

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Donald James SHAW

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Donald James Shaw. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have a BSc (Hons) in Maths and Accountancy, which I completed at Dundee University in 1992. I also have a PGDE (Secondary Mathematics), which I completed at Moray House in 1993 and a MSc (Educational Leadership), including 'Into Headship' and 'In Headship', which I completed at Stirling University in November 2019.
3. After graduating I secured a post as maths teacher and thereafter principal teacher at Inveralmond High School, Livingston, between 1993 and 2006. In 2006 I took up post as Head of Maths at Queen Victoria School (QVS), Dunblane. I remained in that position until 2012 when I became Senior Deputy Head of the school and in 2016 I became Headmaster. I remain the Headmaster at QVS.
4. I understand the remit of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is to cover the period up to 17 December 2014 and, where possible, my responses focus on events during the period of my employment at QVS up to that date. This means that my experiences are mainly drawn from my time as Head of Maths and as Senior Deputy Head, rather than from my current role as Headmaster.

Employment with QVS

5. As Head of Maths at QVS between August 2006 and October 2012, my duties were to effectively run the Maths department, which consisted of two others members of staff.
6. As with all teachers, I was also a boarding tutor. This role involved a four hour shift, one night per week in a boarding house plus eight weekend day shifts of eight hours. During the boarding shifts, tutors are jointly responsible with each other for the supervision of up to approximately sixty students. For evening duties, two tutors supervise each boarding house.
7. Those duties are really just to be the adult available to help deal with any incidents that occur. Most tutors will spend the vast majority of their time in the House office, which would be their base and groups of students would come and go all day long. Roll-calls are taken at 3pm and then again at dinner at 5pm and a final check later in the evening. The tutor then makes sure that the students follow the evening and bedtime routines.
8. The induction process at QVS involves meetings with all senior staff and so each tutor would meet with the Head of Boarding for some training. However, most training for the tutor role takes place on the job and, using myself as an example, my first evening duty in 2006 was with an existing member of staff and he was able to lead me through the boarding house routines with ease.
9. New tutors will always have someone on duty with them during their first duty night. Additionally, it's common practice for the HoM or other promoted member of the House team to be around for extra support and guidance if required. The tutor role is as an addition to a teaching role, in the vast majority of cases, so most tutors are qualified teachers with relevant experience and GTCS registration. In some cases, members of the Business Support team can become tutors and they have to complete their SSSC registration.

10. As far as I was concerned, my GTCS registration was essential to my employment at QVS, as was my previous experience as a maths teacher and Principal Teacher of Maths.
11. There was a probationary period of a year in place at that time. I have no knowledge as to whether my referees were contacted or not. There was a security check from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) which was exceptionally detailed and I am aware that all employees have to pass this check before being employed in an MOD school.
12. My line manager as Head of Maths was SNR ██████████ CKC ██████████. My liaison with my line manager was exactly what I expected and was mirrored in my experiences in the state school system at Inveralmond. I felt appropriately held to account for my actions.
13. My line manager as a boarding tutor was the Housemaster of Cunningham House at QVS, who firstly was Gordon Ross, who was in the position temporarily, and then Mike Eastham, who took up a permanent position. Again, this was as normal with plenty of meetings, information sharing and wellbeing issues openly and appropriately discussed across the whole boarding team.
14. As Senior Deputy Head, my line manager was the Head, Mrs Wendy Bellars. I was very much held to account for all of my actions and had weekly meetings with her in order to monitor and appraise my work. Mrs Bellars introduced a new Personal Review and Development (PRD) system prior to 2010 and I was appraised more formally every year using that, as were all staff.
15. There was no direct impact following this change in terms of child protection. In my time at QVS, there have always been robust child protection procedures, although the introduction of the PRD system perhaps made it easier for staff to request additional training if desired as training needs were part of the PRD system.
16. As Head, my line manager is now based in England. MOD schools as an organisation provide appropriate line management and governance of my work, while I also am

answerable to Her Majesty's Commissioners (HMC) who have significant governance responsibilities for the school as representatives of the Secretary of State.

17. There was, and there still is, a significant induction programme for all new staff which involves individual meetings with all key personnel within the school, such as the Head, Deputy Heads, Child Protection Officer, Facilities Manager, etc.
18. In terms of training, there were several MOD courses I had to attend; for example, before interviewing for a Maths teacher a year after I arrived, I had to attend the MOD interviewing course. All staff were trained on mandatory components of MOD and childcare life, such as annual child protection updates and annual health and safety updates. In terms of other training opportunities, the school had a budget which was able to meet the vast majority of requested training, which was and still is great.

