

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GGI

Support person present: No

1. My name is GGI and I am known as GGI. My date of birth is 1976. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going to boarding school

2. I was born in Inverness. I'm an only child. My surname at birth was GGI and that was what I was known as in school. My parents lived in and that's where I grew up, but I went to primary school outside of in a place called . I was there from Primary One to Primary Six. I missed out Primary Three and I was just turned ten when I left that primary school. I started at Morrison's Academy after the end of Primary Six and started there in Primary Seven.
3. I'd missed out a year at school and I was clever and my parents thought I would benefit from a private education rather than go to the local secondary school. They'd also sent me to a different primary school to the one where I lived and they had a fear I'd be bullied if I went to the local secondary school. I had a good primary school experience, but I'd never quite fitted in at my primary school as it was in a different town from where I lived.
4. I think the main reason for choosing Morrison's was that I was above average intelligence and my parents thought I would benefit from a private education. That wasn't available locally and boarding was the only option.

5. I think my mum made the main decision about where I would go and she looked around for a school and she was very definite that I was going to go to a mixed school. There was another family in my primary school who had all gone off to St Leonards and my mum was very determined not to do that, and she didn't want me to go to a single sex school. I think Morrison's was one of the more affordable boarding schools than some of the others. I then had to pass an entrance exam to be accepted into the school.
6. I visited Morrison's Academy once before I started there. It was a visit that my mum arranged for me on a weekend or during the holidays. We went to look around the school and went to look around the boarding house. I don't think I saw round my own boarding house. I don't think I knew which one was going to be my boarding house and I think unless you already had siblings there you didn't get a choice.

#### **Morrison's Academy, Crieff, Perthshire**

7. The school was about a three hour drive from my parents' house. I started there in 1986 when I was ten and I started at the same time as everybody else at the beginning of Primary Seven. There were younger boarders at the school already. I don't think the school took them, unless it was exceptional, before Primary Five. Sometimes in Primary Four but certainly never before that, so at the ages of seven and eight.
8. Most children started in Primary Seven. The school called that Transitional Year as it's between primary and secondary. The school's advice was, if the child was going to start boarding that was a good year to start boarding. They would get settled into the way of the school before starting secondary school. There was a big influx at Primary Seven. I didn't know anyone who was already at Morrison's when I started there.
9. The school was predominately academically orientated, but they were proud of their sports. I didn't get on the Assisted Places Scheme. My parents had to re-mortgage the house and I don't know how they afforded it. I think I was aware of that at the time. It wasn't held over me as 'you'd better do well, it's cost us a fortune to send you to school'. I think my mum was just very shrewd with financial investments and found

money somehow and I don't know how she managed it. She was a primary school teacher and my dad didn't have a well-paid job, but he worked full-time. Probably I was a bit different to some of the other students in the school who were pre-dominantly from wealthier backgrounds. I don't consider myself to be from a wealthy background, we weren't poor but we certainly didn't have lots of money to spare.

10. The school was laid out on a campus and the houses were dotted around the town within walking distance and not around the school grounds. We walked through residential areas in order to get to school. I think it took ten minutes from my boarding house. Some of the houses were not necessarily further away, but they were in different directions.
11. When I started there were eight boarding houses. I think there were three boys' houses and five for girls. There was a lot of boarders and by the time I left, it was down to four boarding houses or less. Boarding was definitely in decline by the time I left. My boarding house was called Croftweit. I don't know where the name comes from. I think Croftweit had originally been part of the girls' school before it became a boarding house a long time before I went there. I think when I started, the girls' houses were Croftweit, Ogilvie, Knox, Benheath and Knockearn. Every year it changed as they closed one down and moved children into another one. I stayed in Croftweit all the way through and that was one of the last ones that they sold off. The three boys' boarding houses were Dalmhor, Glenearn and Academy.
12. My housemistress was called Mrs MacLaughlan. She lived on the premises. Her husband had recently died and I think that's why she got the job. He'd been head of the primary department and died in-service as a teacher. I think the school gave her a job to try and keep her in a job and it gave her somewhere to live. I don't think she had another house outside of the school.
13. I don't know how old Mrs MacLaughlan was but she must have been fiftyish. She had been the domestic science teacher, but not when she became housemistress. I don't know if the school had changed how domestic science was run and her teaching job perhaps wasn't full time, but I don't know why she wasn't doing that any more. Quite

a few of the housemistresses were purely housemistresses. As she was on her own she wouldn't have been able to do both jobs. She had a teenage daughter who lived with her and she was a pupil at the school.

