

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KQT

Support person present: No

1. My full name now is KQT. At school, I was known as KQT. My date of birth is 1984. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before school

2. I was born in Edinburgh and my parents are and . I have two younger brothers called and .
3. Our family home was in the Trinity area of Edinburgh. My dad worked and my mum was self-employed. As both my parents were working, I had quite a few nannies and au pairs from a young age.
4. My dad had gone to boarding school as a boy. I think he boarded there from the age of eight. He's never spoken much about his time there. On the rare occasion he has mentioned it, he's only spoken about enjoying playing golf with some people there. On the darker side of things, it was back in the days of corporal punishment and he has mentioned being caned a lot. I have a sense of there being more going on there. He has always been cagey when talking about these things and would go quiet or change the subject. I would be very surprised if his time at boarding school was a positive experience for him.
5. I wasn't going to be boarding in primary and my parents just wanted an Edinburgh private day school. My mum didn't go to private school. My understanding is that her

perception of their grammar school system was that it was very good. My dad and generations before him had gone to private boarding school. He just wanted high quality primary school education and Edinburgh Academy was only a five or ten-minute drive in the car.

6. I remember going to a nursery before starting at Edinburgh Academy and remember a lot of kids from the nursery went there as well. I don't remember if I visited before I started and don't remember if I had to sit an entrance exam either.

### **Edinburgh Academy Junior School**

#### *First day*

7. I went to Edinburgh Academy from Primary One. I don't remember my first day there. What I remember most in Primary One was that it was formal and we were all sat in our school shorts and ties. We had little wooden desks and all sat facing the front. I don't remember having a problem with that. I have recently been diagnosed with autism and am a relatively rigid type of person. I guess sitting in such a formal manner was good for me at that young age.
8. I think primary school started okay for me. I don't remember much in the way of close friendships or seeing classmates outside of school. I don't think I had many playdates in the early part of primary school, other than perhaps kids of people my parents were already friends with.
9. I think in Primary Two or Three the school started to become more violent. From a very young age, it felt like we were unsupervised for long periods of time. We would have thirty minutes or an hour at break and would all be running around with no adult supervision anywhere. All the adults were inside. If you needed something, you had to go and find an adult. Even from that young age, you got the impression you were disturbing their break and that you being there was a negative thing.

10. As time went on, there were more threats of violence. I remember feeling left alone with no adults around. I felt that I was a small kid and that the bigger kids would tell me what to do and if I didn't do it, they would hurt me. There was verbal teasing, trying to put me down and make fun of me. I think the exclusion I felt, extended to the teachers.

*Sport activities - Junior School*

11. I remember in Primary Three, Four or Primary Five we did a physical education course for a month. It was to learn the basics of basketball. There were twenty kids in my class and I was the only one at the end who failed and didn't get a certificate. I remember wishing I had been able to manage that.
12. Looking back now, why did they feel the need to do that to a primary school aged kid? Although they didn't know at the time, the one kid they didn't give the certificate to, was the autistic kid.
13. Sport was mandatory in the private school system. My main recollection of sport was feeling that I was bad at all of it. It was often just an opportunity for me to be ridiculed by my peers and feel exasperated with my teachers because they were disappointed with how I had performed.
14. We did a lot of different sports. It was mainly rugby in the winter and spring and cricket or athletics in the summer. Rugby, even from a young age, felt like the worst of the playground violence turned into a game where the bigger kids would just steamroll through the smaller kids. Teachers would take sport very seriously. It was all about performance and technique and not about how people were feeling.
15. I didn't think I was very good at athletics although the closest I felt to thinking I could actually do a sport was running. I was by myself and wasn't the slowest. I wasn't the fastest either but I felt that I could hide. My physical education classes were more organised games. I was always the last one to be picked and people would be audibly disappointed when I had to be on their team.

### *Teachers in Junior School*

16. There were some teachers who were perceived as being volatile, particularly male teachers. In Primary Five my history teacher was Mr Brownlee. There were some teachers who just seemed to be angry men and the type of people you felt, if pushed too far, something bad would happen, even although I never saw or heard anything.
17. Tony Dyer was one and he seemed like he was ready to explode at any time. I think he taught me maths in Primary Four or Five. Brownlee and Dyer are the two who have stuck in my mind for that sense of volatility. Having read both their names in the press recently, it didn't really surprise me.
18. I remember a teacher called Norman Jack who took scripture union along with his wife. He was my form teacher in Primary Six and always seemed like a more gentle soul. We went to the same church later in life and again, in comparison to Brownlee and Dyer, he was gentle and a nice man. I did see Norman lose control on occasion but it seemed to be that he was losing control emotionally with the class's behaviour and that he was finding it upsetting. It was strange to see him almost breakdown and be literally crying or close to tears and being loudly emotional in front of the kids. I never saw any violence or heard of any threats of violence from him.

### *Academic ability*

19. I felt that I did well academically and was the top of my class in several subjects. In Primary Three or Four, I felt that I wasn't useless and could be smart and do well in class. At the latter end of primary school, I remember being introduced to computers. I can still remember writing my first computer code ever in Primary Five and this being one of the happiest moments of my life. I had a teacher in Primary Five who was into computers as well. He would give me little games on a disk and we would swap games back and forward. I remember having a puzzle related to computer issues I had to solve at home. Any opportunity I had to be doing something on a computer was great.

20. That teacher was Richard Lane. I think he was actually a student teacher and I felt that I had a shared interest with him.
21. There wasn't a head boy at primary school, that only really started at secondary school. The closest we came to something like that was at the end of each year when there was a prize-giving for the best child in the class, the smartest or best attainment. That was a prize I got in Primary Three or Four. I got a silver medal.
22. There would be report cards sent home and parent's nights. My parents were friends with some of the teachers. When I didn't get that certificate in basketball, I felt that I couldn't complain to my mother because of that. I felt that my mum would have taken the teacher's side, so there wasn't really any point.
23. My main perception was that the school was mainly only interested in grades and academic and sporting achievement. My sporting achievement was getting a box ticked, I showed up and did what I was meant to do. I didn't get out of it and wasn't naturally gifted at it. In musical achievement, I was doing a little better and academic achievement, I was doing well.

#### *Bullying in Junior School*

24. A running theme through both primary and secondary schools, was that some teachers voiced concerns privately to both my parents. It was never unsolicited but when my parents had gone in to have a conversation with them. I don't have any memories of my parents asking me if I was being bullied or them asking me why things were going so badly at school.
25. I felt that the way the system was presented to me in primary school was that any problems you had were to be taken to your form teachers and they would resolve them. My perception was that this was seen as an inconvenience. It felt to me and I think most others, that it was our job to sort it out.

