

INTRA-OFFICE MEMO

REF. NO.:

MEMO TO:

P. ANNETT

FROM:

GRAHAM DOWNES

RE:-

VISIT TO FATHER P. SEARSON P.F. DOVETON

all
Mr. [unclear] / Mr. Downes
Thanks for this
for your [unclear] relation
purpose
No doubt
we will
hear
more
down
[unclear]
[unclear]

Norm Lalor and I visited Father Searson on Tuesday, 8th August, 1989 after we contacted the Principal, Mrs. Eulalia McGrath. The purpose of our visit to the school was to confirm with Mrs. McGrath that the contents of the letter were correct. This she confirmed. We also inspected the building which is in an appalling state.

Father Searson expressed some concern about the letter having been written by all staff and denied he harassed them. Father said he approached staff about turning heaters down and about his concerns re the blinds left down and the fans left running unnecessarily. Father maintains he did this in an unthreatening manner. Father believes it is far better to approach staff directly to avoid misunderstandings. He also believes the Principal should be spared the worry of staff as her health is not good.

The Principal's job; mainly

It was explained to Father that the staff concern was about how he approached them and that his approach may lead to industrial problems. Father was told that staff morale was low. It appeared to be beyond Father to accept this as he maintained everything that could be done was done to assist them. He maintains the heaters have been serviced, lighting is in accordance with the Health Department regulations; painting has been done in the school and in the toilets, and an application for refurbishing funding has been submitted but no response has been forthcoming. He also said it was necessary for him to help supervise the boys toilets as there were only two males on staff. Supervision was necessary to help overcome graffiti problems.

Father also expressed a concern about the faith commitment of young teachers. He is upset about their lack of attendance at the 8.30 a.m. Mass. Older teachers, in his opinion, give witness to their faith by attending. Father believes he has shown pastoral concern for the staff by attending weekly staff meetings during which time he initiates discussion on faith issues. As well, Father visits the classrooms regularly to help instill the faith into children.

15/8/89

SIGNED: _____

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FROM: _____

RE:- _____

It was explained to Father that the upgrading around the school would be seen as positive, however the staff needed to be treated as professionals. As he appointed Mrs. McGrath the leader of the school, educational leadership and issues relating to staff should be left entirely to her. Whenever Father has concerns he should raise them with the Principal rather than go direct. This would be seen as less threatening to staff. Father was requested to ensure the cheque covering teachers' salaries was banked prior to individual cheques being given out as some staff have had their cheques bounce. He was upset about this and maintained it only happened on one occasion because he was involved in a sick call.

Mrs. McGrath indicated to us that Father said from the Altar that the parish had to contribute \$30,000 a year to the running of the school. Mrs. McGrath was upset as the parish contribution is nil. Some parishioners who see the need for a church became angry about so much money going into the school. I raised this with Father by referring to the A.F.S. I stated that I could not find an amount of \$30,000 showing on the A.F.S. Father became very defensive. He said the money had been spent on the school but this did not necessarily show on the A.F.S. ??

Father reluctantly agreed to work through the principal to avoid further problems with staff. It will be interesting to see how long he will abide by this decision. Norm Lalor also said that Cath Briant the Educational Consultant would monitor the situation by making regular contact with him.

SIGNED: Graham Dolan