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Siberian Schools Plan Santa Ban to Fight Corruption

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Zykov Kirill / Moskva News Agency

The Russian version of Santa Claus is reportedly being banned from visiting kindergartens in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk this holiday season.

Ded Moroz, or Father Frost, is a fixture of New Year's Eve celebrations in Russia, together with his granddaughter Snegurochka, a fairy tale snow maiden.

The parents of kindergarteners in Novosibirsk are now deciding whether or not to hold New Year's Eve celebrations without Ded Moroz, the RBC business portal cited a local source as saying Tuesday.

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According to parents, one of the reasons behind the proposed ban is to keep kindergarten

officials from taking bribes when fundraising to pay for Ded Moroz actors, according to RBC. Bans have also been reported in Kirov, Kazan and Samara in similar anti-corruption drives.

A City Hall official confirmed to RBC that there is a citywide ban on paying for the services of actors in Ded Moroz costumes, but said the ban came in part based on recommendations from child psychologists.

“Experts say that small children don’t understand Ded Moroz,” the official said.

“That’s why younger classes will only be able to invite Snegurochka, though psychologists advise against that too."

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