Catholic school board cuts crucial LGBT+ lifeline from nearly 200 schools over ‘porno’ lies

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Crucial LGBT+ youth resources have been scrapped from nearly 200 Canadian schools following an article that labelled them “smut” and “porno paraphernalia.”

As of 8 January the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) has removed the Canadian youth support organisation LGBT YouthLine from its list of resources for 198 schools in the greater Toronto area.

YouthLine offers free, confidential and informed peer support through telephone, text, and chat services for LGBT+ youth aged 29 and under. It’s one of the only forms of LGBT+ support available in Ontario – but according to former Canadian politician Joe Volpe, it amounts to nothing more than a “smut site”.

Volpe slammed the vital helpline in an article for the Italian-language newspaper Corriere Canadese, titled: “TCDSB website hosts Pornographic site defended by trustees.”

He also referred to a group of progressive Catholic trustees as “urban social terrorists” for their work to make the board more LGBT+ inclusive.

Shortly afterwards the school board informed LGBT Youthline that they were being dropped from the list of approved student resources due to “inappropriate” content on their site. They included a link to Volpe’s article in the email.

“There is a long history accusing 2SLGBTQ+ people of pedophilia and of ‘corrupting’ children and youth and the article explicitly uses these arguments against us,” LGBT YouthLine said in a statement.

“This rhetoric is harmful, unacceptable, and is overt homophobia and transphobia. Volpe wrote this article to clearly de-legitimise YouthLine’s work, including attacking the ways that we support Indigenous and Black youth.”

The TCDSB also received pushback from numerous Canadian social justice organisations, including Pride Toronto, White Ribbon Canada, PFLAG York Region and Italian-Canadians for Black Lives.

“This shameful action is yet another example of systemic homophobia and transphobia that continues to run deep within the publicly-funded school board,” Pride Toronto tweeted. “These resources are particularly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person supports are limited.”

Others are concerned the removal of the resource could push students to other sites that may promote misinformation.

“That’s why it’s so important to have something like a reliable, consistent lifeline,” said Peter A Newman, a professor with the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, speaking to Global News.

“You know with folks that are running it, who know what they are doing and who are consistently responding to students in an appropriate and consistent way.”

In response to the building criticism the school board members have agreed to meet with representatives LGBT YouthLine, but it’s unclear whether they’ll reach a compromise.
https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/01/13/toronto-catholic-school-district-remove-lgbt-youthline-resources-website-pornographic-smut/