14. The housemistress had a flat and the assistant housemistress had a separate room with en-suite facilities. They all lived in. The housemistress was on-call to us all the time. If it was the middle of the night and there was a problem we could knock on the door of her flat and she had a door bell. We didn't do that unless we really had to. If somebody had been sick in the night we would have knocked on the door.
15. I think there was an even number of boys and girls in the school. The boys' boarding houses were quite big. Academy house was huge. The boarding houses were not evenly numbered and it depended on the size of the property.
16. If I had friends who were in other girls' boarding houses I wasn't allowed to go and visit them. I wasn't allowed to even go into other boarding houses. I wasn't allowed out of my boarding house unless I was going to school. I didn't get a rule book saying this was the case, but I think you just learned and knew as you went along. I don't know how these things were told to us, but we weren't allowed out of the boarding house without permission to go anywhere.
17. Throughout the week you had school, if you did anything like an extra-curricular activity it had to be a school extra-curricular activity. Obviously, you had to go out of the building for breakfast, lunch and dinner to a separate building. After school we came home to the boarding house and you weren't allowed to somebody else's house or to another boarding house.
18. You could have walked somebody to their boarding house but you wouldn't have been allowed in or they might have gone in and said 'so-and-so is here, can I bring them in?' You couldn't just walk in like you would to a friend's house. It was the housemistress or master who could give permission for the other child to walk in the boarding house. There was always somebody there and there was never not a member of staff on duty. That was the case in Croftweit as well.

19. In Croftweit there were dormitories for groups of girls and there was no single rooms. There was a junior common room and a senior common room. There was a television in the junior common room and everybody could use that room. Only the fourth, fifth and sixth years could use the senior common room. There was a record player in that room. There was a small kitchen and only the fourth, fifth and sixth year girls were allowed in there. They could make themselves toast in there and the rest of us made do with some juice and a biscuit at night if we were lucky. There was no need really and we got meals elsewhere. There wasn't any dining facilities in the boarding house, but we did have a tuck shop where we could buy food and we had a tuck cupboard where we could store the tuck as well as food we were given by our family.
20. The boarding house was run by a housemistress and she was helped by an assistant housemistress. When I started at the school she was called matron. I think when I started they had some sort of medical qualification. That was my impression. I think the school dropped that title towards the end and they were just assistant housemistress. Each of them got a day off each week and somebody came in as the temporary housemistress.
21. The housemistress was meant to be the motherly figure who made a home in the boarding house, and that was what the school would have told you. If you spoke to her she would deny that. Mrs MacLaughlan told us that her superior had expected her to make it like a second home and she had no intention of that. In her opinion there was no way she could do that as she was not our mother and couldn't pretend to be. The boarding house was an institution and she was running it like an institution. Mrs MacLaughlan tended to address me by surname so I would be called 'Miss <sup>GGI</sup> [REDACTED]'.
22. Croftweit had a range of ages of girls in it. It went up to sixth year. There were four girls in my dorm initially of around the same age of ten or eleven. I was the youngest. The other dorms in the house were arranged roughly in accordance with age. It depended on the number in the age group that year and it changed every year. There wasn't a set system of moving from one room to another room. The number that came

in each year fluctuated. The head girl of the house and the house prefect shared a room, so that was the ultimate room to get to.

23. There were four sports houses. If there was a school competition we'd be divided up according to sports house. Each boarding house tended to be in the same sports house. I was in Murrays.
24. The boys and the girls had contact with each other during school, but nothing outside of school. The classes were mixed as in most schools. The sports were separate. The boys played rugby and the girls played hockey, but we all walked to the pitches together and walked back together. Sibling groups would have seen each other at school and they might have chatted and spoken at meal times. Life was too busy really, it wasn't like we were sitting around doing nothing. I was never bored.

