



Wednesday, 21 May 2008

Information Release

## **EDUCATION TO ADDRESS HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING**

### **SECOND STATEMENT BY BRISTOL MULTI-FAITH FORUM**

We are concerned about the ongoing situation at the schools affected by the issue of the methods used to tackle homophobic bullying.

#### **We are clear, that**

- this is not an issue of the views on homosexuality of the Muslim community, but many parents involved do come from a range of faiths
- this is an issue about the involvement of parents and teachers in the co-education of children
- the perception of parents is that this scheme involves education in the areas of sex and sexuality; while teachers view it within the context of an inclusivity curriculum. There is an unresolved clash of perceptions
- communication between some parents and the staff and governors on this issue has broken down
- the situation is having an immensely detrimental effect on relationship between the parents and the schools and as a consequence, has a ripple effect on community cohesion.

#### **In seeking a way forward**

1. we believe that a process of independent conflict resolution needs to be put in place immediately and this should be done with great sensitivity and respect for all parties
2. we believe that there is a profound need to rebuild trust and respect between parents and staff
3. we believe that it is both appropriate and necessary that there should be a breathing space for all, for both professionals and parents to reflect

upon the experience of delivering the "No Outsiders" pilot project in these particular cultural contexts; and that during such a period, all the materials related to the pilot project should not be returned to the schools

4. we believe that the local issues should now be dealt separately with in each school, with the Governing body taking the lead in each case in the consultation process with parents
5. it would be beneficial in both the two local situations that a collaborative approach is taken with parents to look at alternative ways of tackling homophobic bullying so that community cohesion is enhanced
6. we are committed to seeking and supporting a just and clear outcome to resolve this situation and to help ensure that such situations are not repeated across the City.

Ends

Submitted by  
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Chair