



CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

CATHOLIC DIOCESAN CENTRE
383 ALBERT STREET
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

Telephone: 9665 0333

CORRESPONDENCE TO: BOX 146, P.O., EAST MELBOURNE 3002
FACSIMILE: 9663 4417

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

MEMO TO : *Monsignor Denis Hart*
FROM : *Maria Kirkwood*
RE. : *Issues relating to Holy Family Primary School, Doveton*
DATE : *October 21 1996*

Dear Denis,

Over the past twelve months a number of concerns have been raised with me by the Principal of Holy Family Primary School, Mr. Ray Adams. I recently spoke with two members of the school staff who were distressed about a range of issues related to school/class liturgies, intimidation of staff over the renewal of their contracts and matters that could be perceived as constituting sexual harassment if staff chose to pursue such a line.

I had intended to bring the specifics of these matters to your attention at a Pastoral Response Team meeting however, given a complaint I received today I cannot wait until the next meeting is called.

Mrs. [REDACTED] a parishioner and parent of [REDACTED] (year 6 student), rang to complain that Fr. Searson had hit her son around the head following a Mass last week at which [REDACTED] was an altar server. The matter came to light on Monday (21/10) when Fr. Searson sent to the school for altar servers for the morning Mass. None of the boys wanted to go and, when Mr. Adams investigated, [REDACTED] told him what had happened the previous week. Mr. Adams counselled [REDACTED] to tell his parents. Another boy was also allegedly hit at the same time. Mr. Adams is to see this child's parents tomorrow (23/10).

After speaking with the principal, Mrs. [REDACTED] went to see Fr. Searson. He denied hitting [REDACTED], saying that he merely placed his hands over [REDACTED]'s ears. Mrs. [REDACTED] said that Fr. Searson called her son a liar. She was not satisfied with the response she received from Fr. Searson and maintains that she believes her son's version of the incident.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about this matter, as well as the staff concerns, at your earliest convenience.

Regards,

Maria