Policy

19. As Head of Maths, I was not directly involved in the creation or updating of any policies in regard to residential care. There was, however, whole staff consultation on a number of policies and I took an active role in that consultation. One which stands out was just being formed as I arrived: the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) was developing a new Behaviour Management Policy and all staff were wholly involved in its creation and implementation.
20. When I moved into the post of Senior Deputy Head, I was responsible for all policies relating to the academic life of students, including classroom practice, prep (homework) routines and curriculum development. Now being part of the wider senior leadership team (SLT), I had more of an input into residential care policies but they continue to be the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Guidance) and the Deputy Head (Pupil Support).
21. Although my Headship did not start until 2016, which is outwith the time frame of the Inquiry, my current post gives me overall responsibility for all policies and even though

many of the staff create, review and evaluate policies, as Head I take ultimate responsibility for compliance.

22. In my time at QVS, since 2006, there has been a general shift to more child-centred caring policies. That's not to say they weren't caring at the start of my employment; in fact, just after I started, I can recall telling anyone who would listen that QVS was the most caring establishment I had ever worked in. However, policies have been developed over the past thirteen years which put the child at the heart of what we do.
23. My previous experience had been in quite low-attaining schools and coming to QVS was my first experience of a high-attaining school. What struck me as different was the respect, manners and politeness exhibited by all students. It was much easier to teach in the respect that students had an ethos of hard work and clearly valued being at the school.
24. Of course, the biggest difference was that QVS is a boarding school and this was new to me. I soon learned that this was an advantage in terms of academic life as I was able to ask my classes to come into school in the evenings for extra learning as required. I was also struck by how quickly a 'team around the child' approach was enacted whenever a young person was upset. The school nurse or the HoM or Matron, etc., were, and still are, available to support a young person whenever they needed it. However, in terms of the day-to-day running of a school, there wasn't much difference really.
25. I was not aware of any previous HMiE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education concerns or difficulties at QVS. The previous inspection took place before I arrived and, although I am certain there would be some learning from the inspection, as there is with every inspection in every school in the country, I was never explicitly aware of what that was. Two of my current Deputy Heads, Janette Scott-Laing and Jill Adams, both worked at QVS during the 2004/2005 HMiE inspection and may have more knowledge of what learning points there may have been.

26. Child protection and safeguarding policies follow all Scottish national guidelines and are subject to annual unannounced inspections from the Care Inspectorate. Discipline policies have developed to be a little softer, i.e. there is now more understanding of the reasons for a child's behaviour, rather than just sanctioning every child in the same way.
27. Policies since 2006 have given me no concern whatsoever and I've been proud to lead changes in several areas which have led to our students being given more independence and responsibility for their own actions.
28. It was good to see a new system of Personal Review and Development in place soon after I started at QVS. The school makes use of wider MOD policies for things like allegations, whistleblowing, disciplinary procedures etc. We have a bespoke complaints procedure and complaints and our responses are logged and again, are subject to unannounced inspections by the Care Inspectorate.

Strategic planning

29. Ever since I joined the SLT in 2012, I have had significant responsibility for strategic planning and many of our policy reviews and updates, particularly those in regard to the boarding side of school and we consider any potential for abuse. Policies on visitors, parade weekends, private tuition by externals, etc., were developed, all with the key priority of reducing the chance of abuse taking place.
30. By way of example, every year we have our 'OV Parade' which allows our ex-students (Old Victorians) to return to QVS for a parade by our current students. There are often events such as rugby and hockey matches and when I arrived in 2006, it was customary for OVs who had recently left to walk around the grounds and into boarding houses unattended.
31. It troubled me a little that this had been customary, however this was only during a specific 'OV weekend' every year. During that weekend, it was traditional for OVs to return to QVS for a visit and for them to pop in and see staff who used to look after

them. There was nothing more sinister than that. This practice was ended quickly during the leadership of Wendy Bellars and current practice remains that all visitors around site are to be accompanied.

