



Knox Grammar School

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From the Headmaster

21 November 2003

The NSW Ombudsman
Level 24
580 George Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about a case that has recently come to my attention. The informant has indicated to me that they do not wish to be any way involved in the investigation of this particular situation. The allegations have been made as a result of information that has come to a mother from her separated husband. This information comes from the child involved and the mother has impressed upon me that the information has come as a consequence of a breach of trust between the separated father and the son. She is therefore very awkward about passing on this information as she recognises that it could be invalidated as a consequence of the number of people involved in the transmitting of the information and she also recognises that she puts her own relationship with her son at risk as a consequence of passing on this information.

In brief, the information relates to a concern regarding the Director of Students at the School Mr Adrian Nisbett. The accusation is that Mr Nisbett invited a young student, Year 10 at the time, by the name of ASA [redacted] to his flat to discuss the boy's decision to leave the School. The information to hand suggests that in the course of the evening while the boy was very upset, or at some stage during the evening the boy was offered cigarettes, alcohol, and/or a hug. The concern from my perspective is that a student was alone with a senior member of staff in the staff member's personal residence. I am also concerned about the accusation that cigarettes, alcohol and a hug were offered to the child. There is no accusation of any direct sexual molestation.

To assist me with this situation I have contacted the Association of Independent Schools. I have spoken to Dr. Geoff Newcombe with regard to appropriate process and he indicated to me that this was a matter that should be reported to the NSW Ombudsman's Office and also the CCYP. It has also been his advice that I should engage an external investigator to look into the situation. On this recommendation from the AIS I have engaged Mr Graham Wilson. Mr Wilson works for Lee Kelly and Associates and I understand he has handled many such cases for Independent Schools in NSW. He will be in attendance at the School on the afternoon of Monday 24 November. I have enclosed in this letter the contemporaneous notes that I have created at the time of my conversation with Mrs [REDACTED]

Subsequent to this meeting I discussed the situation with my Executive Assistant Mr Eric Bernard and the Deputy Headmaster of the School, Mr Kim Walton. We directly discussed the issue relating to risk assessment of leaving Mr Nisbett in his present position. It is our opinion that Mr Nisbett poses no immediate threat to the safety of welfare of any student within the School. However, Mr Walton and I have spoken directly to Mr Nisbett to inform him that an allegation has been made, that it will be investigated by an external investigator, that he should not engage in any gossip about this situation, and that we are not suspending from duties immediately, rather we will wait for any outcome of the investigation. Nevertheless, we have required of him that he does not put himself into a position of being alone with any boy either at School or at home until the investigation has been concluded and a decision has been made. He indicated to us that he understood these conditions. I will place these conditions in writing to him.

Mr Nisbett has been at the School for approximately thirty years. He is a much respected and trusted senior member of the School staff. His present role and position is as Director of Students where he has responsibility for the pastoral care of students within the School. This is clearly a most senior position. I understand that the seniority of this position makes the way in which we respond to this case of significant importance.

Any advice you may be willing to offer with regard to the management of this case would be appreciated. I have also informed the Chairman of Council about this matter.

Yours sincerely,



P J Crawley