said the book “constantly referred to evil spirits, holy water, guardian angels, and miracles related to [Orthodox] icons.”

“Even Orthodox parents are opposed to having their religion imposed on others,” Gerasimova told the Kommersant newspaper in early December. "We were told in September that there was no way of opting out of the class." She and other parents then took action and filed a complaint with the Prosecutor General’s office.

Although school No. 2065 decided to drop the controversial course, it is still being taught to students aged 12 to 15 in 62 regions across Russia, according to Kommersant.

Read more on the bitter stand-off between protesters and the Russian Orthodox Church tearing apart a Moscow neighborhood.

Russian officials are currently considering introducing classes dedicated to Orthodox Christian culture into state schools, Russian media reported last month.

Children in grades one to 11 would be expected to cover such subjects as "moral culture in the Orthodox family” and “the Christian warrior,” with 14-year-olds expected to describe different kinds of church bells, name the seven Ecumenical councils, and use the Orthodox calendar.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/12/27/moscow-school-drops-religious-propaganda-classes-under-pressure-from-parents-a56652