

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

DATE: 29th May, 1987

INTRA-OFFICE MEMO

REF. NO.: _____

MEMO TO: FR. DOYLEFROM: NORM LALORRE: DOVETON

CONFIDENTIAL

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Three teachers from Doveton met with myself and Allan Dooley on Wednesday, 27th May. The three were representing staff at the school, who wished to make known to us their feelings and concerns. The points that they raised as concerns were:-

- (i) Fr. Searson's attitude to children who don't attend Mass. His statements to these are negative and aimed at creating guilt feelings - "people who don't go to Mass are evil".
- (ii) School Lighting - because of Fr. Searson's belief that there is a large electricity bill, he has taken some fluorescent tubes out of some of the classrooms, and has had lights taken out of the toilets. Teachers are concerned because of health regulations, and also the toilets are extremely dark, and there has been a recent case of an undesirable being within the school grounds.
- (iii) The portable, initially provided under the C.M.E.P., has been leased to Australia Post. This still remains with Australia Post and has created room problems for the teachers.
- (iv) Pressure is put on teachers, especially the first year teachers, to go to Mass each morning.
- (v) Fr. Searson makes public statements which effectively criticize the teachers.

The teachers would say that the incidents may not seem big, but there is tremendous tension and frustration. They are very concerned for the effects on morale and subsequent effects on the children.

There is still tension existing between Fr. Searson and parents, as indicated by the attached letter. Parents are also irate that Fr. Searson brings his dog to the school - and into classrooms, much to the worry of the children. Parents are considering getting health authorities to inspect the school.

The teachers believe that their employment could be threatened by Fr. Searson. I have assured them that I would pass onto the Director the concerns that they expressed.

I do believe that the situation will get much worse during the year, as it would appear a number of parents are aiming to ensure Fr. Searson is not able to act in ways that antagonise the school community. They intend taking issue with him when the occasion arises.

SIGNED: N. Lalor