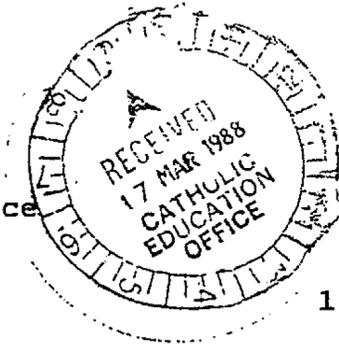


phone 762 7300

Rev. T.M.Doyle
 Director
 Catholic Education Office
 P.O. Box 146
EAST MELBOURNE 3002.



CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE
 OF VICTORIA

Wantirna South Group
 Suite 2, 173 Boronia Road,
 Boronia 3155

15th March, 1988.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Father Doyle,

I am writing regarding two matters which have arisen recently at Holy Family School, Doveton.

The first incident regards a complaint from a parent, Mrs **REDACTE**, who maintains that Father Searson struck her son to the face with a clipboard last Wednesday, 9th March. In my discussions with Mrs **REDACTE** and in speaking with her son, **REDACTE**, it appears as though Father Searson requested **REDACTE** to serve at Mass on the Wednesday morning. **REDACTE** was not rostered to do such and so he did not attend. Just before the end of school Father Searson spoke to a number of boys from the Grade 5 and 6 class, of which **REDACTE** is a member, and when **REDACTE** indicated his reasons for not attending Father clipped him across the face. As a result Mrs **REDACTE** maintains that she needed to apply an ice-pack to his cheek on his arrival at home and that he was absent for the next two days because of the injury. There was no physical evidence of the injury when I visited the home today.

Mrs **REDACTED** immediately approached Father Searson about the incident and he denied that it took place. I understand that she then visited the Vicar General on Friday the 11th March.

This evening I spoke with Father Searson about the incident and he again denied the charge saying that he may have tapped **REDACTE** on the shoulder but that nothing else happened. He indicated that he could present children who were present at the time and who saw what happened to assist me in clarifying the situation. Mrs **REDACTED** was also prepared to nominate witnesses who saw the event take place. I reminded him of the risks involved in touching any children in any way what so ever.

It is my opinion that to pursue the matter further will not help to clarify the situation. Father Searson has lead me to believe that he would not, and will not strike children and that he will

be more careful in his work with children. I have passed this on to Mrs [REDACTE] and she is happy with the assurance about the future, and unless you wish me to pursue the matter any further, I shall let it rest at this point.

The second matter is also one of serious concern to me and regards an incident which took place sometime last week. This matter has been drawn to my attention by staff as it was related to them by children. Co-incidently, Mrs [REDACTE] and [REDACTE] raised the matter with me during my visit to their home.

Early one morning, last week, children maintain that Father Searson and his dog came across a cat lying in the school grounds near a boundary fence. According to the children the cat was alive. Father picked the cat up by the tail, swung it around through the air and threw it over the cyclone wire fence which surrounds the school grounds. The cat lay dead on the nature strip. Father asked the children not to say anything about this event. I raised this matter with Father Searson, this evening, and he agreed that the details were correct except that the cat was dead before he picked it up by the tail, swung it around and threw it over the fence. He did this because the cat would be a health hazard to children. I suggested that a dead cat on the nature strip might equally be a health hazard to which he replied that it was then the Council's responsibility, not his responsibility if it was on the nature strip. I further suggested that the responsible action would have been to bury the cat or arrange for its disposal himself and that to do what he did, regardless of whether children were present or not, was not prudent and should not have taken place. He answered that he didn't think clearly at the time, as he was in a hurry to get to 8.30am Mass. He agreed that it was not the right thing to do.

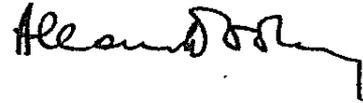
I am not sure what I can say in regard to this incident except that such an act, whether the cat was alive or not, leaves me speechless and wondering why Father Searson acted in such a way. I initially found the story from the teachers hard to believe and still find the circumstances surrounding this event, astonishing.

These two incidents add to the already very long list of inappropriate and unusual events which I have detailed in many letters. These particular events are just two which have recently occurred, and which have caused the Principal and staff further

ongoing concern about the leadership which is offered by Father Searson to the school community. I support such concern on their part and believe that relationships between staff and Father Searson are very poor and that his actions are the major contributing factor to this state of affairs.

Should you require any further information please let me know,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Allan Dooley".

Allan Dooley
Educational Consultant.