

**BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**

400 – 3381 Cambie Street  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R3

bchumanist.ca  
info@bchumanist.ca

November 1, 2018

Hon Rob Fleming  
Minister of Education  
[educ.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.minister@gov.bc.ca)



**Re: Operation Christmas Child in BC Schools**

Dear Mr Fleming

Every year we hear from parents that students in BC schools are asked to donate to Operation Christmas Child. As our schools are required to be secular and inclusive, we urge you to direct these schools to stop participating in this program.

Operation Christmas Child is run by Samaritan’s Purse. It describes itself as a “way for Canadians to bless struggling children” and its boxes are explicitly distributed “in the name of Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Rather than simple gifts to some of the world’s poorest children, these boxes are a tool to evangelize a specific worldview. Further, the well-documented intolerant views of Samaritan’s Purse founder Franklin Graham are incompatible with BC school’s commitment to be welcoming and inclusive spaces for students of all sexual orientations, gender identities, religious and nonreligious beliefs and backgrounds.

Section 76 of the BC School Act requires all schools “be conducted on strictly secular and non-sectarian principles” and mandatory district SOGI policies exist to ensure schools are inclusive of LGBTQ+ students. Supporting Operation Christmas Child contravenes the letter and spirit of these requirements.

Last year, Newfoundland and Labrador’s English School District direct all schools to cease participation in Operation Christmas Child and we would support a similar directive in British Columbia. Individual schools may choose from a number of highly rated secular charities that exist to assist children in developing countries, including Plan Canada, Save the Children and Oxfam.

Sincerely

Ian Bushfield  
Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.samaritanspurse.ca/about-operation-christmas-child/>