26. I think some of the lines I would get from my parents from primary and extending into secondary was that I needed to ignore the bullies and not give them a reaction. Essentially, if you were quiet and ignored them, they would go away.
27. I don't know how much I was saying to my mum and dad. I was definitely explaining the occasional conflict and saying that I wasn't enjoying my interactions with other kids. I don't know if they saw that I wasn't sociable outside of school. There wasn't a lot of playing with other kids going on. If there was a group that I was a part of, it would be a short-term thing before I was excluded from the group.
28. We were segmented into year groups so the bullies would be in the same class. We would be together at class times and breaktimes. The bullying incidents were usually at breaktimes or in class times when waiting for the teachers to arrive in class.

#### *Preparing for Senior School*

29. I remember us all being up in the secondary school and there being a big intake of kids from other schools, either state schools or other private primary schools. I remember it felt in some ways that everything had stepped up a gear from primary school. The academic, sport and music were more serious. Almost instantly, the violence stepped up.
30. As a parent now, I think the teachers should have known we were vulnerable going up to secondary school and that we needed to be prepared for that.

#### **Edinburgh Academy Senior School**

31. The headteacher in the secondary school was John Light. I think he was the headteacher for the entire time I was there. My memories of contact with him were of him saying that I needed to tighten my tie or that I looked scruffy or had bad table manners. He felt distant to me and certainly wasn't someone I would have approached to speak about any of the things that were going on.

32. I'm not sure if I had the same [REDACTED] for the entire time I was there, but I remember it being ICM [REDACTED]
33. There were only boys at the secondary school up until my last two years when girls were introduced. I would say it was around 90% boys and 10% girls.
34. We were split into houses which were loosely related to the boarding houses, I think. They didn't really mean too much and were kept randomly for sports at various times but didn't really mean anything beyond that.

*First year/Geits*

35. Geits was a term used for first year pupils at secondary school. I don't think I felt vulnerable because of anything the school said in that first year at secondary school, I felt vulnerable because I didn't know what the transition process was going to be. I felt vulnerable in terms of going to a bigger place, bigger school with bigger people around. The teachers felt even more distant. The breaks were longer, so we had more time left alone. Although the campus felt less enclosed and it would have been easy to run out the gate and get away, it felt that the punishment would be more severe. It also felt that at age eleven, I was a semi-adult and was going to be held to a much higher standard.
36. In my first week of secondary school, one of the strong kids repeatedly slammed a classroom door against my friend KPO's head. He then did the same to me. KPO was autistic and there were zero repercussions for that. It became very clear to me that essentially the people that were going to stand up for the kids were the kids. If you stood up for a kid who was vulnerable and was being abused, you would probably take what the kid was going to get.
37. This was something that I did on a regular basis. As an adult, I realise that the big kids were beating up the small kids and I was just another small kid. The choices were to do nothing or to get beaten up yourself. I feel from that young age we were trying to survive. The grown-ups were just there to make sure we grew up to be good and

proper gentlemen and part of that was learning the innate violence that was present in the system. You just had to suck it up and if you were lucky, you got to an age where you were able to apply it to other pupils and that was that.

38. There were a lot of jokes about essentially doing whatever you liked to the smaller kids because you wouldn't receive punishment. In some ways, the rite of passage was you took the violence when you were new to the school and were then in the privileged position to give it back when older.

### *Boarding Houses*

39. I wasn't really aware of boys boarding when at primary school. I think I became more aware of that in secondary school. There may have been boys boarding in primary but there didn't seem to be a distinct difference.
40. The boarding houses were right next to the playing fields. Everyone knew what they were but there wasn't really much awareness of what went on there beyond knowing the kids themselves.
41. I became more aware of the boarders in secondary school. I remember that the stereotypical boarder would be someone whose parents lived abroad and were originally from China or Japan. They would be boarding over here and their families would be back home. They would be in the boarding houses most of the time.
42. I felt that the boarders were relatively well integrated. Everyone knew who they were and I wouldn't say they were picked on any more than others. I wouldn't know precisely, but the percentage of boarders at the school would have been between five and ten percent. I don't think I ever set foot in any of the boarding houses.

### *Daily routine*

43. I would be dropped off by my parents in the morning. That would be sometime between 8:30 and 9:00 am. When I was older, I cycled into school.

44. In the morning, we would all mill around in the classroom. There would be some teachers around preparing for the day. Then everyone would go off to assembly. We would sing some hymns and have some notes from the teachers or headteacher. We would head off from there to our first lesson around 9:30 am.
45. We would have a couple of lessons and have a morning break between 11:30 and 12:00 noon. Again, for me the breaktimes were the bad times, where there were no adults around and I had to figure out how to not get into trouble. At primary school, I would say most of the violence was from kids my age but at secondary school, you weren't just looking out for the big kids in your year, you were looking out for the kids who were older than you. You were having to be careful around them because they were more physically powerful than you and could hurt you.
46. In the afternoon, we would have another two or three lessons. We would then have after school activities from 3:30 until 4:35 pm. That would be sports or other options like chemistry club or orchestra. On paper, you did have a choice as to whether you did afterschool activities but as both my parents were working, I was in afterschool five afternoons a week. If you did sports, you would be punished for going home early or turning up late.

#### *Food/mealtimes*

47. Lunchtime was over an hour and a half. During that time, we ate our lunch in the dining hall. The kids ate at the bottom of the hall, the teachers all ate on an elevated area.
48. After eating it was free play in the playground. There were a couple of teachers on duty for the entire school and two teachers outside the lunch hall to make sure there was nothing too crazy going on.

### *Combined Cadet Force*

49. Combined Cadet Force (CCF) came along when I was thirteen or fourteen. There was a semi choice-based system where the majority of kids did the army CCF. There was also the Royal Airforce and the Navy. The perception was anybody who wanted the army section could do that because they could accommodate the most people. You had to be selected for the RAF and the Navy was for kids who couldn't get into the RAF and didn't want to do the Army. I remember around that time and for a while before, I had been very passionate about aeroplanes and the RAF and wanted to be a pilot.
50. I remember asking if I could be in the RAF. I turned up for my CCF interview and gave them aircraft facts during the interview. I had lots of ring binders at home and knew the speeds all the aircrafts could go at and the armaments in the RAF at that time. I thought that if I knew lots of things and could share that with them, it would show I was enthusiastic. Instead, what happened was that the older kids and the teachers involved in the selection, actually mocked me for being weird. I was basically told that I wouldn't be joining the RAF and would be joining one of the other groups. They thought it was strange that I would have so much knowledge.
51. There was a time in the school where CCF became optional. You could still do it until the end of the school if you wanted to but you didn't have to do it anymore. There was about a seventy-five percent drop off. At that time, despite being humiliated before, there was a chance I could get in. I asked and very grudgingly, with some petitioning from my parents, I was allowed to join. I was told I would have to join at the basic level along with kids three or four years younger than me. I was now three years older, had been in the air cadets outside school for three years and had achieved a rank there. I ended up teaching those kids whilst being the same rank as them.
52. In hindsight, it's obvious to me that the teacher felt she had to let me join whether she liked it or not. She would regularly voice her displeasure that I was there. It was a humiliating situation and kids younger than me would mock me for being the same rank as them.

