The Church of England's Pastoral Principles have been recognised by a judge at the Employment Appeals Tribunal.

The judgment was handed down today in the case of Mrs Kristie Higgs vs Farmors School.

The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England was given permission to intervene in the case in order to propose a Proportionality Assessment for cases where freedom to express religious or other beliefs publicly was in conflict with other people's views.

The Council whose intervention was neutral in relation to the two other parties in the case argued that such cases would be easier to resolve by applying the Pastoral Principles which the Church of England had developed to enable respectful dialogue between people who disagree profoundly.

In her judgement, the President of the Employment Appeal Tribunal, Mrs Justice Eady, explained how the Archbishops' Council had developed the Pastoral Principles to outline a comprehensive Proportionality Assessment and, in upholding Mrs Higgs's appeal, ruled that her case be heard by another Employment Tribunal which should apply the Proportionality Assessment to the facts of the case.

In her judgment, Mrs Justice Eady said: "The values that underpin the right to freedom of religion and belief and of freedom of expression – pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness ... require nuanced decision-making; there is no “one size fits all” approach. ... In answering those questions, within the context of a relationship of employment, the considerations identified by the intervenor are likely to be relevant."

The Rev Dr Malcolm Brown, Director of Faith and Public Life for the Church of England, said: "We hope that the adoption of the Proportionality Assessment, derived from the Pastoral Principles, will help the various parties, and those who hear cases, where the freedom to express religious beliefs in public causes problems for others, to consider the manner and impact of specific instances, rather than facing a binary argument between incompatible and abstract ideas.

"We hope that our intervention sets out grounds whereby Christians and others can assess the impact of their engagement in public life and possibly prevent many such cases being brought to law at all."