

Aranmore school getting its own Hindu priestly advice to justify Nose Stud fiasco

@arancc #hinduism #nosepiercing @hinducouncilau

A young Hindu year 10 student has been asked not to come to school wearing a Hindu religious symbol, a nose stud, as it is against school policy.

Parents of the girl explained to the school that the nose stud is not a fashion item but a spiritual icon. Hindu Council of Australia has also approached the school and explained that the nose stud is a religious item.

Despite being advised by the Hindu Council of Australia and by the parents, the school is now, it seems, shopping around for a Hindu priest to advise them on the nose stud and its relevance to Hindu/Indian culture.

This is strange.

Hindu Council of Australia is a federation of Hindu temples and Hindu organizations all over Australia. It has members in every state of Australia. Hindu Council of Australia is recognized by state and federal governments to advise it on Hindu issues very much like the government depends on Churches to advise it on Christian religious issues. Hindu Council also advises Australian governments on Hindu marriage rituals etc.

For a christian school to ignore the advise of a Hindu parent and then the advice of peak Hindu body like Hindu Council of Australia and to embark on its own journey to find a priest to interpret Hinduism for the school when the school stand is well known, is like shopping around for a favorable opinion. It is not appropriate for a religion to start interpreting the doctrine, ritual or practices of another religion. It will not help religious harmony and certainly does not make multicultural Australia very proud.

How would Christians feel if a Hindu school in order to justify its interpretation of Christianity, which is at odd with the Christian Churches, shops around for a Christian priest or a scholar to justify what it wants Christianity to be. Such a thing would not be acceptable and what the school is doing should not be either. We can not accept Aranmore school to determine what is and what is not essential to Hinduism. Off course, Hindus will never try to tell Christians as to what is or is not a Christian practice. It will accept whatever Christians say as final in this matter.

The school has not been open about its policy, if there is one, on allowing religious symbols worn by its non-christian students. The school has not made its stand clear as to what will it do if its shopping exercise does not produce the results it wants. Will it accept the student back or will it still continue to throw the extensive and unpublished rule book at its non-christian students.

There is a need for a uniform policy on how faith based schools would treat students of other faiths in their school. For the sake of a cohesive strong Australia, that all of us want, we should allow students of different cultures, beliefs, backgrounds and faiths to mingle together in schools. We

should not create island of faith based schools where students of one particular faiths grow insulated from beliefs that belong to "other". All faith schools should have an open and not restrictive policy that raises the bar for people of "other" faith to study with them.

Hindu Council of Australia calls upon Catholic Archbishops and Catholic education organizations to (1) not to interpret what is essential to other faiths and (2) have school policies that pass the test of encouraging a mix of faiths in their schools rather than uniformity.

Off course, Hindu Council accepts that all faith based schools, including Christian schools, should be free to teach their own interpretation of their faith.

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