32. Very quickly, when Wendy Bellars, the new Head, arrived in January 2007, this changed. Policies were developed through staff consultation and agreement so that the possibility of abuse was minimised. Any visitor, even a student who had left school only a few months previously, had to be accompanied around the grounds and visits into boarding houses were stopped. It had been practice when I first arrived here that those OV students could drink alcohol on site during OV weekend, although not in boarding houses, but this was soon stopped, again so that the possibility of abuse could be reduced.
33. This only occurred on OV weekend, however I can recall I was on duty on OV weekend in 2007 and I noted a group of adults drinking cans of beers on the football pitches. I reported it to the HoM at that time and he challenged them. They immediately emptied their cans and put them in the bin. They were OVs and very respectful. However, although perhaps I am wrong, it did seem to me that they did not expect to be challenged and it was my impression from their reaction that this had previously been common practice. Under my tenure as Head, we now have a 'dry school' and no alcohol is permitted at school events.
34. This is just one example of a policy change which reflects the bigger picture of care here over the past thirteen years. When policies are changed, it has always been standard practice in my time at QVS that all staff are fully involved in the consultation process which of course, gives greater buy-in to the new policy when it is made live.

Other staff

35. As Head of Maths, I had line management responsibility for two maths teachers. As Senior Deputy Head, I was line manager to several Principal teachers. As Head, I am line manager to my Deputy Heads and the school business manager. In all of these posts, I have had standard managerial responsibilities. As Deputy Head, all of the

teaching staff were accountable in some way to me, while as Head, all staff are in some way accountable. I find nothing of note to mention in terms of my line management responsibilities.

Recruitment of staff

36. I have been involved in interviewing teaching and boarding staff since my arrival.
37. Recruitment policy and practice has always followed strict MOD guidelines and I have always been impressed by the rigour involved. If I am on the recruitment panel for a vacancy, I and all other panel members receive a pack with all applications and we go through a strict scoring process based on the skills and behaviours of each applicant. We then agree on who we will interview and we repeat the same process, scoring each candidate on the evidence they provide, before making a final decision.
38. As Head, I am on the panel for all teaching and boarding tutor posts, while the Business Support Manager leads on admin posts. Between us, we ensure that everything is correct and above board.
39. I have not been involved in the collation of references. This is the responsibility of our HR department at the school and the MOD recruiters, Defence Business Services (DBS). I am confident that if a reference flagged up a concern, I would be immediately informed but as yet, this has not happened.
40. I don't know whether referees are actually spoken to, I have not been involved in this area. What I do know is that even a temporary supply teacher has to supply four references from previous employments, including one from their most recent employment, to pass through the rigorous MOD systems, both internal here at QVS and external with DBS.

Training of staff

41. I have provided a range of internal training courses over the years, particularly in my roles of Deputy Head and Head.
42. I have been a strong supporter of 'Distributed Leadership' in a school sense and so many of my training courses are designed to enable staff to become better teachers and to be more confident in themselves as advocates of change.
43. Between 2016 and 2019, I completed a Master's degree in Educational Leadership. One of the main focuses of my study was to implement a system of Distributed Leadership at QVS. In academic literature, the definition of distributed leadership is often context-specific, so 'in a school sense' simply reflects what it meant to me at QVS. It means up-skilling staff in a variety of ways, building capability in the teachers and tutors, empowering them to take the lead on areas of whole-school development and providing them with autonomy. For example, one of the Principal Teachers took on the role of Numeracy Coordinator, another took the role of IT coordinator. In short, Distributed Leadership in a school sense relates to building capability in staff.
44. I recently ran a course for ten less experienced teachers which I called 'Into Middle Leadership'. This used Scottish Government materials, adapted to be bespoke to our boarding environment, and was a series of workshops aimed at developing the skills of those less experienced staff to enable them to become good middle leaders or better leaders within their classrooms.
45. As a further example, following a safeguarding issue involving a member of our staff in 2019, which led to criminal charges and a dismissal, I recently led a session on effective safeguarding and how to anonymously, if desired, and safely report any concerns a member of staff might have about the behaviour of others. I wouldn't say that there were any flaws in the previous system but after every significant event, I firmly believe that a review of the event should take place and any 'lesson learned' should be acted upon.

