

SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF [REDACTED] –“DL 1”

I qualified as a teacher in [REDACTED] and commenced work as a teacher at De La Salle Boys Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin in [REDACTED]. I became [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] and became [REDACTED]. I remained in this position until the school's closure in 1985. [REDACTED] also acted as house mother and house father in a residential setting at Rubane during the academic year [REDACTED].

I taught [REDACTED] whilst a teacher at Rubane. Occasionally I would be required to assist in teaching [REDACTED]. I also took many of the pupils on regular outings outside the school to places such as Ards swimming pool and Ardnabann outdoor pursuit centre in Castlewellan. I assisted with sports days and helped out with Christmas concerts etc.

Rubane had no official policy on corporal punishment of unruly pupils. I would say that for the most part, the students at Rubane were eager to learn and generally well behaved. It was a source of immense pride to me that many of the students in my care successfully took external 'CSE' examinations successfully.

Many of the students participated in the Christmas concert that my wife and I helped to organise. Indeed, many returned to visit my wife and I at our home after they had finished their education at Rubane. There was a good ratio of teachers to students which meant that there were always plenty of outings from Rubane. I was happy to take the students on these outings and the students really looked forward to and enjoyed them. There were approximately ten students for every teacher at Rubane, a much better ratio than at most schools. This also helped keep behaviour from the students at a manageable level.

The use of corporal punishment was rare as I found that in general the students were well behaved in class. In fact, occasions when corporal punishment was required were generally when students had been nasty or hard on one another as opposed to being badly behaved in class. Rubane was a home for boys from troubled or difficult backgrounds and the students could be extremely cruel to one another regarding their backgrounds.

On any occasion when a student's behaviour did warrant the use of corporal punishment, they would be given one slap or two with the 'strap'. This was a foot long piece of leather which was approximately two inches wide. I assumed that despite the lack of an official policy on corporal punishment, the use of the strap by the teaching staff in Rubane was not uncommon. The students used to be struck on the palm of the hand.

HIA 104 [REDACTED] It has been alleged by HIA 104 that during my time as a teacher at Rubane I struck him hard on the head, knocking him back into the blackboard during a [REDACTED] lesson. It is credible that I was teaching a [REDACTED] lesson but I deny the allegation that I struck HIA 104 in the manner alleged. I never lifted my hands to a student and I completely refute the allegations made by HIA 104.

HIA 18 [REDACTED] It has been alleged by HIA 18 that I punched him in the stomach and winded him. I totally deny these allegations. I repeat that I would never have lifted my hands to a student. This incident did not take place. HIA 18 alleges that I took him to the office to see the principal after he alleges he had been struck by the art teacher and sent to the principal's office. He stated that I was [REDACTED] at the time. This could not have happened as I would have been teaching at the time. I would not have been able to take HIA 18 to the principal's office.

I categorically deny the allegations by HIA 25 that I punched him. He alleges that I would tell pupils that I wanted to search pupils for contraband and get them to hold out their hands. He stated that whilst they were doing this, I would punch them hard to the chest. I deny this allegation generally, and against this individual in particular. HIA 25 [REDACTED]

HIA 25 [REDACTED]

It was alleged by HIA 41 that I punched him and other pupils in the class regularly, every day. This is untrue. I never engaged in punching of any kind. I always enjoyed a good rapport with the students. On occasion corporal punishment was required for the purposes of administering discipline but there was never any punching or any kind of striking with the hand. HIA 41 [REDACTED]

HIA 222 [REDACTED]

HIA 222 alleged that I would slap him across the face with my hand from behind, often for no reason. This allegation is untrue and I refute it utterly.

HIA 170 [REDACTED]

HIA 170 stated that I struck him twice in the stomach and that he and the other students called me by the nickname [REDACTED]. I was amazed to hear that as the students were always very respectful and I was unaware they had a nickname for me. I repeat that I never raised my hand to a student and I certainly never struck HIA 170 with my hands. HIA 170 also alleged that I struck another student, [REDACTED], into a shutter. This is completely untrue and never happened.

I have spent a lot of time discussing corporal punishment in my statement to the PSNI, statement to the inquiry, consultations with my legal team and in giving evidence before the inquiry. The fact is that corporal punishment was rarely used during my time at Rubane. The threat of not being allowed to participate in trips away from the school was often a far more effective tool in maintaining discipline than administering corporal punishment.

There was a lot of sympathy felt toward the students at Rubane as many, if not all had come from difficult backgrounds. The emphasis within the school was on encouraging the students academically and rewarding their performance with extra curricular activities.

I used the phrase that I felt "betrayed" by the De La Salle Order in relation to the allegations of sexual and physical abuse within Rubane during my time there. There were no obvious signs of distress from the students in this regard that I could see during my time at Rubane. Often if a student was distressed it was because they were unable to return to their families for the weekend.

I was shocked and saddened to hear the reports subsequently emerging from Rubane that sexual and physical abuse had been perpetrated on students staying there. I was

never aware of any such activity during my time there. I am also upset by the allegations of physical abuse which have been made against me personally and discussed above. I deny each allegation totally.