

**BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**

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November 1, 2018

**Re: Operation Christmas Child**

Dear Ms Pedersen-Skene and Ms Taylor

We've heard from parents at your school that students will be asked to donate to Operation Christmas Child this year. As a public school with requirements to be secular and inclusive, we urge you to consider a secular alternative.

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 your district's "Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Communities" policy calls for efforts to foster respect and inclusion. Supporting Operation Christmas Child contravenes the spirit of these requirements.

We urge your school to reconsider its support of Operation Christmas Child. There are 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

cc Rollie Koop, Superintendent

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