

From: Dr.Brendon Bailes [mailto:bailes@iafrica.com]

Sent: 20 July 2011 12:10 PM

To: bccsa

Subject: FW: Broadcasting Complaints Commission - Carte Blanche 10th July 2011 - Chameleons Montessori School

Attention: Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa

From: Chameleons Montessori School – Cape Town

Contact: Brendon Bailes . PTA Chairman Chameleons Montessori School– 082 8595513 (P.O. Box 2812 Durbanville 7551)

Re: Carte Blanche 10th July 7pm – broadcast on Pesticide story.

To whom it may concern,

A program was aired nationally on Carte Blanche, 10th July 2011 about pesticides and the Chameleons Montessori School in Durbanville, Cape Town.

The Chameleons Montessori School and parent body would like to officially complain about the content presented in the program as follows:

1. Detailed and in depth information regarding the history of the issue, the school's previous and current policies as well as the actions taken by the school and the Department of Health on the matter were conveyed to the producer of this programme (Mr Angus Begg). All the information together with a policy of full transparency was conveyed by the school to the producers of this programme some months ago. Despite this very little (if any) of this information was presented or accurately portrayed in the Carte Blanche program which eventually aired.
2. The school has consulted with at least five different experts in the various fields associated to the issue. This consultation has occurred over a lengthy period, initiated many months prior to Carte Blanche taking an interest in the matter and the producers elected to ignore all this input in favour of sensationalism.
3. The program was biased to the complainants and portrayed, as fact, unfounded accusations and personal opinion about pesticides.
4. The information which the program alleged was provided to the Department of Health was not brought into context as the Department of Health still awaits clinical evidence of any incident of pesticide poisoning as was reported by the complainants Mr Hallum and Dr Mookadam and interviewees Dr Helen Muir and Dr De Vries Basson on the programme. To date, no such evidence has been provided to the Department of Health as was requested by them..
5. None of the perceived experts interviewed in the programme have at any stage conducted any tests or sampling of the environment specific to our school. Their opinions were accordingly, tantamount to pure conjecture and was conveyed as authoritative by the producer.
6. The school was provided with the assurance from the producer Angus Begg, that none of our children would be identifiable in the footage aired with children's faces blurred where necessary. The interview with Carte Blanche was only agreed upon on this condition. A written undertaking (an extract from the emailed undertaking is copied below for your reference) was provided by Mr Angus Begg that this would be the case. Notwithstanding this, some children are clearly identifiable in the footage aired on National television. This conduct was against our agreement and is found to be completely unacceptable to the school and parent body.

"Dear Brendon,

We are not interviewing children, nor parents – and if any child was identifiable we would blur their faces. These are background shots of children playing – no focus on them required. I do trust that you won't delay this any further with yet more conditions.

Kind Rgds

Angus"

The staff, management and parents of Chameleons Montessori School feel that the Carte Blanche program which was aired was irresponsible, biased and highly defamatory. The school also calls into question the professionalism of the conduct of the producer (Angus Begg) and editor (Carte Blanche) of this programme. The program deems to paint a picture of uncertainty with regard to the school's actions and the practices of the farm on which this specific school is located. This is tantamount to pure sensationalism and not even remotely indicative of the truth. The entire programme is deemed to be driven at the behest of one of the interviewees, Ford Hallum, who has demonstrated a personal grievance towards the school.

The Chameleons Montessori school would appreciate feedback on our complaint as soon as possible.

Regards

Dr. Brendon Bailes
Registered Chiropractor
Chairman : Chameleons Montessori Parent Teachers' Association
Chairman : Chameleons Montessori Environmental Health Committee

Ms Emma Medell
Principal & Co-Owner : Chameleons Montessori School

Ms Claire Goffe-Wood
Co-Owner : Chameleons Montessori School