46. One lesson learned from the 2019 incident was that there was no internal policy in place to allow staff to quickly raise any concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff, in a safeguarding context. It was always possible to raise concerns using existing MOD systems but I, and my team, felt that we could develop a protocol which would allow staff to safely and anonymously, if desired, report a concern about another member of staff quickly and efficiently. I was very careful to word this protocol correctly and had a whole-staff meeting to agree upon its implementation. Staff accepted this new routine and a new 'button' was placed on our intranet homepage to allow staff to raise concerns.
47. I have nothing but positives to say about training and personal development at QVS since 2006. The training budget has been more than adequate and the MOD as an organisation as a whole genuinely support the training needs of their staff. In practice, this essentially means that if a member of staff either wishes to, or is recommended to, go on a certain course, it is highly likely to be financed and agreed. All staff then fill in evaluations on their training and, if appropriate, can disseminate it to the rest of their peers.

Supervision/staff appraisal/staff evaluation

48. I am responsible for the Professional Review and Development (PRD) reviews of those who I line manage, the three Deputy Heads and the School Business Manager.
49. Every member of staff sets a number of objectives for the year. The line manager holds a mid-year review and an end of year review to discuss progress with those targets and to set targets for the next year. This reflects current practice within Scottish Education and also meets MOD policy requirements on annual reviews.
50. The MOD has very strong and robust procedures for managing poor performance. They are very supportive of staff but also provide clear timelines for actions and improvements. I have used those policies when dealing with staff, both as part of their appraisal process and when circumstances require it. This enables the school to

support staff who require additional support while also providing a structured set of procedures to deal with staff who are not meeting our high standards.

Living arrangements

51. From 2006 to 2008, I lived in private accommodation on site at QVS. From 2008 to 2010, I lived in Paisley. From 2010 to 2012, I was back in private accommodation on site. Since 2012 I have lived in a private house on-site as this is now a requirement of the job. My living arrangements have always been separate from the students.
52. The four senior leaders have to live on site and housing is provided for this purpose. Several other members of staff voluntarily live on 'The Green', which is in an out-of-bounds area of the campus. Housemasters and Housemistresses, Deputy Housemasters and Deputy Housemistresses and Matrons all live in each boarding house. This means that there are three live-in staff attached to each boarding house.
53. All boarding tutors have access to the children's residential areas. This remains the case although, as you would expect, we have protocols for anyone entering a students' room.

Culture within Queen Victoria School

54. QVS is the most caring establishment I have ever worked in. The culture is one which promotes fairness, equity, respect and excellence. This has been the case since 2006.
55. The practice of 'fagging', which is a term I am only now familiar with, did not exist.

Discipline and punishment

56. All teachers and boarding tutors have some responsibility for discipline and sanctions although the tone of those sanctions is always set strategically by the SLT. Since my time here, all students, parents and teachers have been involved in the creation of the

Behaviour Management Policy in relation to discipline and punishment and have bought into its content. In reality, it is often the Deputy Heads and myself as Head who decide on and issue sanctions for misbehaviour.

57. The Behaviour Management Guidelines have always been in place in my time here. In my role as Deputy Head and now as Head, I have pushed for more inclusive discipline policies, reducing the use of sanctions such as suspensions and exclusions and introducing more restorative procedures.
58. All discipline records are kept in a child's chronology, in line with 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). Every pupil has an individual file and all discipline issues and sanctions are included in that file. We have recently moved to making this an electronic record.
59. Senior students have only ever had one possible sanction they can issue in my time here and that is that prefects can put a student 'on a day' which basically entails the student helping out by doing extra duties at mealtimes and having to attend meals in uniform. This is overseen by Senior staff and students can appeal the decision either to me or other senior members of staff.
60. It is a very transparent system and when I read out the names of those 'on a day', I always ask them to come and see me if they think they have been treated unfairly, which often means I speak to the senior students involved and we come to an agreement as to whether the sanction should stand or not.
61. Senior pupils also have a role to play in boarding houses. A number of house prefects help with house routines and support younger students in following those routines. This is carefully monitored by both promoted house staff and boarding tutors.

Day-to-day running of the school

62. In terms of the practicalities of day-to-day life, as a boarding tutor my duty night involved ensuring all evening and bedtime timings were being followed. As Deputy

Head and now as Head, I have little practical involvement in the day-to-day life of students although as part of my SLT duties, I am required to step in and support students in emergency or urgent situations.