### *Air Cadets and local state school children*

53. I did the Navy section in CCF at Edinburgh Academy. I was so passionate about the RAF and disappointed that I wasn't selected, that I went to an air cadet group out of school a couple of evenings per week. That was a strange experience for me. At Edinburgh Academy, it was presented to us that we were the posh kids and almost eugenical, superior humans. Kids in state schools and in rough areas, such as Muirhouse and Pilton, were less than us and were all crazy and super violent.
54. Going to the air cadets was probably my first real contact with non-private school kids. Other than one girl, all the air cadet kids were from Pilton and Muirhouse. I had experienced so much violence at school, I was prepared for violence from these people. In fact, it was the complete opposite. The violence was coming from the kids at Edinburgh Academy but not coming from the kids in the air cadets. I could tell that they were very sensitive to me going to a private school and would not have appreciated me being a snob but they treated me really well. They were very protective of me.
55. There were a couple of times outside of school, where I had altercations with boys from Edinburgh Academy and the boys from the air cadets had my back. I seemed to be able to fit in with these guys more than I did with the boys at Edinburgh Academy.

### *School Motto and Anthem*

56. The motto of Edinburgh Academy was '*floreat academia*', which I think meant glory to the Academy. We all sang a school song entirely in Latin and I can still remember the first few lines of it. It was, "*Floreat academia, mater alma mater pater*" which was 'glory to the academia, it's my mother and father' or along those lines. Even at the time, I remember thinking it was a bit weird. It felt like we were singing the Nazi national anthem.
57. Even at that age, I felt that I was in an oppressive horrible place, where horrible things happen to a lot of kids so why would I sing this? It felt almost part of a cultlike

indoctrination, and that we were singing this song about this place being our father and mother, a place almost more important than our parents.

58. As I progressed through the school and went from survival to protest, I decided I wasn't going to sing that song, whether it was in assembly or at the end of year. Even after I had left the school and went back because my brothers were there, I wouldn't sing it.

#### *Culture at Edinburgh Academy*

59. I wouldn't say teachers were explicit about us being superior. If you had asked me ten years ago, I would have said that the teachers didn't think that. Looking back now and remembering some of the conversations that were had in teacher's earshot, conversations containing fascist language, I think differently.
60. The teachers wouldn't nod along but would tolerate it. They wouldn't jump in and they wouldn't disagree or contradict. I can't really remember specifics now but words like 'Schemies' and 'Scum' were used, essentially indicating that all kids who went to state school were 'Scum'. I know teachers overheard this and didn't contradict it. It felt very adversarial.
61. There were first-hand accounts from people who saw Edinburgh Academy kids being beaten up by kids from the state school and Edinburgh Academy kids beating up state school kids. Rocks were thrown and ambushes arranged. It was definitely presented to us as a type of gang warfare and that we had to look out for these types of people.
62. To walk from the secondary school to where the sports grounds were, you had to walk past Broughton High School. Often the time you had to do that was the time they were finishing school. I never personally saw any altercations but heard lots of anecdotes of violence between groups. On some occasions, I overheard teachers hearing about the violence and them essentially encouraging it. We were to stick up for the school.
63. There were never any interactions involving Edinburgh Academy kids, the state schools or the wider community, which was organised by Edinburgh Academy.

### *Clothing/Uniform/school rules*

64. I remember when I was fifteen or sixteen, my best friend and I went to [ICM], [REDACTED]. One of the school rules, was that you had to go to and from the school in your school uniform. When walking through Granton and places like that in your uniform, you would get at least one comment and there were a few altercations and times you would be chased by other kids. We asked [ICM] if we could at least take our school ties off. We told him we felt physically intimidated but he didn't care. He said those were the rules and that we had to abide by them.
65. We had a little book we were handed at the beginning of the year. It had our classes and the names of teachers in it. I think there was a subset of rules and a set of rules we were all made aware of. There was a lot of concern about table manners and not putting your elbows on the table, how you held your knife and fork, is your tie straight, is your shirt straight? Then there was a rule about not having your hair too short. If you had your hair shaved to a three or less on the sides or back, you would be suspended from the school and would not be able to come back until your hair had grown back. That actually happened on several occasions.
66. I know of at least three people who were suspended because of their hair. I know several people, including myself, who had bones broken at the school, reported it and no one was ever suspended. That was for demonstrable physical assault. It was clear at the time and even more so looking back, that the important thing was to look presentable, not to speak back, be polite, have good manners, be where you were meant to be on time. Then there was a secondary onus, which was, if we could avoid it, try and not kill each other.

### *External Inspections*

67. I remember teacher inspectors coming in and pupils occasionally trying to embarrass the teachers in front of the inspector. It felt like the inspectors were there to inspect that classes were being taught and the curriculum was being followed. The inspectors weren't wandering around a lunch breaks making sure pupils weren't getting shouted

at. I can't imagine that was a primary part of their job description or that they were particularly worried about it.

#### *Prefects/senior pupils*

68. There were prefects in the top year. They called them ephors. We learned from a young age that the ephors were untouchable. They weren't teachers but were as close as you could get to being a teacher while being a pupil. If they told you what to do, you would do what they said. I had stopped reporting things to the school much earlier but you would definitely think carefully before you reported an ephor. If my threshold of reporting another pupil was say a five out of ten, then reporting an ephor would have been much higher.
69. It wasn't the case when I was there but it was widely known in the school history that the ephors used to be the first rugby team. There was still a strong association with the ephors being the players. The rugby players being the bigger, stronger, heavier kids and generally the more physically intimidating kids.
70. Ephors had their own room that only they could go in. I don't remember specifically ephors being violent towards me. I don't remember what age or stage the older pupils were or whether they were ephors or not but there were times older kids, particularly older rugby players would push me around and in one case rough me up a bit. This would have been towards the latter end of my time at the school because my youngest brother was in secondary school by this point.

#### *Trips and holidays*

71. There was a schoolhouse in the Highlands called Blair house. Those trips felt alright. It felt like the teachers kept a closer eye on things. I didn't feel so unsafe on these trips. Similarly, on CCF camps, I always felt safer.