### **Routine at Morrison's Academy**

#### *First day*

25. My parents drove me from home to get to school. I'd read Enid Blyton books and I thought it was going to be great. It was going to be lots of fun and there'd be midnight feasts and jolly hockey sticks, I was only ten. It was a bit nerve wracking as it is going to anything new, but on the whole I thought it was going to be great fun and it was going to be wonderful. I wasn't dreading it in any way.
26. I don't remember much about my first day at the school. It was all very exciting I think. There was somebody already in the house in our year. There was three of us who started at the same time in that boarding house. There was somebody in Primary Seven who had already been there for two years. She took us under her wing and showed us the ropes. She was probably told to do it, but she was also quite excited that we were coming in. The four of us were going to be sharing a room so it was natural that she was going to look after us and she probably enjoyed it.

27. There was an informal system of an older pupil looking after a younger one. I'm not sure if the housemistress did it and I suspect it was done informally by us girls. I don't remember it happening when I was older. But you did get a house mother when you started, and that was one of the older girls and that was somebody you could go to. I don't think that was a school system and I'm not sure if it was done by the housemistress or informally by the girls. I can't remember. It was in place when I started and I did have a house mother who was an older pupil.

*Mornings and bedtime*

28. The daily routine was similar throughout the houses.

*Bed wetting*

29. I can recall wetting the bed once and I didn't tell anybody and nobody found out. I can't remember anybody else having issues

*Mealtimes / Food*

30. The refectory was opposite Croftweit and in a separate building. In the refectory we all ate together. There were allotted times for meals. We'd line up outside Croftweit to go to the refectory and this gave the housemistress an opportunity to call you out in front of others as we were all together. Humiliation was her greatest punishment. We then all sat at the tables allocated to our boarding house for breakfast and dinner. The lunch was a school lunch and the day pupils would be there too.
31. I think my boarding house had two tables allocated to it. There was around thirty girls in Croftweit so two tables. Houses like Academy had six or seven tables. Off the top of my head I think there was about eighty to a hundred boys in Academy. I think they must have had senior prefects sitting at the ends of some of their tables and I think they had longer tables.

32. I didn't have an allocated seat at the Croftweit tables. I could have sat anywhere on the two tables except at the ends as the housemistress sat at one end. There was an assistant housemistress sat at the end of the other table. After school we'd come back to the boarding houses before going to the refectory for tea unless you had something on after school.

*Washing / bathing*

33. There were showers, baths and toilets in the boarding house.

*Clothing / uniform*

34. There was a very specific uniform. I think there were a couple of places in town, but there was a place in Crieff that stocked the uniform. There was a thrift shop in the school where you could buy second hand pieces. We wore the uniform most of the time at school. I think we were allowed one set of casual clothes. We were almost never in them. We were in school uniform seven days a week, with the exception of Sunday afternoons.
35. I think the uniform has changed a lot now, it was a grey pleated skirt and a dark navy with purple and white braiding. It was alright, it could have been a lot worse.

*School*

36. There were a lot of day pupils coming into the school every day for lessons. I don't know how many day pupils there were in total, but I think there were more day pupils in the school than boarding pupils. It was just different when new people came in every day. The standard of teaching was pretty good. I enjoyed the academic side of the school. I can't think of any bad experiences in the classroom or with teaching staff and I can't think of any I'd heard of.
37. Discipline in the school was quite normal. The cane had been used in previous years but had been outlawed shortly before the time I was there. There was no mention or



suggestion of threats of it when I was there. We just didn't dare do anything wrong and we just knew that we didn't do it. We might get lines as a punishment to write one hundred lines about something. If you did something wrong you might have to go and stand in front of one of the really scary teachers or see one of them which you didn't want to do. I don't recall harsh punishments in the school.