63. I do give daily talks to the students at chapel every morning and continue to have teaching responsibilities. It is, of course, ultimately my responsibility to ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is done with the care of our students as our top priority and the Senior Leadership Team ensure that all procedures and protocols for day-to-day life are fair and safe.
64. In practice, the evening duty is just to ensure that students are on their beds and have lights out at the required time. This would involve knocking on room doors, asking for permission to enter and confirming lights were out. The school has always had a clear protocol for such actions during my time here.
65. Nowadays, as Head, I am often required to take the lead on situations where a young person is at risk, for example, self-harming, suicidal thoughts, allegations against others. This involves long interview processes, contacting parents, the police, as necessary, and ensuring the young person feels safe and secure.
66. I am as confident as I can be that if any child was being abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring. I do however understand that some people simply do not report abuse when it occurs so I can never give a cast-iron guarantee that abuse will be uncovered at the time it occurs.
67. What I can guarantee is that during my time here at QVS, there have been procedures, policies and protocols in place which provide anyone who is suffering abuse the chance to report it safely and that disclosures have been made directly to me due to those procedures, policies and protocols being in place.

Concerns about the school

68. In my time of employment, QVS was never the subject of concern, in school or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children and young people in the school were treated. However, I believe the inspection of the school by HMiE in 2004/2005 was problematic.
69. I am wary of commenting on this inspection as I do not know the facts and I do not know enough about the nature of the concerns, any individuals who were the subject of concern, and the school's response. I could report what I had heard but this would be rumour and hearsay and therefore unfair on those involved. It may be that two of my current Deputy Heads, Janette Scott-Laing and Jill Adams, who both worked at QVS during that time, may know what those problems were.
70. Similarly, I do not know the extent to which the parents of the children were made aware of such concerns, nor who had responsibility for reporting to the parents.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

71. Members of the QVS community have always been able to make a complaint and those complaints have been logged. As previously mentioned, the complaints log is accessed by the Care Inspectorate. Details of how to complain are part of the 'Boarding School Arrangements' which were sent to all parents on an annual basis. Since I became Head in 2016, the complaints procedure has been modernised and updated and still forms part of those arrangements.
72. The basic process for a complaint since 2006 has been that the parent/student makes a complaint and then all parties involved are interviewed. In my experience, senior staff have never shied away from being direct about complaints and those who have been subject to a complaint have understood and respected that directness. Once a conclusion is reached, it is communicated to all parties and recorded in the complaints log.

73. It is common for many parents and children to bypass the official complaints policy and complain directly to senior staff via email.
74. Complaints, whether formal or informal, are recorded in the complaints log which is then subject to scrutiny from the Care Inspectorate.

Trusted adult/confidante

75. In my time here at QVS, all young people have been able to personally identify a trusted member of staff to whom they could go to share their thoughts and address concerns whenever the need arises. The member of staff then becomes part of the formal Intervention Planning Meeting (IPM) processes and is named as part of our formal support plan for that child.
76. When a young person arrives at QVS, they develop a series of trusted relationships with a variety of people. Firstly, they have the promoted House team: the HoM, Deputy HoM and Assistant HoM. The House matron is a live-in post and there are two tutors on duty every night from 6pm to 10pm. They work with a variety of teachers every day and they have contact with school nurses and other staff such as Housekeepers.
77. Within the first few weeks, it is normal for a young person to have identified the best person for them to talk to if they are distressed, upset or worried. The choice of adult lies with the child and we would never ask a child to confide in someone they did not trust. If we become aware of a significant event in the life of a young person where they may need someone to talk to, we ask the child to identify that person and that person becomes part of the child's wellbeing plan.
78. The vast majority of students also see and communicate with their parents regularly. A member of House staff is on duty at all times, twenty-four hours a day, and a member of the senior team is available every day, twenty-four hours a day, to offer support when needed.

79. This practice has not really changed to any extent since 2006. If there were any changes, it would be that we remind students more often now that if anything makes them uncomfortable, they should report it.
80. In my experience as Deputy Head and Head, children have made a number of disclosures both to me and other members of staff. The culture within the school allows children the freedom to report matters in this way safely and securely. It is often the case that other young people make reports on behalf of their friends to safeguard them from risky behaviour, which is fantastic.

Abuse

81. "Abuse" is clearly defined in our Child Protection Policy and I have provided a copy of that policy to the Inquiry.
82. During my employment, abuse has been understood to be absolutely anything that could potentially cause danger to a child. Our annual Child Protection update and regular Safeguarding updates have underlined a variety of different types of abuse, including neglect, emotional, physical, etc., and where young people are most likely to experience abuse.
83. All staff have been trained on what to look out for to recognise abuse, changes in mood etc., and have been given an understanding of the fact that abuse can occur literally anywhere, including in the home, the school, online, in the community, etc.
84. All staff must undertake this training on child protection and safeguarding regularly, on an annual basis, at which time the definition is communicated and explained to them.
85. In my period of employment, I have always had annual child protection training. In more recent years, from 2012 onwards, I would suggest the level and importance attached to this training has increased and that the training and actions which result from such training have become a very high priority for all staff, including myself.