## *Education and Grades*

72. As a lifelong trend, from primary onto my current career, I'm somebody who is quite smart but also lazy. Primary school was less orientated on homework and more about what you could come up with on the spot and how quickly could you come up with new concepts. I'm good at that. Secondary school went more towards going home, spending time with parents and I was lazy.
73. My grades were good the first few years of secondary school. My GCSEs were deemed to be okay but disappointing to what they thought my potential was and that was made clear to. I think I got five A's and five B's, which for some kids would have been okay but for me it was a massive disappointment. That disappointment came from my teachers, my parents and was reflected in my school reports.
74. In some cases, teachers, in front of other kids in the class, talked about how much of a disappointment I was. They said that I was failing to meet my potential, was lazy and failing to apply myself.
75. I remember in my AS (advanced subsidiary) level when I was sixteen, my [REDACTED] teacher, Dr IRR [REDACTED], spent the first five to fifteen minutes of [REDACTED] lessons, berating me. He would talk about how disappointing my homework was, that it was late and not good enough, that my exam result was terrible. I remember a bunch of the other kids in the class being uncomfortable with him tearing me to shreds in front of everyone. I know Dr IRR [REDACTED] was going through a divorce at the time but it was no excuse.
76. My autistic best friend, KPO [REDACTED], had a support teacher who sat next to him in class. She was in the [REDACTED] class and witnessed the way Dr IRR [REDACTED] spoke to me and said nothing. There was a sense of her being there to look after KPO [REDACTED] and anything else that happened in the class, was not her problem.
77. Due to my academic ability in secondary school, I was expected to be getting straight A's. As time went on, and nothing was done about the bullying, I started to think, what's

the point? I'd go to class and pay attention but wondered why I should put in the effort with my homework. My internal narrative was all they wanted from me was my grades. I was having a horrible time at the school and I didn't want to be there.

### *Healthcare*

78. At the age of thirteen or fourteen, I was actively planning to kill myself and trying to figure out the best way of doing it
79. My understanding is that my mum noticed that my mental health was bad around the time. A number of years ago, she told me that she had gone to John Light, the headmaster, worried that I was a suicide risk. Apparently his response was, *"Don't worry, he won't do a silly thing like that."* At no time during or after this time did any teacher ever ask me how I was doing, how my mental health was or if I was being bullied.
80. There was another conversation where my mother had expressed concern about the isolation, the bullying and me being excluded. John Light apparently commented to her that a lot of people didn't understand me and thought I was hard with a soft inner side. Knowing what I know now, I was an autistic child who didn't respond the same way emotionally as non-autistic children do.
81. The academic side, my mental health and suicidal thoughts, felt as if they were all closely mapped into me not coping at school, feeling like I had no friends, being isolated and not doing well academically. Everything seemed to go wrong at once. I remember feeling in that period that the only support I had was from my dog and my teddy bear. I felt utterly alone. On any particular day, there was a fifty to eighty percent chance I was going to be beaten and if I tried to avoid it and was late for class, I would be punished for that too. I just felt like there was no escape.

### *Pastoral Role*

82. I think the chaplain at Edinburgh Academy was in a pastoral role but I don't think I ever actually had a conversation with him the entire time I was there. His name was Mr Hazlett. He certainly wasn't going out of his way to find or help vulnerable people.

### *Music*

83. Edinburgh Academy were always big on their orchestras and classical music. I had been playing the cello for a long time and had a private cello teacher. I remember her refusing to teach me after I told her that I hadn't practiced because I hated playing the cello, hated practicing it and was only there because my parents forced me.
84. I remember having a similar conversation with the head of music at Edinburgh Academy who said that even although I hated it, it was his job to make me do music.

### *Bullying*

85. The only conversation I ever remember having about bullying was when the head of year had a conversation with me about me bullying KPO and how I needed to change my behaviour. This would have been in my third or fourth year in the secondary school. That teacher was Mr Trotter. His wife was the learning support teacher who sat in class next to KPO. I'm pretty sure that report didn't come from the school but from his wife whilst they were at home having a chat. I think I was contrite, said I wasn't bullying him but would adjust my behaviour.
86. KPO and I alternated between being best friends and almost nemeses. We were both at the bottom of the pile and had been physically bullied a lot. We were trying to assert our way in the dominance structure. He would call me names like, 'radiator ribs' because I was so skinny and I would push him around because I was a bit stronger than him. He would still come to my house as my friend a month later. In hindsight, we were both vulnerable but recognised we had some sort of commonality in that we were the bottom of the pile. We were never going to be the cool kids, the strong kids or the

bullies but could have our little fights to decide which of us was at the bottom that particular week.

87. I think I started trying to make sense of what was going on around me whilst trying to figure out how to stop the bullying. Looking back and knowing how my brain works, I was almost in science mode and thinking of it as an experiment. I was going to follow the rules, get kicked about, be isolated and nobody would care. But I was going to try various things to see what would happen.
88. I thought why should I do this for you, you don't care about me? I wanted to do things that made me happy and not the pointless work they were asking me to do. Having had advice from my parents in relation to bullying, "*Don't rise to it, ignore it,*" I would try to ignore insults and avoid people. At times, I would be getting beaten and I would try not to make a noise or show any emotional response and would quietly take it until it went away.
89. I thought I was smart and all these kids beating me up were less smart than me. I would think of an insult I could say to them, knowing this would make matters worse but knowing I could come up with something better than they could. I knew that this would bring more violence and that I would get hurt more but it meant that I had some sense of ownership over what was happening. I would dredge something up about their family or something I remembered that happened years before, just to get some reaction.
90. Then there were times where I was being beaten up, where I would try to laugh hysterically whilst they were doing it so they would think I was weird and leave me alone.
91. I remember either my GCSE or AS level year, my maths teacher, Dr Brookman, would always hand back our homework in reverse order so everyone in the class knew that the first person to get their homework back had done the worst. I remember one of the bullies in that class telling me that he had done better than me and I felt that I had lost my last strength, which was being smarter than them. In a funny way, that's what

helped me crawl out of it. I had hit rock bottom, everyone in my life was disappointed in me. No one thought I cared or was doing a good job.

92. With my academic work, I didn't try. I rebelled against the school. That was the thing the school cared most about and I hoped someone would notice.
93. No one ever linked my grades deteriorating or my unhappiness at the school to being bullied. There was just a sense that I was lazy and wasn't applying myself. In some ways, not trying in school compounded things for me because the one thing I did have was being smart.
94. I think the first time I was able to do computing was for my Higher in my last year. My computer teacher, in hindsight, was feeling intimidated by me because I knew way more than he did. He would take every chance he got to tear me down.
95. The school would give prizes every year. That year they decided not to give a computer prize as they felt there was no one good enough to merit a prize. I went off to another School where I did computing both years, did a computer science degree and am now a computer software entrepreneur. I did pretty well for myself but none of this was encouraged at Edinburgh Academy. I still don't really understand what was going on there. It was the one thing that I was really good at. Even then they found a way of knocking me down.