38. The Rector, Harry Ashmall, was aloof and unapproachable. He taught a bit, but not much. When I started at school he was around a lot but towards the end as the boarding numbers declined he was often abroad looking for students from Asia. Then as I got older there were more students coming into the school from overseas. A lot of students came from the Far East.
39. In the boarding house and towards the end there were pupils from a different ethnic background. There was a huge gap between pupils from overseas and us. That was enhanced by the school and probably by Harry Ashmall himself. He was trying to accommodate people who came from overseas who were probably paying quite a lot to be there and I think it created a lot of resentment between them and us.
40. We felt pretty restricted in the boarding house and we got a limited number of weekends out every term and we couldn't go out without getting written permission. Then when pupils from overseas came in the school took them on a day trip to Edinburgh. The rest of us would have liked a day trip to Edinburgh and we were told we couldn't because we were from Scotland. It was widening the gap. Eventually the school relented and let us all go on the trip. I don't know how we made the argument but it wasn't done formally.

### *Religion*

41. I had to go to church every Sunday. Later on there was an opt out from that when more students arrived from overseas who weren't Christian. I don't think there was an option for somebody who was an atheist. After church was Sunday lunch then we could change into casual clothes. Up until third year you went for a walk with the housemistress in the afternoon. In fourth, fifth and sixth year you were allowed to go

for a walk on your own and you didn't have to be with someone else. I think you were allowed about two hours. There was a signing out book to complete.

*Work/chores*

42. There were chores to do on a Saturday and the chores were split up between us. That was things like sweeping the stairs and hoovering. There were paid cleaners for the house otherwise.

*Trips / Holidays*

43. I didn't go away on school trips. I signed up to one in Primary Seven and I pulled out as I was too scared to go. I was never told by my parents that I couldn't go and my mum would have paid for me to go. She probably lost her deposit when I changed my mind. I didn't go on any after that. There weren't that many trips and they weren't regular and it wasn't like everyone else was going except me. It was a very small group of people that went on the trips so I never sensed I missed out by not going on them. It wasn't an essential part of schooling.
44. I didn't have other children from school at home for the holidays. Nobody else lived as far north as me. Most of the girls in my year group had relatives in Scotland. The overseas student all had guardians and they would stay with them in the holidays if they didn't go home to their own parents. There weren't any children who stayed in the school over the holidays.
45. I went home in the school holidays and at the end of them I dreaded going back to school. Most of my friends were at boarding school so it was good to go back to see friends again but I was happier at home.

*Leisure time*

46. After tea we had prep time. There was a little bit of time to ourselves after prep time before going to bed. There was two hours of prep each evening. There wasn't a lot of

leisure time. The only down time during the week would be between school and tea-time. If you were in the hockey team you had that to do three times a week or other clubs that were on after school. I was rarely in the house between school and dinner. If I was I could watch telly. The oldest person in the common room generally got to choose what was on the telly. That wasn't often a problem. Most of the older girls were too busy doing something else. The junior common room was usually just for the juniors.

47. For me personally I joined as many clubs as I could in school because I wanted to be out of the boarding house as much as possible. I don't think I realised that at the time, but on reflection that was what I was doing. I joined everything and wanted to be in everything. Maybe it's part of my nature as well.
48. I didn't enjoy the boarding house and it did feel like a prison. It felt like I was always at school and never away from it. We were always in school uniform even when we went into town on Saturday. At the time it felt like there was no distinction between school and the boarding house, but school life was very different to boarding house life.
49. Up to and including Secondary Three you were allowed into the town on a Saturday morning or in the afternoon if you'd been playing hockey in the morning. We could go to the shops or go to a café. In fourth year you were allowed one afternoon after school and you chose which day and you stuck to that day every week. In fifth year you got to go in Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and in sixth year you could go into town any day of the week.
50. I don't think there were issues with the local people from the town. We were always in school uniform and representing the school and wouldn't dare to do anything wrong. Relationships between boys and girls in the town was frowned upon, but it happened. They just found places to hide and hang out. Relationships between boarding and day pupils happened but not often with anyone outside of school. Pupils would be told off if caught holding hands, but they couldn't stop you spending time with someone else. It was acceptable to walk back from school with somebody as long as you didn't hold hands.

51. I don't remember any reports of pupils going into another boarding house at night through a window to meet other pupils. It didn't happen in my boarding house but I'd heard of it happening before. It would have been hard to get into our boarding house as there were bars on the windows to prevent people falling out of the sash windows. Most of the boarding houses were old style buildings so they would probably have had the same big windows. The front door of our boarding house was locked at night as well as the side door.