Child protection arrangements

86. Child protection training is delivered to all staff annually and must be from an external expert every three years, which is the case here. In addition, all members of the SLT and all Housemasters are now directed to complete full external child protection training.
87. There are also several 'ad hoc' internal training opportunities whenever we as SLT feel it necessary to remind staff of protocols and safeguarding strategies. Child protection and safeguarding are a school priority. An example of this is when a student raises an issue when completing their annual questionnaire on boarding life, which is a key element of 'student voice' that we use to make sure we get things right. If the issue is a generalised comment on, for example, privacy within boarding rooms, we would get the staff together and remind them of our clear protocols on entering rooms, i.e. knock, announce who you are and ask permission to enter.
88. Part of our annual child protection training is on how to respond to and report abuse which has been disclosed. We have a child protection coordinator, who is the Deputy Head Pastoral and Guidance and a deputy CP coordinator, who is the Deputy Head Pupil Support. If they are not around, staff can pass on any disclosures to me.
89. As previously stated, students also have a 'go-to' member of staff and they often feel more comfortable making any disclosure to that member of staff, who immediately passes it on to the Child Protection team detailed above. Our default response is to then contact the police immediately if the disclosure meets our definition of abuse or is a clear breach of law.
90. No autonomy, including discretion, is given to staff, including managerial staff, in relation to these matters. Staff must pass on all concerns raised to the CP coordinator or a member of SLT.
91. The annual training mentioned takes place to ensure that all staff are aware of all rules, regulations and law in relation to abuse.

92. When I started as PT Maths in 2006, I was struck by how well the Child Protection system worked within QVS. The Child Protection Coordinator was very clear on process and protocols from my induction meeting onwards. When I joined the SLT in 2012, I became part of that system and ensured I was trained in Child Protection. In my experience, the system works really well: a child makes a disclosure and a system kicks in to ensure that police, parents, other pupils, social services, etc., are fully involved in any investigation which is necessary.

External monitoring

93. Since 2006, we have been the subject of a number of unannounced Care Inspectorate visits and a Quality Improvement visit in 2012 by HMiE. We also have an annual visit from our Link HMiE, which tends to take place around May every year. We also have timetabled visits from our board, the HMC, and have quality assurance visits from our employers, the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP), representing the MOD.
94. The Care Inspectorate and HMiE often speak to groups of children. I am not aware of any individual meetings. This is also the case for DCYP staff: they speak to groups of children only. Members of HMC are never alone with children.
95. Staff are not required to attend group student meetings with HMiE, DCYP or the Care Inspectorate. We have a policy of having staff present for all other visitors.
96. HMiE, DCYP and the Care Inspectorate did speak with me on the occasions they have visited and I received feedback from those visits.

Record keeping

97. Working for the MOD, the school is subject to rigorous record keeping procedures. In my time of employment, all incidents which are categorised as abuse are fully recorded and filed; this includes notes of the initial disclosure, interview notes, police or social

services involvement and the final conclusion. In instances of child protection, this is fully summarised in a child protection incident log which is open and fully accessible to all regulatory bodies such as the Care Inspectorate and HMiE.

98. We also stick very carefully to MOD policies and protocols when dealing with incidents as there is an understanding that, if a member of staff is involved, we would be enacting MOD performance management or misconduct proceedings. Those proceedings are very much 'set in stone' by policy and procedure.
99. In our archives, we have records for students going all the way back to the 1960s and those records often contain details of any allegations of abuse and the resulting actions.
100. The only historical information I can comment on is the files I have seen which relate to this inquiry. Files from the 1960s/1970s are sparse and potentially justifiably so: we really shouldn't have personal records stretching that far back. Files from around 2000 onwards have a wealth of information contained in them which details incidents and responses to them. I would be confident that files stored in the school for this latter period would allow the inquiry to see the detail and response to any claim of abuse.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

101. I have been involved in several investigations into abuse, however all fall outwith the dates relating to this Inquiry, i.e. they have been since 2014.
102. I will summarise a recent incident in which I led the investigation to illustrate the processes and protocols that, to my knowledge, have been in place since I started my own employment in 2006.
103. A student disclosed to me in February 2019 that she had been the subject of abuse from a member of staff. Following the allegations and along with a note-taker, I interviewed and immediately suspended the member of staff, phoned the police on behalf of the student and alerted her parents.