#### *Social ostracism*

96. Social ostracism was something that went on through the years, not just the physical violence. I remember it happening frequently. I didn't wear a watch and would ask someone for the time and they would often pretend that I didn't exist. I would ask three or four times and in some cases be completely ignored. It became a bit like a game, where they would say to their friends, "*Is it windy, I can hear this noise.*" I guess it was to publicly humiliate me, to be clear they were ignoring me and not even looking at me. They would just pretend I didn't exist.

97. My closest three male friends from Edinburgh Academy in those days were people from single mother families. That was quite unusual at the time. It just felt that all of us were outsiders. It turned out that three out the four of us ended up having neurodivergence diagnoses. There was a hundred percent chance that if you were neurodivergent, you were not going to be one of the cool kids or one of the kids who were taken seriously. At best you could do very well academically and just hide the rest of the time.

*Growing in confidence*

98. I remember making this friend called [REDACTED]. He was in the year above me and cross year friendships were unusual. He was also a bit of an outcast and had a gang of people who were also socially ostracised. We had a commonality there. I think [REDACTED] built me up from nothing. I don't know where he got it from, but he had an attitude of, "We're awesome and everyone else around here who doesn't want to talk to us or know us, we feel sorry for." Those people didn't get to hang out with us.
99. [REDACTED] definitely built me up. He was the friend I went to [REDACTED] with when we asked about walking home in uniform. I think it was mainly him who instigated that and he gave me a lot of confidence. That was the period I started having more friendships outside of school. I started drinking and going to house parties.
100. [REDACTED] was helping me come out of my shell. Although not encouraged by the school or parents, I remember kissing a girl and having those formative teenage experiences. I had to pave my own way. The closest thing I had to a parental figure at that time was [REDACTED] and perhaps his mother.
101. Outside of school, I was doing more and more stuff with computers and was getting better at it. I was building confidence and people started asking me to help fix computer issues they were having. I started earning a bit of money from it. That was entirely self-taught. I was spending more and more of my lunchtimes and break times in the computer room at the school. It was seen as a bit of an annoyance but they allowed me to be there. Because there were always adults around there it felt like a safe place.

Even some of the teachers started asking me for help with some of their computer problems.

### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy Junior School**

102. One of my earliest memories from Primary Two or Three was of a kid in the playground who grabbed me by the hair and smacked my head against a brick wall. I found it very painful and very distressing. I went to get a teacher and tell them what had happened. When they came out, the boy started crying and denied it. He said that I had hit his head against the wall and that it wasn't the other way round. I ended up being punished for that. I don't think I had any marks from the wall, possibly under my hair.
103. I realise now, having recently been diagnosed with autism, that I have what I'd call, shutdowns. I wouldn't cry under those situations, I would go quiet and not make eye contact. My perception looking back is that the teacher came out and saw two kids pointing the finger at each other. One boy looked visibly stressed and the other one looked perfectly fine and was avoiding eye contact. From that, the teacher decided who the guilty one was. I don't remember who the boy was or the teacher.
104. I felt in some ways that was an early lesson that life was not fair and adults were not to be trusted. You could tell the truth, be honest and get punished anyway. You had to figure out your own way of dealing with these things because adults were not going to help you. I don't recall my punishment for that, I think I had to sit inside for the rest of the break, I'm not sure.
105. In Primary Five my history teacher was Mr Brownlee. I remember on one occasion he said to the whole class that he had a white stick in his cupboard that would leave no marks if he hit us with it. He would say if we were bad in class and he hit us with the stick and we told our parent about it, our parents would know we were lying because there would be no marks and that our parents would hit us for lying.

106. Brownlee was also renowned for picking things up from the aisles in the classroom and throwing them out the second-floor window. These would be things like musical instruments. I remember various families complaining that a saxophone or similar instrument had been damaged after he had thrown it out the window.
107. On occasions, Brownlee would even threaten to throw kids out the window. I never saw him do anything to any kids but there were definitely explicit threats being made that we needed to behave or there would be violence.

### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy Senior School**

108. I remember my first week of secondary and being in our new classes. In Mr Hudson's geography class, one of the strong kids held this boy called KPO and bashed his head on the door. He repeatedly slammed the door against his head. I remember going over and telling him to stop it and then him slamming the door against my head. KPO's surname is KPO and I'm sure the guy who did it was called . I wasn't injured from this, as in it didn't stop me carrying on as normal but I was in pain during and after it happened. I didn't feel that I had any recourse either. I think I just got used to thinking I was going to get hurt by other kids and there was nothing I could do about that.
109. If I remember correctly, this happened whilst we were in the classroom waiting for the teacher to arrive. If a lesson started at 1:30 pm and you cruised in at 1:35 pm, you would be told off or potentially punished. Everyone had to be there early although the teacher wouldn't normally get there until 1:35 pm. For me the repeated and most severe violence was not in the playground. We were all in the classroom together with no supervision. I remember there would be some sort of violence and the teacher would come in and say, "*Stop that and sit down.*"
110. You weren't allowed to go off school campus during break times. I do remember one time being beaten quite badly, being upset and running off the campus for fifteen minutes. I then turned up ten minutes late for the lesson and was berated by the

teacher in front of the class and punished. There was no, *"Are you okay, what's going on?"* I was thirteen or fourteen when that happened.

111. That specific incident happened with the geography teacher, Mr Hudson. I remember that his class was where the most severe violence happened, while we were waiting for him to arrive.
112. I remember a time where me and another kid were trying to strangle each other to a point where we both had very visible bruising to our necks. I don't really know why Mr Hudson's class was the worst.
113. I remember there was a lot of violence in the French class before French lessons. Someone in the class, usually me, would be picked on, beaten up and then stuffed into a bin so you couldn't get out. Then the bin would be put up on a desk. When the teacher came into the classroom, it would be part of the game that everyone would look studious and ready for the class. I would be this person wedged in the bin on the desk. The teacher would ask what had happened and say they couldn't do things like that but there was never any sense of acknowledging this was something that was happening repeatedly and that something had to be done about it.
114. This kid used to beat me up regularly. I remember going through all these different strategies, the laughing, the ignoring, trying to get away and thinking that the only thing that was left was to fight back. I remember getting myself psyched up and when he came over to me and me knowing he was going to hit me, I punched him in the stomach. He was quite startled at me fighting back but he just pinned me to the ground and bent my finger back until it broke. There was a loud snap sound.
115. I went to the nurse in a lot of pain and the nurse asked me what had happened. For a change, I told her exactly what had happened. I told her that I was trying to defend myself and this guy broke my finger and his name was [REDACTED]. The teacher of this class was Madam Hartley, the French teacher. I told her that he had broken my finger deliberately. The nurse asked me if I wanted to report it and I said that I did.

