

Issued on behalf of Lydia Playfoot

STATEMENT

Following the Judicial Review by Mr Justice Supperstone on June 22, 2007, brought by Lydia Playfoot (a pupil) against Millais School, West Sussex

OVER a year ago, as a Christian teenage girl, I was concerned at the number of teenagers who were catching sexually transmitted diseases, getting pregnant and/or having abortions.

The Government's Sex Education Programme is simply not working, and as the years pass, the pressure on young people to 'give in' to sex increases – thanks to the media's bombardment of sexual images, the expectations of others, and peer rivalry.

Increasingly, girls in particular are not looked on as human beings with value, and worth who have the right to say no to sex, or to keep sex for a loving, long-term relationship in marriage. It causes me great sadness to think that girls are often looked on as just sexual objects and others expect them to want sex and agree to sex, whatever the level of relationship.

Whilst, as a Christian I do not agree with sex before marriage, I accept that others have a right to do so, providing they are over the legal age limit. However, I also have a right not only to state my Christian views on sex, but also to demonstrate my Christian faith and commitment to God and my future husband not to have sex before marriage through the wearing of a purity ring.

I, along with 11 other Christian girls at Millais School decided that we would make a commitment not to have sex before marriage, and as a sign of that commitment, to wear a simple silver ring from the 'Silver Ring Thing' movement.

The wearing of the ring was to me, a demonstration of my Christian faith and values, which are based on the Bible – which clearly teaches that sex outside of marriage is wrong and therefore not God's best for us.

Despite the fact that Muslims girls at our school wear headscarves, and Sikhs wear Kara bangles, the school refused to allow me to wear this demonstration of my faith.

I believe the decision by the Governors of the School violate my Article 9 rights to Freedom of Religion and my right to express my faith in word or deed, in a democratic, Christian-based country.

I am delighted that Mr Justice Supperstone took a full day to hear all the legal arguments in this case. The case was clearly put by my barrister, Paul Diamond, and I look foreword to the decision of the court in four to six weeks time.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents, family and friends who have stood by me though all of this, and to the many hundreds of people, both locally in Horsham, the UK and internationally who have sent me letters of support and assured me of their prayers.

I would also like to thank the national press and media for the balanced way in which they have covered this story, and have portrayed it for what it is; the loss of the right of Christians to demonstrate their faith in public.

I would like to thank my barrister, Mr Paul Diamond, and Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams of the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship for all their advice, guidance and support through what is a legal and political minefield for a 16-year-old schoolgirl to walk through. I would also like to thank Paul Eddy, of Paul Eddy PR who has guided me through the maze of working with the national press and media.

To everyone I offer my thanks.

Thank you.

Miss Lydia Playfoot

June 22, 2007

INTERVIEW NOTE:

Lydia Playfoot will not be giving any further interviews until the judgement has been handed down. However, Andy Robinson, director of the Silver Ring Thing will be delighted to help journalists. His mobile number is: 0797 400 2071.

Issued by:

Paul Eddy Public Relations Ltd

Kavanagh House, 25 Ridley Road, Bournemouth BH9 1LD

Tel: 01202 522177, 07932 019 430.

Paul Eddy, FRSA
Director
Paul Eddy Public Relations Limited
Kavanagh House
25 Ridley Road
Bournemouth BH9 1LD
T: 01202 522177
E: paul@pepr.co.uk
W: www.pepr.co.uk