

Andrew Knox

cause by privately suggesting to their colleagues that they are being treated unfairly, or that their particular complaint or dispute is not otherwise being handled properly. Council is aware that inaccurate and incomplete information has circulated within the staff from time to time in relation to aspects of some of the individual cases.

Your claims relating to staff morale more generally are entirely inconsistent with the observations and experiences of members of the School Council, most of whom are current parents at the School, and are not supported by other, more objective evidence available to the Council. For example staff turnover at the School in recent years has been of the order of 5% - 7% per annum. These figures are very low for any substantial organisation, and particularly low for an organisation undergoing the very substantial organisational reform that has been occurring at St Paul's in the past 2-3 years.

Over this period, only 8-10 staff members (out of a total staff of over 140) have availed themselves of the free, independent and confidential external counselling service offered by the School to its staff. Of that number, approximately half of the consultations have related to personal matters entirely outside of the School workplace.¹

To the extent that last year's survey may have accurately reflected the views of some staff members at St Paul's at the time of the survey, the School Council is confident that this predominantly reflects the inevitable stresses and strains in the midst of a substantial organisational change process, and would be an understandable response to the inaccurate and incomplete information in circulation among staff at that time.

The School Council has therefore concluded that the objective evidence is entirely at odds with last year's survey responses and the former is consistent with the subjective impressions gained by School Council members. We are confident that the current situation at St Paul's with respect to staff morale and well being is a very positive one and that the situation apparently painted by your reported survey results does not represent the current position at St Paul's.

So far as your references to workplace health and safety are concerned, we note that the concerns to which you refer have not been reflected in any related workplace compensation claims to date, and that there is no other indication that the matters to which you refer are having any impact on the physical or emotional well being of our staff. As noted above the incidence of use of the independent counselling service made available by the School to its staff to assist coping with any such concerns (among other issues) is really very low, and relates as often as not to personal difficulties experienced by staff from time to time, unrelated to their workplace.

Complaints Handling Processes

It is our understanding that the document attached to your letter is essentially the same document that has been forwarded to a number of other Anglican schools and to the Anglican Schools Office for discussion between that Office and QIEU in relation to Anglican schools generally.

We have indicated to the Diocese our willingness to work through the Anglican Schools Office in responding to this document as that appears to be the proper and most appropriate avenue

¹ While individual staff matters are kept confidential by the independent counselling service, a generic annual reporting of the numbers using the service, and of the broad nature of the issues for which assistance is sought, is received by the School so that the effectiveness and value offered by the service can be monitored.

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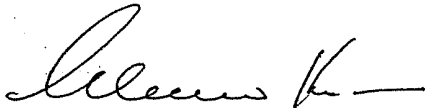
through which a common procedure can be formulated and agreed upon for the benefit of staff across all Anglican schools, and we indicate the same to you.

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The School Council has considered the claims raised in your letter seriously and assessed our responses in light of our full confidence, both in the School administration's handling of matters to date, and that the morale of our staff is high, and increasing, as the benefits of the recently completed organisational change process are delivered to both our students and staff.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to our attention.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Knox

Chairman

St Paul's School Council