104. The Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) were informed, as were my line management chain at DCYP. All students were given the opportunity to disclose anything further and several other allegations came forward about the same member of staff, which were immediately passed to the police.
105. Over the weeks and months that followed, a full investigation took place and the member of staff was dismissed. Criminal proceedings are ongoing.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

106. I have never been involved in the handling of reports to, or civil claims made against the school by former pupils, concerning historical abuse. Claims are dealt with by the Ministry of Defence and consequently I am unable to give any further detail of any response or conclusions that were reached.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings

107. As Head, I am made aware of any/all police investigations into abuse, whether current or historical.
108. All files and information we have regarding the allegation are shared with the authorities. This is currently managed by DCYP so I have little involvement.
109. I have given statements to the police but only in regard to disclosures which have been made directly to me by other children, such as the example I gave relating to the disclosure made to me in February 2019.
110. I have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school.

Convicted abusers

111. I do not know whether any person who worked at the school was convicted of the abuse of a child or children at the school.

Specific alleged abusers – unless covered in responses to previous questions

YXL

112. I have been made aware that the Inquiry has received evidence of allegations about a current member of staff of QVS, YXL
113. When I arrived at QVS in 2006, YXL was suspended pending an investigation, but I knew no details except rumour and hearsay. At some point soon afterwards, perhaps late 2006 or during 2007, the Deputy Head at the time came into the staff room and announced that an investigation had been completed and that Mr YXL would be returning to work shortly. I would guess YXL was around thirty-five years old at that time.
114. As someone who knew nothing about it, it did not really impact on me at the time. YXL has worked here continuously since then and still does.
115. YXL . We were both Teachers between 2006 and 2012 and from 2013, I was his line manager for a spell. Now, as Head, he is simply another member of staff.
116. I have always found YXL to be an excellent teacher and a kind and supportive person. a great department and gets great results from his students every year.
117. I do not know him particularly well; I know all my colleagues to an extent but I do not get involved in personal lives. I know YXL as an excellent Teacher more than anything else more personal.

118. I frequently observe lessons in the Computing department and as Duty SLT, I see **YXL** on duty as a tutor **[REDACTED]**. **YXL** is very good with children. He is supportive, helpful and caring. He has a good manner that is ideal for teaching. No issues have ever been raised about **YXL** by pupils or parents or staff in my time here at QVS.
119. **YXL** keeps a well-disciplined classroom but that is because of his excellent professional rapport with the students. He does not require to use 'discipline' as such and I have never even heard him shout at a child. I would say **YXL** takes a 'positive discipline' approach: he tries to promote good behaviour and good practice using praise, rather than by using negativity or sanctions. I have not seen **YXL** abuse children.
120. I have heard rumours that the investigation that concluded in 2006 was in regard to an inappropriate relationship with a student. I do not know if they were factual or not. I assume the investigation at the time would uncover the facts of the matter but that took place before my arrival at the school.

Helping the Inquiry

121. Lessons can be learned from every single incident that takes place in a boarding school.
122. Students should be regularly surveyed by school staff and by external inspecting authorities to ensure they feel safe, secure and protected.
123. Students should always have mechanisms to allow them to report concerns about themselves or others and it is the same for staff. Schools must continually evaluate and adapt their policies to ensure that nothing that makes anyone feel uncomfortable or at risk goes unreported.

- 124. In current times, I believe we have got things mainly right. In Scotland, we have Education Scotland and HMiE, we have the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC. We have the Registrar of Independent Schools. Those regulatory bodies regularly hold schools to account for their actions through rigorous unannounced and announced inspections.


- 125. GTCS registration means that teachers have to be professionally qualified before they can work in schools.

- 126. Systems are in place across the nation to try and minimise incidents involving abuse. When abuse is uncovered, schools need to ensure that everything is in place to protect the youngsters involved and to fairly investigate allegations. By default, the police should be made aware and consulted regarding any incidence of abuse and then they can take the decision whether to press criminal charges or not.

- 127. All of this happens at QVS now and I think we have it nearly right. Constant review, evaluation and being held to account by regulatory bodies are three key ways of making sure it stays that way.

Other Information

- 128. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... 03 November 2020