*Personal possessions*

52. We got allocated a standard amount of pocket money each week that was something our parent's paid for and the housemistress gave out to us. We had a bedside locker for personal possessions and we could have whatever we wanted in there.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

53. I would have been at home over the Christmas holidays. If there was a birthday in term time and the parents had requested it, there might be a cake. It came from the parents.

*Visits / Inspections*

54. When I started there was no phone in the boarding house. We used to go into town on Saturday and could phone home from a phone box and they could phone us back. There would be a queue of boarding kids behind us. There was a house phone but we couldn't use that unless there was an emergency. Later on, in my third or fourth year, pay phones were put in the houses and we could phone from there. The one phone we had was in an alcove but not behind a closed door. We had to write a letter home every week on a Sunday. We were free to write what we wanted and nobody read the letters and we posted them ourselves.
55. The previous housemistress before Mrs MacLaughlan used to read girls' diaries and it wouldn't have surprised me if she'd read the letters home.

56. We were allowed weekends out during term time and I spent time with my parents away from school. The students from overseas might have spent that time then with their allotted guardians. We were allowed to spend weekends with anyone who would sign the paperwork to take you out.
57. I don't remember any outside inspections taking place in the school or boarding house.

#### *Healthcare*

58. I don't remember any issues with girls running out of sanitary products and if you did you'd approach the housemistress or her assistant. If you were unwell you could stay off school and there was a sick bay. You had to be really sick to be off school. I had back trouble and pain all through school. Paracetamol and Ibuprofen were the only things on offer from the medicine cabinet if I asked the housemistress or her assistant for them. They would then write it in a book so they knew how much you'd been given.
59. There was one incident when my back went and I was in a lot of pain. I was fifteen and I was in agony and I couldn't move. My roommate offered me something stronger and gave me Co-codomol that she had. Her mum was a nurse and the girls phoned her to ask about me taking the Co-codomol and her mum asked me various health questions. I ended up taking one of the tablets. The housemistress found out and went through the roof that I'd taken something that wasn't prescribed to me. I can't remember being punished for it but it seemed like I'd committed the worst crime ever. I think she said something in front of the whole house to make it clear this wasn't acceptable behaviour to take medication that wasn't prescribed.
60. Then a few days later a girl with eczema asked me for some cream a doctor had prescribed to me for eczema. She told me Mrs MacLaughlan had said I had the cream and that she could ask to use it. I refused to give the cream to the girl given the advice we'd been given a few days earlier. Mrs MacLaughlan thought I was being ridiculous for not giving the cream to the girl.

61. The school would have taken me to see a GP if necessary. I can't recall anyone going to the hospital for treatment.

*Running away*

62. I don't know of anyone from my boarding house who ran away, but they did from other houses. It wasn't often. One boy ran away but I don't know what happened when he came back. He carried on at the school. I only knew about it from talk amongst the students.
63. I thought about running away but I realised I wouldn't get very far. I was mature enough to know there would be an end point to school. I can remember thinking about suicide, but thinking school life is going to end eventually. I don't know if there was something really bad happening at the time or if I was just unhappy or if it was hormones. I don't know.

*Discipline*

64. The boarding house could have as many house prefects as the housemistress wanted for that year. The head girl and the house prefect were there to represent the house I suppose, keep order and be a role model. They got a special badge to wear. They got to discipline the younger pupils and that would vary from year to year. The year I started the head girl was lovely and caring. The house prefect was a lot stricter, but I don't remember her giving us any punishments. They could have made us polish their shoes. Nothing more than that. I can remember her shouting at us and telling us how easy we had it and it was much harder when she was our age. She felt we weren't respecting her in the way she respected her elders.
65. A year or two later the head girl and house prefect gave us lots of punishments. The head girl of the house that year was head girl of the school, and she went from being quite nice to deciding she could do whatever she wanted and the power went to her head. The two prefects she had that year made it their mission to hand out as many punishments as they could think of. I can remember being quite miserable that year.