116. I told my parents about it at the time and my mum remembers it in detail. I didn't do French in my last year so this must have been when I was fourteen or fifteen. For me that was the most formative moment of my time at secondary school. I definitely went to the school nurse about it and think she bandaged it up. I maybe went to the family GP afterwards but I didn't go to hospital.
117. I remember my friend KPO making a joke about someone having dandruff. He was grabbed by the hair and had his face smashed on the desk so hard that his front teeth shattered. He had to get emergency dental work done to replace his teeth. Again, that was a detention, no one was suspended for that. I can remember seeing bits of KPO's teeth all over the desk. That was another pre-class situation before the teacher came in. The boy who did that was called [REDACTED]. Even now, KPO still blames himself for that and says that he was trying to be a smart mouth and had pushed [REDACTED] too far.
118. An older boy called [REDACTED] came to the school in either my last year or the year before. He was an overweight twenty stone, six-foot-tall boy. He became known as a dangerous guy. I remember him deliberately smashing into a younger boy with such force that he broke the boy's arm. I remember seeing the boy in the school with his broken arm in a sling. Again, there was no suspension for that. There were other incidents where I maybe didn't witness the actual incidents happening but did witness the before and after. I remember a boy had his collarbone broken.
119. I've spoken to other friends about how we felt at the time and we all think it was like 'Lord of the Flies.' The pupils were policing these things ourselves. If you defaced a desk or took a football into the playground where you were only allowed a tennis ball, you would certainly have got adult attention. But extreme violence happening on a regular basis, even where a teacher came into their classroom to find a bunch of pupils piled on top of a kid, they would just say, "*Come on, sit down*" and then start the class rather than deal with the situation.
120. I remember a lot of times where there would be six, eight or ten guys who would form a 'gauntlet'. You would be pushed to the floor and they would all kick you. I would try

various strategies to avoid that. I remember one time that happened to a guy who is now dead. He had recently returned to the school having received chemotherapy for childhood leukaemia. After they did that to this guy, I think there was a bit of self-policing. I think they realised they shouldn't have been doing that to him. He was vulnerable and near the bottom of the pile but actively kicking into a cancer survivor with his hair shaved off was beyond the pale. I remember the boy's name was [REDACTED]. I don't remember any of the other people involved.

121. Any teacher who says they didn't know the violence was going on is a liar. There is no way people were not aware what was going on there. To me, any teacher who even thought something was going on and did nothing, is culpable. To me, they were all part of that system.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Edinburgh Academy**

122. I remember one of the few times I decided to tell someone was after the most severe incident in a classroom where there was a lot of violence and I had my finger broken. I told my parents and the nurse what had happened.
123. I remember one of the punishments was a detention over lunch time. You had to spend an hour sitting in a room doing some homework and not playing outside. That was [REDACTED]'s punishment for breaking my finger. There was never any conversation about it with me and I was never asked if this was a pattern of behaviour or whether I had a problem with [REDACTED]. There was no concern. This is along with a context where people are being suspended for having their hair too short. [REDACTED] stopped hitting me after that but other people didn't.
124. I think the idea was to tell your teacher if you had any problems or complaints. You could tell your form teacher, the head teacher or even the nurse. There were a lot of people you could tell but it didn't feel as if there was a specific process.

125. In some ways Edinburgh Academy's attitude was that if you came out with three As at A-level and had the shit kicked out of you for twelve years, which was better for you than coming out with three B's and being left alone.
126. There was talk about bullying being bad, don't bully people, if you see someone being bullied, make sure you report it to a teacher. I think I may have laughed one time it was being said. To me it was like one of these signs in a train station where it says no smoking in this area and someone is literally standing under the sign smoking. It just felt like they were saying these words because they had to and that there was some guidance, recommendations or laws that said that they had to but none of them cared.
127. No one was doing anything towards stopping the bullying. The closest I could see to anything approaching trying to stop bullying, was the computer technician letting us sit in the computing room at lunchtime. Looking back, he probably suspected. He wasn't a teacher, he was auxiliary staff and never taught a lesson by himself.

### **Leaving Edinburgh Academy**

128. I didn't do as well in my GCSE's as it was hoped. I would have had two further years at Edinburgh Academy doing my Highers and AS levels in the first year and then A-Levels in the second year. I sat my first-year exams of the two years and they didn't go well either. I think I got a B, C and two D's. I think the expectations were I should be getting mainly A's or entirely A's. I think there was a sense from Edinburgh Academy and my parents that things were going in a downhill direction after them spending a huge amount of money and I wasn't going to get into university. Leaving Edinburgh Academy and not going to university meant you had essentially failed.
129. At sixteen, I was deeply sick of Edinburgh Academy and going through a cynical stage. Sometimes on a school night, I would go out and drink underage until 1:00 or 2:00 am without my parents realising.

130. I can't remember how the conversation started but I ended up looking at a few different schools. One was Loretto, another one was a random school in Nottingham. I had made friends with some people at an air cadet camp and they were all from down there. The other one was Strathallan School in Perthshire. I really liked it there and I had a vague connection through a neighbour's son who was there.
131. I ended up going to Strathallan. It was pitched to me that it was because of my age but I think it was more to do with my grades and I had to repeat a year. I did my A-level year again.

### **Strathallan School, Perthshire**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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181. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Strathallan School, Perthshire**

183. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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185.

### **Life after boarding school**

186. Along with a fair few other people from Strathallan, I went off to Edinburgh University only to be told that in the first two years, tutorials were recommended but optional. You had to make sure you got a pass grade but that they didn't count to your over all grades. I thought I would go to the minimum amount of classes and play lots of computer games. I came very close to failing in my first and second year and knew a few grade A students from Strathallan who did fail in their first or second year.

187. In my third year, I tried a bit harder but still didn't do very well. In my fourth year though, I did well and managed to scrape a 2/1 honours degree. It worked out okay in the end.
188. At university, I felt that I had lots of friends who accepted me as I was. There were hundreds of people who were as obsessed with computers as me. I had complete control of my environment. I could choose where I slept, when I slept and what I did in my spare time. I did kickboxing and felt that I could physically defend myself. Each year I was at university it got better and better.
189. I left university in 2007 and got a job down south for a year, changed to another job and since 2009, I've worked from home in Scotland. I've worked in the technology industry the whole time.
190. My younger brother stayed at Edinburgh Academy throughout his school days. He did okay and had lots of social circles. There were lots of complaints about him not paying attention and it turns out he has ADHD. My youngest brother was not doing great at Edinburgh Academy. He was pulled out at thirteen or fourteen and went to another boarding school.
191. My mum continued to volunteer at Edinburgh Academy until all three of us had left. She volunteered with the athletics and had a social/work type relationship with some of the teachers there.
192. Since leaving Edinburgh Academy, I've had no contact with any of the teachers and wouldn't be in a rush to have any. I've never attended any school reunion there.

