

From: John Hamill [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Atheist Ireland Fol
Date: 5 February 2018 at 18:26
To: Ciara O'Donnell [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] Jane Donnelly [REDACTED] G McHugh [REDACTED] Aine Duffy [REDACTED] Siobhán Kerr [REDACTED] Martin Barrett [REDACTED]
Bcc: Michael Nugent [REDACTED]



Dear Ms O'Donnell,

Chaplains appointed by the Catholic Church and Catholic Diocesan Advisors are both representatives of the Catholic Church (this would be the case even using your own very limited definition). Any in-service days for religion teachers that were attended by both representatives of the Catholic Church and representatives of the PDST should have been included in the response to my Fol request, but they were not. My request did not mention any exceptions based on what you do, and do not, consider to be the role of a guest speaker. Consequently, your response was inaccurate and incomplete.

Similarly, if the PDST received an invitation from a Diocesan Body (as you have outlined below) then this would also have been consistent with the first point within my Fol Request. My request did not mention any exceptions based on what the opinions of such invitations within the DoES might be. Consequently, your response was inaccurate and incomplete in this respect also.

I would be grateful if you could now attend to my appeal in a timely manner, which is an appeal relating to the full scope of my original request, including all seven points. Given that you unilaterally decided to withhold details that should have been included in the response, without even telling me the reasons that you had contrived to exclude these details, I am now concerned that there may be other information that should have been provided but has been concealed based on other invented criteria.

Best Regards,
John.

On 5 Feb 2018, at 17:51, Ciara O'Donnell [REDACTED] > wrote:

Dear Mr Hamill

In an effort to clarify our response below please note:

PDST provides CPD services to primary and post primary teachers, across the full range of subjects taught in schools, including RE. The content of CPD for RE deals with the approved curriculum, which *offers opportunities to develop an informed and critical understanding of the Christian tradition and seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no, religious traditions*. PDST does not enter into any agreements or policy decisions with representatives of the Catholic Church (or any other religious body) regarding the roll-out of CPD services to RE teachers. Nor do PDST attend CPD events with representatives from the Catholic church. **Please note** that our interpretation of a representative of the Catholic church is someone who is there to promote and uphold the views of the Catholic church as opposed to an RE teacher who happens to be a Catholic and may well be in attendance. The views/interests of the Catholic Church do not in any way influence how PDST's CPD services are delivered, and we do not host jointly arranged events. Our CPD is for teachers of RE at second level and is based on the curriculum.

From time to time we are asked by teacher professional network (TPN) or Diocese bodies to present at their events **according to our curricular remit**. We do this for ALL post primary curricular subjects if asked as the DES encourages us to accept invitations from these partners, again in relation to our curricular remit. PDST may be invited to speak at such events as are the JCT support service (who also appear on the

leaflet you sent to us as presenters on November 4th. Our invitation is purely to speak about a curricular topic, and there is **no agreement of an overall agenda with the organising body**, simply an agreement regarding our input only as **guest curriculum speakers**. PDST also have no influence over the presence of third parties, such as Veritas, at such events as they are not ours. PDST has accepted invitations to speak at events from a range of religious traditions, in keeping with the curriculum content as outlined above.

Regarding the advertisement of PDST workshops and/or seminars, the event listed at <http://education.dublindiocese.ie/2015/11/19/2015-2016-opportunities-for-in-servicecpd/> is not indicative of an agreement, formal or otherwise, between the PDST and the Catholic Church. PDST events are advertised via our website and through the Education Centre network. If links and details are subsequently shared by teacher associations or other parties through other forums, it is not as a result of an agreement with PDST.

Regarding the information at <http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/2016/03/post-primary-religious-education-in-service/> this is a PDST event and was **not co-hosted or organised by the Catholic Church**. It looked at the completion of Junior Certificate journal work, and approaches to Junior Cert exam questions, and different teaching methodologies at RE senior cycle level. Again this was curriculum based as is our remit and **none of this content** is set or influenced by the Catholic Church.

As such, regarding your FOI request, PDST sees a distinction between attending an event as a “guest speaker” (on curriculum which is our remit) and being party to the organisation and agenda of an event, the purpose of which is to promote and uphold a particular point of view. We have no role in the latter. There is a further distinction to be made regarding the fact that although members of the Catholic Church (teachers) attend PDST CPD events, they do not do so as co-hosts, joint organisers, or in any way which influences the content or tone of an event.

I would perhaps ask you to clarify what you mean by representatives of the Catholic church? In reading your request we understood it to be those holding formal roles in promoting and upholding the views of the Catholic church and no such people have any involvement in our CPD work, in an attendance or organisational capacity.

If what you mean by representatives of the Catholic Church are teachers of RE who are Catholic, then it is inevitable given the teaching population in Ireland that such teachers attend PDST CPD events to receive curricular training and I am very happy to supply you with a full list of these events.

PDST is happy to provide you with whatever information we have and have been prompt in our responses to date

Regards

Ciara

<image002.png>

From: John Hamill [redacted]
Sent: 01 February 2018 08:53
To: [redacted]
Cc: Jane Donnelly <[redacted]>
Subject: Atheist Ireland FoI

Dear Ms O'Donnell,

I refer to your response to my FoI request, which I received today, dated 30th January 2018. One of the requests that I made was for:

"A list of all in-service days for religion teachers since January 2016, which were attended both by representatives of the Catholic Church and representatives of the PDST ..."

You have responded to this request as follows:

"There have been no jointly arranged in-service days and representatives of the Catholic Church have not attended our in-serivde days in that capacity."

This response is not accurate. At [this link](#), you can find details of an in-service day that was jointly attended by representatives of the Catholic Church and representatives of the PDST in February 2016. There are more such examples that I have documentary evidence of, including events attended by the PDST that were used to sell Veritas and other products (see attached). Since your response to my request is incomplete and inaccurate, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act I would like to formally request that my original request should be reviewed in full by senior members of your organisation. If I do not receive a satisfactory response within three weeks of the date of this communication, then my next recourse will be to the Information Commissioner.

Best Regards,
John.