We were all in the same boat and we knew it was nothing personal and they'd just gone on a power trip.

66. Nothing was done about it at the time because the head girl was quite pally with the housemistress and was going to get away with everything. Maybe she got pulled up for it and I wasn't aware of it, but it didn't seem to happen. They were trying to trip us up as often as possible to give us as many punishments as they could. The three were friends with each other and pally with the housemistress and we didn't have anywhere to go to complain about it.
67. If we did have complaints then the housemistress was the most obvious person to go to, but I think she would have laughed and wouldn't have believed us and thought we were exaggerating. But I think if she had seen them doing something seriously wrong she would have pulled them up for it. She was never going to see it happening as they were never going to do it in front of her. It would have been their word against ours and we would never have got anywhere. Their punishments were never anything outrageous, it would have been to tell us to polish their shoes or tell us to go and do something else. I don't think it was more than polishing shoes.
68. The biggest punishment the housemistress could hand out was not being allowed to watch Tops of the Pops in the junior common room. You could also be gated as punishment and not be allowed to go into the town on the weekend. The few privileges you had could be taken away. I know of one boy who was a boarder in the school who was expelled for drug use. I think he'd been suspended prior to this happening. Another boy was on his last day at the school and about to leave and he told his housemistress what he thought of her and she got him expelled.

### **Abuse at Morrison's Academy**

69. I don't know what was happening in the boys' boarding houses. The first year I was there in Primary Seven, I heard about one of the boys' houses. They were all run very differently. It was very obvious to us that some houses were more relaxed than others

in terms of internal rules. There were rules that came from the school about how many weekends out you could have, but how the house was run was different depending on the house. I know that in Primary Seven, the younger boys in one of the boys' house were fagging for the older boys. That was definitely happening. It was only happening in that house and not in the others. What that consisted of behind doors I have no idea because I wasn't in a boys' boarding house.

70. I only know for sure that it was happening because we saw two or three of the Primary Seven boys, aged ten or eleven, in Dalmhor House carrying the school bags belonging to the Sixth Year boys. The bag could be quite heavy with books and sports kit. It wasn't just the weight, it was the humiliation of it. The girl in our house who had been there for two years told us that was because they were a fag for an older boy whose bag they were carrying. I assume they had to polish shoes and if it was worse than that I would only be speculating.
71. I never had a conversation with any of the boys about what they experienced, but I know from seeing them carrying the school bags that there was something happening. It was known, by word of mouth, depending on which boy you were fagging for, you either got off lightly or you didn't. Some of the older boys were worse than others. The impression I got was there was no regulation of that. That was just the way the housemaster at Dalmhor decided it was an appropriate way to run a boys' boarding house. It certainly wasn't happening in our house.
72. The name of the housemaster for Dalmhor was Mr <sup>JMH</sup> [REDACTED]. He was also a [REDACTED] teacher in the school. He had a nickname among the pupils of <sup>JMH</sup> [REDACTED]. He was married and his wife lived in the property provided by the school and this meant Mr <sup>JMH</sup> [REDACTED] could also be a teacher, and his wife was then a housemistress and looking after the boys.
73. We, in our house, thought Dalmhor was great because it was so relaxed. It was known that they got away with a lot more than other boys' boarding houses. They had a bit more freedom within the house. We were allowed in our houses, once a term, to hold a disco when you could invite boys. If you got invited to the Dalmhor disco that was really cool. That was going to be the really relaxed disco. Each pupil got to invite one



person. If you were invited to any other house's disco it would be a bit rubbish. There was a feeling that Dalmhor was the best house to be in in if you were a boy, despite this fagging going on. My house had its own disco with the housemistress supervising it and no alcohol was involved.

