

Tracie Chambers-Clark

From: Bernard Hill
Sent: Wednesday, 2 September 2009 11:50 AM
To: REDACTED
Subject: FW: Professional Standards Matter

Dear All

Thank you for your advice yesterday and this morning, which I appreciated.

I have forwarded the (sanitised) response from the Headmaster below, and you will see my recommendations beneath it – for what they are worth.

Not sure about the wisdom of some of his actions – particularly the ‘dismissal’ one...

My advice differed in some areas from that which some of you offered – and which I received after I’d sent the email. (The Headmaster had me on speakerphone and a room full of his advisers and I was on my mobile striding through the city back from another ‘matter’ when he rang – so I wasn’t at my most composed! I did get my act together a bit more when I got back to the office and emailed him, but I respect that your views may differ on what I advised him.)

The facts that he gave me initially were sparse, and even from the email below I am uncertain about his original statement that the victim is now an adult.

Something to discuss at our next meeting – along with the four other new files that have I have opened in the two weeks since our last one!

FYI

Bernard

 Bernard Hill

Director of Professional Standards
 The Anglican Church of Australia
 Diocese of Perth
 GPO Box W2067
 PERTH WA 6846

 REDACTED

Dear Bernard,

Thank you for your considered advice on this delicate matter.

Thus far, I have;

- Spoken to the boy’s family to receive detailed accounts of the form of abuse. The allegations are serious.
- Met with the staff member concerned this morning and suspended him from duties on full pay, with a rider that should the police formally charge him, I will immediately dismiss him from his post here at the School.

- Offered (and he accepted) counselling, immediately following the aforementioned meeting, from the School Counsellor. The staff member has also been offered external counselling as per the PSU offer.
- I met with the mother of the boy who was allegedly abused this morning along with this boy's younger brother, who is still at the School. In this interview, I offered counselling to the family en masse or as individuals.
- The family has approached the Sexual Abuse Unit of the Police Service with the allegation and they will be setting up a case.
- I am in the process of lodging an electronic mandatory report to the Department of Child Protection and that will be sent today.
- I hope to speak with our Archbishop by phone today/tomorrow to inform him of events.

Regards,

From: Bernard Hill [mailto:REDACTED]

I refer to the matter that you brought to my attention by telephone this afternoon.

I confirm that the following actions suggested by you are appropriate and reasonable:

- Stand the alleged perpetrator down on full pay (You may wish to consult their employment agreement to check any applicable provisions re power to suspend, however it is highly likely that the common law would allow suspension for such alleged serious misconduct)
- Inform the parents of the alleged victim and report your action and intention to report the matter to the police (if that is your decision – see below).
- Offer access to counselling to the victim, parents and immediate family members (Professional Standards will pick up the bill for this – we can discuss the details at another time)
- Offer access to counselling to the alleged perpetrator (ditto re PSU funding)
- Satisfy yourself that the alleged perpetrator has access to support – either family or friends – to ensure their emotional well-being
- Report the allegation to the Archbishop's office so that he is aware if there is any media attention
- Prepare a media response – which should be 'it is a police matter' as it should be left to the police to investigate the allegation and you do not want to say anything that will compromise it.

I have emailed the members of the Professional Standards Committee, listing your proposed actions. At the time of writing only the Chair, THE SCHOOL has responded.

He agrees with the actions with the exception that he believes that it should be up to the alleged victim to report the matter to the police. I can see the merits of both arguments – ie the issue that it is an allegation of criminal misconduct in your workplace. It is certainly not wrong of you to report it to the police.

You should also be mindful of any other members of staff who may need debriefing or counselling as a result of the allegation.

I will keep you informed if I have any further responses from PSC members.

In the meantime, I will be available to assist when required.

All the best

Bernard

Bernard Hill

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