
From: Education Scotland Complaints
Sent: 25 January 2017 10:25
To:
Subject: RE: FAO Lead Inspector of Schools, re. George Watson's College

Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your email of 22 January 2017 to Education Scotland.

The content of your email has been noted.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]
Corporate Business Manager
Official Correspondence Unit

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 22 January 2017 21:55
To: Education Scotland Complaints
Subject: Re: FAO Lead Inspector of Schools, re. George Watson's College

Dear Sirs,

Further to our recent communications, it has been brought to our attention that certain statements we have made to at least one person with respect to George Watson's College and its staff and governors might be open to interpretation as potentially defamatory, at least when taken out of the context of their accompanying documents. We wish to make it absolutely clear that it has never been our intention in any way to hurt, offend, or injure the reputation of any individual. We intend only to highlight what we perceive to be failings in the performance of responsible professionals' duties. We deeply regret if we have, in our understandable frustration, strayed into language that could be construed to be injurious to reputation, and hope that our unreserved apology for any unintended offence be acknowledged.

Specifically, it has been pointed out that in at least one communication we may have insufficiently qualified our concerns about the possibility that issues of mental infirmity might be contributing to the repeated professional incompetence demonstrated by [Redacted] while handling our formal complaints. We still believe that given [Redacted] duty of care for thousands of children, and our very real fears about his potential inability to handle our complex complaints responsibly, we had a duty to communicate our sincere concern to legitimate parties, hopefully to discount the possibility after appropriate consideration. However, we recognise that in at least one instance we might have qualified our concerns and recommendations more fully, to affirm more clearly that this was only one of a range of possible explanations that could account for his incompetent performance. And again, we apologise unreservedly for any inadvertent offence or misunderstanding.

Beyond this, the school's legal representatives have warned us that there may be other statements within our several hundred distinct complaints about George Watson's College that might be defamatory, and have asked us to retract these. However, the school governors are directly refusing to specify precisely which of these thousands of statements they consider to be lacking in total foundation. This is consistent with the school's sustained refusal (to our intense frustration) at any level ever even to attempt to refute or otherwise

directly address with us any one of these several hundred complaints about its apparent failures (a) to protect our child from lifelong harm; or (b) properly and professionally to address our concerns when legitimately raised. We consider our complaints to be overwhelmingly justified and robustly evidenced, so we are unwilling to withdraw all our complaints as they are effectively demanding. We can therefore only apologise in general terms if we have inadvertently included any statement within our quarter million words or so of densely evidenced complaints that is not absolutely true and justified. Should the governors bring to us any actual evidence that any statement we have made cannot be justified as 100% true or reasonable, we will immediately retract that statement and apologise unreservedly in that instance also.

We would also wish to take this opportunity to affirm that in view of the concerns raised, we have of our own volition revised our major complaint documents (which were only ever intended for purposes of responsible internal investigation) for future circulation, with a view to responsibly addressing any legitimate concerns we can identify. Where we have shared these to date it has always been in strict confidence with responsible and appropriate parties, which we have done in good faith, and with the best of intentions, in the public interest. But for any future circulation we will revise our description of [REDACTED] incompetent actions by removing any comments of a potentially diagnostic nature, and also change the names of individuals below the age of responsibility. We would welcome any specific suggestions as to examples we might wish to consider.

Meanwhile, we intend to continue our efforts to require George Watson's College to acknowledge and appropriately apologise for its failures that caused our child's lifelong injury, and professionally to act on that recognition to allow proper investigation and where necessary the implementation of appropriate procedural and practical improvements to prevent recurrence of the same failures. We will not rest until we have this.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

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