

BishopAccountability.org

Ex-Priest Quits on Sex Charges

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HONG KONG - A FORMER priest quit a Hong Kong school after a parent accidentally found websites that claimed he had been charged with molesting a boy 50 times in the United States, reports said on Monday.

The man, aged in his late-50s, had been hired by Pegasus Primary School for more than a year to design curriculum and tell stories at the school library, Chinese newspapers Mingpao and The Sun reported.

The school was alerted by a parent who had wanted to search for his doctoral thesis online, but was shocked to discover numerous websites detailing his alleged arrest in 2005 for sexual charges, the papers said.

He admitted to the arrest when confronted by the school and resigned last Friday, but said that the truth about the case was not what had been reported in the media, the reports said.

A website called BishopAccountability.org carries a report claiming he was charged with molesting a 14-year-old about 50 times between 1999 and 2001 when he was a pastor in Rochester, New York, the papers said.

The website said he pleaded guilty to attempting to endanger the welfare of a child and was sentenced to a year of probation.

A government spokesman said teachers in Hong Kong must declare that they have no criminal record before being registered.

However, Mr Cheung Man-kwong, legislator for the education sector, said there was little that the government, employment agencies, or schools could do if overseas applicants did not disclose their offences.

'The case reveals a serious loophole in our system as we keep letting in native English teachers from other countries without first figuring out the means to make sure that they have a clean record,' he told AFP.

Hong Kong's law reform body proposed in Jul setting up the region's first sex offender register, which would allow schools and religious centres to check with police to see if prospective hires have been convicted of sex crimes.