

Review of file for Seanon's file
CONFIDENTIAL

13th March, 1991

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On Friday, 8th March, 1991, I spent some time discussing a matter with Michael Quin, Principal of St. John's College, Dandenong.

A Year 10 girl in the school had approached the school counsellor after having been questioned by police about alleged sexual offences of a minor nature said to have occurred during the girl's days at the primary school. The local parish priest was involved. The counsellor advised the girl to raise the matter with Michael Quin who interviewed the girl in the presence of the counsellor. Earlier, the same day, Michael Quin had spoken with Fr. Doyle and the Vicar General about the matter. It was alleged that other girls had been involved and questioned by the police.

I rang Richard West of Minter Ellision on Michael's behalf and the three of us discussed by telephone the details of the allegation. Richard West pointed out that it was necessary to separate out legal and moral responsibility. If an illegal act has taken place then it is the responsibility of the police to act. The only thing required of Michael Quin under these circumstances would be to provide any information that he had to police on questioning. It is more appropriately left to police to follow up whatever line is appropriate. There is need to ensure that the action taken by the police do not cause undue pressure on students or create unnecessary alarm.

Concern was expressed over the fact that the present primary school principal could be in an awkward situation, between conflicting loyalties to her employer and to the students. Support would be needed for her and it would be appropriate for the Pastoral Care people from the C.E.O. to provide this. It may be necessary for us to take the initiative in this case.

In the course of the conversation with Richard West, he made the following points:

- (1) One must take precautions to ensure that the welfare of students is the major consideration.
- (2) There is no legal obligation on any person to report a crime.
- (3) It is a public response to co-operate with police in legitimate investigations but one should be careful not to defame the person.
- (4) There is no problem in Michael Quin being interviewed by the police.

- 2 -

- (5) It would not be appropriate for Michael Quin to interview the other named girls at this stage.
- (6) The girl should be advised to assist the police in whatever way she could, preferably in the presence of her parents.

Quin