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Telephone REDACTED

Monday January 14th.1991.

Regional Operations Manager,
Family & Community Services,
Campbelltown, 2560.

Re - CIL

(State Ward at Mater Dei School).

Dear Sir/Madam,
last year CIL 's District Officer resigned from the Department
(Mr. Bernard Pozo). So, at the moment, CIL does not know just whom
is to be his new District Officer. However, CIL was told that
Mr. David Packer may once more take over, but this has not been
confirmed.

I am an advocate and friend of CIL 's and at his request
and on the strength of CIL 's information, I wrote a letter to
Mr. David Packer because I know that Mr. Packer is familiar with
CIL 's case. In the letter I asked for a meeting to discuss the
problems CIL is having at Mater Dei and to plead CIL 's case
for him to return to live at Arnold Avenue, at least while he is
still at Mater Dei - Special School.

David is a very busy man and so far he has not responded to
my letter and so, as the Regional Operations Manager, I now write
to you as I feel that you are in a position to know just whom to
pass on my letter to. Also, I feel that CIL 's case needs priority
treatment and it's important that his case be dealt with
"sooner" rather than later during this school year.

Mater Dei - Special School offers a residential programme
during the school week. Residents return to their parents, foster
parents or carers on Friday afternoons. You could say we offer a
type of "group home" accommodation. As group homes we are meant to
serve a purpose (to teach independent living skills) and utilize
measures to ensure this purpose is being achieved.

I believe that in this context, our "group homes or
cottages" should represent the child's least restrictive living
environment providing that the needs of the child are being
adequately met. In CIL 's case, his needs are not being met
because of the following reasons:

1 CIL was moved from the group home or cottage at Arnold
Avenue, where his "emotional" and "psychological" needs were being
met and where he was happy.

2 CIL was moved from Arnold Avenue "AGAINST HIS WILL";

3 CIL 's requests to return to Arnold Avenue
were denied. Requests were made by myself as CIL 's advocate and
by your Department, to have CIL return to live at Arnold
Avenue. These requests were also denied because the administration
at the school (Ms. Carol Poutney and the then principal - Sister
Joan Nolan) did not want CIL to live at Arnold Avenue simply
because I, as CIL 's advocate and friend, am the Resident Social

Educator at Arnold Avenue.

4 After one year of "FORCED" living in another cottage at the school, CIL is still not happy and he still desperately wants to return to live at Arnold Avenue. _ This highlights the fact that CIL 's needs are "NOT BEING ADEQUATELY MET".

My interpretation of Mater Dei and it's group home's or cottage system - keeping in mind we are a "specialized" residence, is as follows: My objectives are based on an understanding of the child's "actual needs" _ not on the generalised intentions of Mater Dei to provide residential care just to teach independent living skills. I also believe there should be a consistant relationship between the child and the significant care giver.

My objectives and my belief that children should have a consistant relationship (in a professional manner) with their significant care giver, are held out as reasons for moving CIL from Arnold Avenue. This is not, in my oppinion, the way to handle children such as CIL who is not only intellectually disabled but also emotionally disturbed as well. After all, being a friend to a child in need is not a crime _ yet Ms. Poutney seems to think that my friendship is wrong and that I am "too involved".

I feel that I can't emphasize strongly enough that my advocacy for and on behalf of CIL , does not constitute a conflict of interest on my part in that I am not "too involved" or "too close" to CIL . This seems to be what Ms. Poutney has been espousing. My method of handling CIL as his principal care giver, during the time he was living at Arnold Avenue, was in recognition of CIL 's personal needs.

CIL , in one of his many requests last year to to return to live at Arnold Avenue, was told by Bernard Pozo that your Department were going to approach the new principal at Mater Dei in 1991, to request that CIL be moved back to Arnold Avenue once more. CIL has not forgotten that and he has asked me to try and find out what is going on for him. It would be appreciated if you could keep the points mentioned re - my "involvement" with CIL , in mind when you talk to the new principal.

Ms. Carol Poutney is the co-ordinator of the residential cottage programme at Mater Dei however, the principal has the authority to override Ms. Poutney. I am sure that if the new principal is given the background information re - CIL 's sad circumstances and she is made aware that your Department want CIL to return to live at Arnold Avenue and, that you have no concerns re - my capability to take proper care of CIL , then I am sure she will choose not to listen to the tales from Ms. Poutney about my "spoiling" CIL or my being "too involved" or "too close" to CIL . I am sure that with representations from your Department, the new principal will be more sympathetic in her approach to CIL 's situation and she will "make room" for CIL to move back to Arnold Avenue without delay.

It is my firm belief that the placing of a child such as CIL , in a group home or cottage system such as the one at Mater Dei - Special School, that the main objective of our cottage residences should be to operate primarily to "benefit" each "individual" resident. We ought to have a specific role which

should be determined by looking at the "individual" needs of "each child". Over the past year, CIL 's needs have not had any consideration from the administrators at Mater Dei School. This is especially true re - his individual psychological and, emotional needs which are still blatantly being denied him by Ms. Poutney.

The principle that "a person with a disability is entitled to the same human and civil rights as every citizen", has important implications for the administrators of Mater Dei's residential programme. I believe that CIL 's quality of life is being compromised in that some of his basic rights are denied him. This is evident in the areas of "PROTECTION" and "FRIENDSHIPS". In both these areas Mater Dei is at fault. E.G.:

1 (RELATIONSHIPS) All residents have the "RIGHT" to friendships of their choosing: At Arnold Avenue CIL made lots of friends in the local community.

2 All residents have a "RIGHT" - "not to have friendships and relationships disturbed or manipulated by staff": CIL was taken away from all his friends at Arnold Avenue - AGAINST HIS WILL, simply because I, as CIL 's principal care giver at the time, was also CIL 's friend in whom he confided (and he still does confide). CIL 's friends were being manipulated by moving him away and his friendships definitely have been disturbed by staff at Mater Dei (Ms. Carol Poutney)

3 (PROTECTION) All residents have the "RIGHT" to "PROTECTION and they should not be psychologically harmed by being in a residence": CIL must be under great psychological stress if after one year away from Arnold Avenue, he remains unhappy in his present forced placement at Berallier Drive and, he still desperately wants to return to live at Arnold Avenue.

There is no grievance procedure for CIL to express his problems at Mater Dei so, while he remains at Mater Dei - Special School as a resident during the week, he will need an advocate and, I have no hesitation in continuing to fill that role. Emphasizing CIL 's need for an advocate still further, is Ms. Poutney's dehumanisation of CIL through the devaluation of his character and her patronising, custodial methods, practices and attitudes in co-ordinating the residential programme; all of which demonstrate her complete lack of understanding and respect for the children as individuals.

In view of the above facts, I would like to know just what your intentions are for CIL . As I am denied any membership of the decision - making process as it affects CIL at Mater Dei - Special School, I would like to think that as CIL 's advocate, I can depend upon your Department to enlighten me.

I shall look forward to hearing from you soon.

END.

Yours Sincerely,
CID

A copy of this letter has been sent to the chairman of the board at Mater Dei - Special School. - (Mr. Paul Grew).