

Former Member of Staff

The School's Governing Board wanted to share an update with Old Boys about developments involving a former member of staff and to provide guidance on addressing any related concerns.

Edward Phillips-Smith, who was Chaplain at Papplewick School from 1993-2008, was convicted and jailed last year of child sexual offences towards two boys at a school in the West Midlands in the early 1980s. Such appalling crimes can affect people in profound ways and our thoughts are with the victims of those offences.

Following Mr. Phillip-Smith's conviction, the School's Governing Board decided to commission a team of independent safeguarding experts to conduct a review of existing records and other documents relating to his time at the school. The purpose of this review was to provide a comprehensive picture of what information the School held about him and whether this information raised any urgent questions or issues about his conduct at Papplewick or the way it was managed.

This review found that some concerns about Mr. Phillips-Smith's behaviour had been raised during his time at Papplewick. While the police, with whom we shared the review in full, did not identify any instances that would meet the threshold for criminal investigation, any behaviour that causes concern is a matter of great regret for the current Board, however long ago it occurred. Due process was found to have been correctly followed in the handling of both Mr. Phillips-Smith's recruitment in 1993 and his departure in 2008.

The investigation team found no concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of our current pupils. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), responsible for safeguarding in local schools and with whom we shared the review alongside the police, was very positive about our working relationship with them both throughout this process and on an ongoing basis. We are as confident as we can be that our pupils today are living in the safest environment possible, in line with regular inspections by the Independent Schools Inspectorate and a separate independent inspection commissioned by the Governing Board earlier this year.

Advice and support for Old Boys

Since Mr. Phillip-Smith's conviction, some Old Boys have been in touch with thoughts, concerns and questions about his time at Papplewick. The Board is fully committed to being as responsive as possible to the needs of all our Old Boys and we will reply to any correspondence raised with us. We are mindful of the need to work with the authorities to keep children safe and have shared details with the police and LADO. They have explained that any non-recent sexual abuse allegations should be reported to the police via 101 or to the [LADO](#). The LADO can refer cases to the police if appropriate, provide an opportunity to discuss experiences with sensitivity and care, and signpost to further support.

We would encourage anyone who has been a victim of sexual abuse in any circumstance to report it to the police and to seek support if needed. The LADO has recommended that we signpost to NAPAC (the National Association of People Abused in Childhood) on 0808 801 0331 or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.

Andrew Try

Chair, Papplewick School Governing Board