

RISC BACKS NEW CAMPAIGN TO END RELIGIOUS SELECTION BY STATE SCHOOLS

“Parents all over the country share the concerns of [Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign \(RISC\)](#) supporters about faith-based admissions to state schools.” That was the message from Jeremy Rodell, Coordinator of RISC, talking about their support for the new national [Fair Admissions Campaign](#), which wants all state-funded schools to be open to all children, regardless of their parents’ religion.

Jeremy will be among the speakers at its launch on 6th June, along with Rabbi Jonathan Romain, head of the Accord Coalition, Professor Ted Cattle, founder of the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) and author of [‘The Cattle Report’](#), and Pavan Dhaliwal from the British Humanist Association.

Like RISC, the Fair Admissions Campaign does not take a position on the state funding of faith schools but focuses solely on the unfairness of religious selection in admissions, and its consequences in terms of religious, ethnic, social and economic segregation.

Other founding supporters include [British Muslims for Secular Democracy](#), the [Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education](#), the Christian think tank [Ekklesia](#), the [Hindu Academy](#), the [Liberal Democrat Education Association](#), [Liberal Youth](#), the [Socialist Educational Association](#), and the [General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches](#).

Speaking in advance of the launch, Jeremy said:

“Over a third of the primary school places in the borough are at schools applying some level of faith-based selection. That’s not only unfair, but it’s a major constraint on the choices available to many local parents, especially when there is so much competition for places at good schools. All the running costs of these schools are paid for by the state. It would be illegal and unacceptable for a state-funded hospital to give priority to Catholic or Anglican patients, so why do we accept it in the crucial area of education?”

“To their credit, some faith schools are already equally open to all, including the new St. Mary’s Church of England primary in Hampton. It’s a myth that it can’t be done, or that non-religious families don’t want the opportunity for their children to apply.”

“As we’ve seen in the recent case of discrimination against non-Catholic siblings at Sacred Heart in Teddington - as well as the discriminatory policies of the new St. Richard Reynolds Catholic schools at Clifden Road in Twickenham - faith-based discrimination is a choice made by school governing bodies, under the direction of their Diocese. It takes advantage of a special exemption in equalities legislation. RISC thinks it is simply wrong to deny local children access to state-funded schools on the basis of their parents’ religion or beliefs. We hope the Fair Admissions Campaign will help put that right, and are proud to support it.”

Notes for editors

- The Fair Admissions Campaign launch will take place in the Craven Room of the Foreign Press Association, 25 Northumberland Ave, London WC2N 5AP, at 11:00-12:00 on 6 June 2013.
- Link to Fair Admissions Campaign press release: <http://fairadmissions.org.uk/fair-admissions-campaign-aims-to-end-religious-selection-by-state-schools/>