### **Impact**

193. Since leaving education, I've done judo, kickboxing, weightlifting and entered powerlifting competitions. It's almost been a defence mechanism. I will not be weak again or allow myself to be physically pushed around again. As an adult, I feel that the

police are not going to protect me. I don't think the adults or institutions are going to protect me and ultimately it's up to me to protect myself and the people I care about.

194. It's strange but I don't even feel that emotional about it. I can watch a sad film and feel sad about it or hear other people share their experiences and feel sad about it. In a way, that boy who went through all those things at Edinburgh Academy died. I'm not him. I'm different and have a different name. It feels like there was a change in my life that completely disconnected me from that person. I don't feel sad or that it has brought up all these emotions describing it. It feels like I'm describing a film I watched five years ago. I can speak about the child who had his finger broken and think that wasn't good but I don't have an emotional response to it. I don't feel upset or that I'm reliving it, it just feels like I'm a spectator.
195. My wife had a normal experience at a fairly typical Scottish state school. When we go to our child's school, it's hard for me not to hear his teacher say things without having an adversarial mindset and always thinking my son is in the right and the teacher in the wrong.
196. I think my relationship with my parents is still impacted by my experiences at Edinburgh Academy. My dad doesn't talk about it and I don't feel able to talk to him about it. I've tried to talk to my mum about it. I don't know whether she feels guilty or it's cognitive dissonance where she can't bring herself to agree with what happened. My therapist has encouraged me to speak to her about it but she's too old and almost certainly autistic as well. She can't get behind or take with the idea that some of the names mentioned abused children at Edinburgh Academy. Some of the teachers remain personal friends of hers to this day.
197. I know some people who won't speak to the Inquiry until their parents have passed away. They feel their parents will blame themselves for not intervening at the time. It's difficult where parents have made huge financial sacrifices to send their kids to a place where they were abused. If they had saved their money, their kids would probably not had that experience. I can only imagine how horrendous that is for a parent.

198. I've had some imposter syndrome about having therapy and speaking about it. I wasn't even sure whether my experiences would be of interest to the Inquiry.
199. I've had a good life. My twenties were great, my thirties have been wonderful and I'm a really happy guy. The sad reality is that for a lot of people who went through similar things to me that isn't the case. There's been several divorces, people with drink problems, drug problems.
200. In my case, it's hard to know what came from the abuse and what came from my autism. I think I'm quite a closed off, unemotional person. I think people find it hard to know what I'm thinking about or if I'm upset.
201. I remember not long after leaving school, I was at the Edinburgh street party and a boy from Edinburgh Academy came up behind me, lifted me up and threw me to the ground and I hurt my knee. My mate asked me if I was going to report it to the police but I didn't think it was a big deal. I love living in Edinburgh but do feel unsafe. I feel I could bump into these people from Edinburgh Academy who, in my head, are still seventeen or eighteen years old. Thankfully, I don't see them now but I can still picture their faces and don't know how I would feel if I bumped into them.
202. For fifteen years after leaving school, I had very violent nightmares about the bullying. They've stopped mostly now but I still have one every so often.
203. I have a strange relationship with anger and violence. They simultaneously terrify me. Even raised voices and people shouting feels like a pathway to someone getting hurt. The other week I saw some boys jumping in front of cyclist in a cycle lane in Edinburgh. They continued to do it so I got out of my car and told them to stop it. Predictably they surrounded me and got in my face. The wiser mind in me prevailed and I got back in my car and called the non-emergency police number and waited for twenty minutes, By that time they had wandered off.
204. When I'm in those moments, where the roles have reversed and I've got twenty kilos on those guys and have done lots of combat sports, part of me just wants to beat them

up. In that situation, where you've tried to involve the police and nothing happens, it still feels like the adults are not paying attention and that you have to sort it out yourself. What stops me though, is that I know how disappointed my wife would be in me. It's hard when you have been raised with violence and learned that the correct response is to fight back. The saddest part of that, is that it's not untrue. It would be the wrong thing to do and it's against the law, but it's what I've learned.

205. In a previous job, I was a very senior engineer and had responsibility for around a thousand engineers. I remember when a graduate started in the company and began challenging some of my decisions. I felt like I was in school again and that he had all the power and I had none of the power. I felt like I had to defend myself and fight vigorously with my words and actions to get myself out of that. People could see that and were amazed that I was reacting to it. No one was listening to this guy and everyone was listening to me and thought it was unnecessary for me to take him down a notch. I have to keep reminding myself that I'm not under threat anymore.

### **Treatment/support**

206. I went through a long period of my life thinking things that happened at Edinburgh Academy were entirely normal. I remember when I first started therapy with my current therapist and describing this to her. Obviously she's very objective and has heard stories of child abuse before but I remember seeing her visibly welling up and looking like she was going to cry as I was describing things to her. I remember feeling a little bit ashamed to be having therapy with her. I'm a rich privileged boy who has had a very easy life and don't have any problems and I'm taking up a slot from someone who has had a hard time. My life is fine now and if it really was that bad, I would have killed myself or have been homeless by now. Every time someone finds it distressing or are surprised by what happened, I almost have to do a double take.
207. I've been in therapy on and off since 2020. My experiences at school come up a lot, particularly to begin with. I felt like I needed to get help. I'm a bit messed up in some ways. I'm getting better at dealing with some things and healing but in other ways,

these feelings will be with me until the day I die. My goal is that these things don't affect my kids.

208. I remember talking to my therapist when I saw a rugby player from Edinburgh Academy on the BBC talking about his mental health. I was feeling quite conflicted and said that we were all part of the same system and it must have messed him up too. There was another part of me that was happy his mental health was messed up because he messed up my life. There was another part of me that thought how dare he? It felt absurd to me that the first wave of victims talking about Edinburgh Academy would be the rugby players who beat up kids. I just remember thinking how ridiculous that was.
209. My dad went to private school and so did his dad and generations before him. My goal is to break the cycle and that my kids go to therapy for the opposite reason. That they go to therapy for feeling smothered with love throughout their childhood and that their dad had their back all the time even when they didn't need it. I'm just desperate that my son grows up in a world that's not the same as mine.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

210. I think part of the reason I want to share my experiences is partly due to having kids of my own now and one of them being neurodivergent himself. It is one thing thinking what happened to me was normal and that I just had to suck it up, deal with it and move on but it's another thing thinking about any of this happening to him. Basically, that's the main reason I'm speaking about it. I just don't want this to happen to other kids. I don't want this to be a generational thing that goes on into the future. If by me telling my story means that even one kid doesn't go through it, then it's worth it to me.
211. I've never reported any of the abuse from Edinburgh Academy [REDACTED] to an authority. I'm not sure what I could report or what things were actually a crime. Anything that was peer- on-peer, there's a sense even when I talk about it with friends, that kids will be kids and that maybe you had provoked it. If I put my hand at my side and you walk up to me and punch me and I don't retaliate in any way, I'm almost a

clean victim. If I said something that had provoked you or tried to fight back then there's a sense that I am equally complicit.