74. I remember a conversation with our housemistress, Mrs MacLaughlan, in my first year at Morrison's, when we must have made a flippant comment aged ten or eleven, if only we could be a bit more like Dalmhor. She said do you really think it's appropriate some of the things that go on in that house? When we asked what she meant she said would you be happy if I let initiation ceremonies happen when, if you're new to the house, you lie in the bath and the older boys pee on you. Do you think that it's right that the school lets that carry on, knowing that it's going on?
75. I never heard that first hand from any boy that it happened to. I didn't ask them later on in life if that had happened, but I don't think the housemistress had any reason to make that up. Where she heard it from I don't know and I don't know if it was something that had happened years before or if it was still happening. I didn't hear any other stories about initiations of new pupils and none happened later on when I was older.
76. Her late husband had been head of the primary department. Maybe he had heard it from other boys who had come to him having had it happen to them. I'm speculating as I don't know where she got the information from. Whether that had been happening in the past and it wasn't happening any more I don't know, but I don't think she would have made that up out of nowhere. She sounded annoyed, not just that it had happened, but that school staff higher up the school hadn't done anything about it. The conversation didn't happen again, but it stuck with me.
77. Dalmhor house closed, either at the end of my Primary Seven year or the end of the following year. They moved the boys into other houses. I don't know what the school did with the house for a few years, but they still owned the property. It became a girls' boarding house later on with a different housemistress. I think it was the last boarding house before they finished boarding altogether. The housemaster of Dalmhor, Mr [redacted] wasn't a housemaster for a few years but he was still a [redacted] teacher. Then

he became a housemaster later on after another boys boarding house had been established in Glenearn. The fagging didn't seem to start up again.

78. I saw the younger boys carrying the school bags for the older boys throughout that school year and that stopped whenever Dalmhor closed. Dalmhor wasn't a very big house so there wasn't many younger boys, maybe four or five, to carry the bags for the Sixth Year boys and there would have been a similar number of those. At the age of ten I didn't think about it very much, but looking back now was that the school's way of dealing with it or was it just rationalising the boarding houses and one had to go anyway. I just don't know.
79. Bullying happened. I can remember us bullying a child. Halfway through Primary Seven a girl came to join us. She was aged eight and because there was nobody else her age she got put in our room in an extra bed. We weren't very accommodating. She was to us, ten and eleven year olds, a bit weird. She was just an eight year old girl who had lost her father, and as a result she and her brother had been sent to the school. She had no-body else her own age. We weren't very understanding and she had a hellish time. Her brother was our age and in our class but a different boarding house. He was different because he had a disability and he was picked on. They needed to be somewhere psychologically safe and they weren't. It must have been hellish for them.
80. I think the staff treated that young girl very kindly. She wasn't bullied by the staff and they tried their best to get us to be more reasonable but we weren't going to be. We could have been a lot worse, but the girl needed a lot better after what she'd gone through. I think her mother wasn't coping and somebody had decided that boarding school was a safe place to put them, maybe to give the mother a break. She and her brother didn't stay beyond that school year. My impression was it was always going to be a temporary solution.
81. I can't recall any other child with a disability in the school. There one boy who was boarding and he had diabetes. He was eating meals at certain times each day and injecting himself. I think he was cared for. His sister was in our boarding house. There

were day pupils with disabilities who were accommodated and I can't think of any other boarding pupils with disabilities.

82. If we wanted to report abuse within the school itself I think we were expected to approach our form teacher or the assistant and deputy rectors. I did report something to one of the assistant rectors about one of the teachers. He had made some comments in class that I thought were unwise. The assistant rector planned to have a conversation with the teacher in question.
83. If there were issues of abuse in the boarding house the housemistress was the person to have approached. There were house meetings every week but I don't think they were for us to raise any issues. They were mainly for her to tell us what was going on. It also gave her an opportunity to call you out on things in front of other people from the house. If there were issues you would have had to approach her directly about something. She would have never have asked us how we were getting on. Or if there was anything wrong. She was the person to go to if we wanted to report abuse. If there were any grievances against her there was nowhere to go with that apart from to my parents. They wouldn't have had anywhere obvious to go with any grievances about her.
84. I can only think of one thing Mrs MacLaughlan did to me that I think now as a parent I wouldn't do to my kids. If you didn't like something for your dinner and I was quite a fussy eater, I really didn't like lasagne. She knew I was a fussy eater and she was determined to get me to eat. She knew I didn't like lasagne. She made me sit in the dining room at the end of dinner with everybody else in the house having gone back and I was in the refectory on my own. She might have let somebody stay with me, but I was obviously singled out. I'd sit there until I'd eaten the lasagne and I was throwing it up as I was eating it and she was aware of this. She wasn't shoving it down my throat, but it was clear I was to sit there until I ate it. I wouldn't do that to my kids. I think she did it twice to me.
85. There was nowhere for me to go to complain about that. We knew who her superior was but we had no opportunity to go to them and that superior never came round to

the boarding house. If that person had visited the boarding house, once a term or once a month to chat to us and tell us we had somewhere to go it would have made a difference. It certainly didn't happen in the early years. I had nowhere to go to except to tell my mum that it wasn't fair.