212. In my son's school they did a PowerPoint presentation and said if they were being bullied or were attacked, they weren't to retaliate or fight back but should tell a teacher. I felt that was problematic because although they were making a happy path to report the matter to a teacher, every time the victim deviates from that path makes them no longer the correct type of victim. That means the victim is less likely to report the matter. The guy who broke my finger, I hit him first. He beat me up every week but in the eyes of the law, maybe I assaulted him and he acted in self-defence.
213. If you provide your idea of what a bullied victim looks like, you are going to put people in a situation where they don't report things because they don't feel they have done the right thing. They don't tick the right boxes.
214. I feel that is still a real blind spot we have. We have to enter a world where we can say even if you hit them back or do whatever, come and tell someone and we'll figure it out. Otherwise, we're encouraging people to stay quiet and not report things because they're worried they are going to get into trouble.

## **Records**

215. My mum still has my old school reports. She tends to keep these sorts of things. I've recently asked to see them. They matched what I remembered. Growing concern over my academic performance and being told to give more effort to "*meet my potential*." There's no mention of bullying but sporadic mention of "*social isolation*" in secondary school. These two things are obviously not seen as connected and the bullying never taken seriously. The headteacher, John Light, always wrote a summary but only mentions academics and never social issues, even although he had been told about me being suicidal.

## **Lessons to be Learned**

216. Ultimately, the adults involved need to be responsible for the bad things that happen all the way through school.
217. I remember going to see my youngest brother's sports day at School. He had some back issues and was worried it was going to go again because the school had entered him into three races. I went to his teacher of physical education and asked what they were going to do about my brother's back. He said that my brother was a big boy and could look after himself and turned his back to me.
218. During the second or third race my brother's back went and he was lying there in agony. I went up to the teacher and said that this was on him, that my brother was a boarder at the school and was in his care. I could tell from his reaction that he thought I just didn't understand. That was the classic situation where my brother injured himself having already expressed concern to the teacher and me as an adult, had also expressed concern. Both expressions were ignored. I would like to see, in such a case, a written record of what happened there, what led to the situation and some accountability.
219. I don't actually know what the law is around mandatory reporting if you know or hear something related to a child being physically or sexually abused. I would extend that to bullying, cyber bullying and exclusion. There should be a mandatory reporting process.
220. I believe strongly in incentive structures. In Edinburgh Academy the incentive structure was set up to actively discourage teachers and pupils from getting involved in reporting things. We need to flip the incentive structures so the teacher, who doesn't report something, is worried they are going to lose their job, their pension, their career or house and feels they have to report things.
221. The teacher needs to have a route to report it even anonymously as a whistleblower so an outside institution can come in and investigate. These institutions can't police

themselves. They need to have robust external bodies, whose job it is to go in and look at these things.

222. If anything, private schools need to be more scrutinised than state schools. Historically, you didn't need to have formal teacher training to teach in a private school and you did in a state school. I felt that these schools were able to police themselves and make up their own rules in a way the state system couldn't. There is almost a societal attitude that these are all posh kids, so we shouldn't feel sorry for them. We need to have a level playing field. Whether the school is paid for or not, doesn't mean someone is more or less of a victim.
223. It feels like the teachers, whose job it is to look after children every day, are held to a dramatically lower standard than twenty-year-old volunteers with no formal training.
224. I would like to see the teaching and school sector looked on more like the voluntary sector. I did some voluntary work with kids from Dundee. I remember being told on day one, hour one, that I couldn't promise to keep secrets for them. If they disclose certain things, you have to tell someone. I don't know if it was legally required but my impression was that it may well have been. If it wasn't, it was clear to everyone in that organisation that they would lose their job if they held on to information they should have shared.
225. I did some volunteering with scripture union during summer camps. Something they really have nailed is child safety. We had a form to complete, not just any time a child had a splinter on their finger, but any near misses as well. I was doing this as an unpaid university student. It felt like the standards being set were so high along with the expectations set and background checks carried out.
226. What if those teachers who came into the classroom and saw me stuffed into a bin were legally obliged to report that? It felt that supervising the kids and stopping the violence, would have inconvenienced them in time, in process, confrontation and they just didn't want to do that.

227. My son is in primary school. He has found it hard. We get daily emails from his teachers. The emails come in at evenings and weekends when the teachers don't have to be working but they're looking after his wellbeing.
228. Bad teachers were the teachers who saw things and did nothing or in some cases verbally joined in. Neutral teachers to me were those that saw nothing and did nothing. To me a good teacher was one who had some sense that maybe things weren't going so well. A teacher who sat you down and had a conversation where they tried to boost your confidence.
229. I was in Edinburgh Academy for eleven or twelve years, I don't feel that any teacher at any stage tried to boost my confidence. The closest I ever came to that was Norman Jack and his wife, who did the scripture union group, saying to me, *"Good job, you're getting into religion."* There was maybe borderline indoctrination and I did become religious but that's the only time I can remember being praised and feeling that someone was looking out for me.
230. It's maybe great when pupils leave school with great grades but, in my generation, there were pupils who left school with good grades who were messed up. A child's wellbeing has to come before their grades and there has to be a lot more help and support available for kids who are having a hard time.
231. In a culture of violence, why did we spend so much time without adults' supervision? I don't see a reason for this. In every single room where a child is being taught, there is an adult. At breaktimes, where all of the violence happened, that is not the case. I know it's ridiculous, but if you had a ratio of one teacher per pupil and the teacher followed the pupil around all day, there would be no violence. At breaktimes, it's around one teacher to two hundred pupils. Maybe it's a bit dystopian but CCTV could be put in every room in the school.
232. The other thing would be escalation paths for pupils. A sense of someone they could talk to and be taken seriously and rewarded for coming forward.

233. I just want a lot of the things we've spoken about not to happen to kids. If we go from a hundred kids per day being beaten up in school in Scotland down to one, one is still too high in a situation where kids are in the care of other adults. I don't think it's an unreasonable goal to get that down to zero. When it's close to zero, then at least we have investigations and consequences to ensure it doesn't happen again.
234. As a parent now, I'm handing my child over to other people to look after him and trusting they're doing their best for him. I'm not allowed to decide that my child doesn't go into education without social services getting involved. It's somewhere he's going to be for twelve years and I don't think it's too much for the institutions to say that within that time, we're going to make sure your child is safe and doesn't get beaten up.

#### **Other information**

235. Barry Welsh, the current headmaster of Edinburgh Academy, has approached some people, said sorry and asked if they feel able to come forward. That's something I have now done. It was helpful to reflect on some of my experiences with him and hear things have changed to prevent kids like me falling through the cracks.
236. 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.....14/08/2024.....