86. I went to my mum about it at the time and I've spoken to her more recently. My mum commented that in those days nobody would have said anything and I asked what could she have done about me being force fed my dinner? She agreed there was nothing and nowhere to go. She had to be careful what she said to challenge the housemistress because I was living with her and if she'd been picking on me, the chances were it was going to get worse. I think she had to tread very carefully. I know she did challenge Mrs MacLaughlan about that incidence, but she did it very carefully. It didn't happen again so it had the right effect. Mrs MacLaughlan didn't run the boarding house like a home, it was like an institution. She had favourites and those that weren't, and I definitely wasn't one of her favourites. They didn't get told off as much. I wasn't tidy so I was picked on for that.
87. Eventually, when I got to fifth year, I don't know if it was because people started to complain, the person who was her superior started to take more of an interest in what was happening. She called all of the fourth, fifth and sixth year girls out of the house for a meeting with her to discuss the housemistress because of complaints from different parents. It took six years for the school to want to hear our side of the story. Mrs MacLaughlan was asked to leave and given a full reference and she got a job at a different boarding house in a different school. She left at the end of the school year. She announced it to the students that she was leaving and had been asked to leave.

### **Leaving Morrison's Academy**

88. I left the school at seventeen at the end of sixth year and I was a year younger than most of the others having skipped a year of primary school. I did Highers and then A' Levels.

### **Life after being in boarding school**

89. I went on to study civil engineering at university and worked in the UK before going back to university to study for a Masters. Then I worked overseas for aid agencies in water and sanitation before returning to the UK and starting a family and going on to run a small business.

### **Impact**

90. When I left school I said I would never send any of my own children to boarding school. My oldest is disabled and has autism and we have considered sending her away from home to school, but having got through that stage I wouldn't consider it now. It did cross my mind a few years ago that she might have benefited from a more structured system that a private school might have given. I wouldn't have sent my children to board at school and we would have moved house to avoid that and they could have been a day pupil. The education on offer might have been better, but the boarding side of things, maybe not. I would hope things have changed by now and boarding now wouldn't be how it was in the eighties.
91. Being at boarding school matures you more quickly than if you stay at home for school. You grow up quickly. I settled in quickly at university as result. When I went to university and I lived in fully catered halls, every time I sat down to eat a meal I felt like I had to make it look like I'd eaten it even when I didn't like the food. I still thought somebody would question why I hadn't eaten my dinner. So the issue with the lasagne was still in my head. I've got over it since. As a parent I've looked back at my time at boarding school and thought there's no way I could force my children to eat. My child who has autism is a very fussy eater and if she wants to eat pizza everyday then that's what I'll give her. I've used my experiences to my advantage and tried to make positives out of it and learnt from it.

92. There is a Morrisonian Club for ex-pupils and you are a life-long member when you leave the school. I've never been to anything that they've done. I have got in touch with people from school through social media and that has been a positive thing. No-one has said anything on that forum about bad memories of Morrison's.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

93. I didn't make any reports of abuse after leaving the school. I've not heard any stories about abuse at the school either.

### **Records**

94. I have school photographs and house photographs.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

95. I think if the supervisor of the boarding houses had had more regular contact with the houses that might have made a difference. At least we would have been aware that that was where we went if we had a problem. It was a long time before we did anything about the housemistress and we started writing down things that she did so there was a written record of her behaviour.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

96. I hope that anyone who has experienced abuse, but hasn't been able to resolve it through other means, will find justice and closure through this process.

**Other information**

97. 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..... 13 June 2022 .....