

[REDACTED]

To: The Family and Community Development Committee inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations.

Submitted by: Mr Michael Crowe

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I would like to speak at a hearing to highlight the lack of natural justice provided to employees in catholic schools that are victims of clergy abuse for having witnessed acts or raised allegations against clergy who perpetrate child sexual abuse. I would also like to speak about the internal processes of catholic education in Victoria and the catholic church that prevent whistleblowers being heard and protect corrupt and paedophile clergy.

I am prepared to speak at a hearing of the Committee to provide further detail regarding my submission (as it is abbreviated) and explain why government regulatory structures need to be strengthened and imposed upon my former employer - The catholic education system in Victoria. Catholic education in Victoria does not provide a proper and reasonable internal systematic response to abuse claims yet it is a very large employer receiving Federal and State Government funding. This body does not have an open and accountable complaints system and maintains a veil of secrecy to protect corrupt and abusive clergy and staff. There is a great need for new laws and an independent support mechanism and safety net to regulate catholic schools. This would make the catholic church more accountable for the abuse of children and staff that catholic education fails to address; abuse that places people at great risk.

The intention of this submission is to address the terms of reference by describing my personal experience working as a teacher and REC Religious Education Coordinator in catholic education in Victoria from 2005 - 2012. This position gave me insider experience into **current practices** in catholic primary schools; practices that continue to place children at risk. My situation demonstrates how clergy abuse is not historical but remains current and supported by a veil of secrecy maintained by the catholic church and their educational organisations. The Clergy remain in control of catholic schools and are the employer of teachers – this places teachers and staff at risk, particularly regarding mandatory reporting. The clergy have free access to children in catholic parish schools and are free to continue having secretive one-on-one access to children. This enables predator paedophile priests to gain unquestioned easy access to their prey – vulnerable and trusting children. Those children are victimised readily because they have been indoctrinated by the catholic education system into believing that priests have an authority that cannot be questioned.

There is a well established culture of fear that permeates the workplace controlled by the catholic education system in Victoria. The culture within this organisation is such that it is taboo to raise the issue of clergy sexual abuse or discuss it in catholic

schools. During my seven years of employment as a classroom teacher in a [REDACTED] Victoria regional catholic parish primary school I worked in a toxic place and was constantly fearful of bullying in a workplace controlled by an incompetent priest. I became the victim of directed bullying by my employer – this catholic priest, and also by the school principal, deputy principal and other school leadership appointed by the employer priest. My case of bullying and intimidation extended well over 24 months mostly during 2010 & 2011 and climaxed with me being forced into resigning from my position and into signing a hastily drafted separation agreement. This was to silence me after **I witnessed the priest grooming a child**. I believe that The Bishop of Ballarat, and the Director of the Catholic education office Ballarat (CEOB) conspired to protect this priest and fully supported him whilst he made vexatious and unsubstantiated allegations against me. I have evidence highlighting the allegations that he made in order to silence me and prevent his predatory behaviour becoming known. I also have evidence of the priest supporting another suspected paedophile that he assisted to have free access to the school- even when it became public knowledge that this man was under police suspicion and investigation. I was trying to highlight a situation that should be of concern to any reasonable person and the catholic bodies that I worked for were busy silencing me by any means.

They have been successful and the priest was moved to a new parish at the other end of the Ballarat Diocese by the Bishop. He moved this priest immediately upon securing my so called 'resignation' and silencing through a separation agreement. This same priest had been bullying the parish secretary to such an extent that she had a solicitor write a letter to the priest demanding that he stop harassing her. The dysfunctional nature of the school and parish combined with the misdeeds of the priest were such that Ballarat church leaders must have felt compelled to act. They had received a petition signed by parish members and school parents complaining about this parish priest and the school. Instead of investigating the many complaints made against this priest by parishioners and school parents, the current Bishop of Ballarat moved this priest to a distant part of the diocese, far from any lingering scrutiny or connection with his former parish.

The 'catholic system' conspires against the individual whistle blower in order to protect itself. I was subjected to physical assault, professional isolation and repeated false and vexatious allegations of what the school leadership termed 'serious misconduct' being made against me. This was in direct response to standing up to workplace bullying by the priest who was desperately trying to destroy my reputation and standing in the school and wider community. He was desperate to do this as he felt threatened by what I had witnessed him doing. From that day his attitude and demeanour towards me changed and I knew I was a target.

In short I witnessed what I can only describe as the parish priest grooming a child in a physical manner. I witnessed this when I inadvertently interrupted a one-on-one meeting he was conducting with a boy behind a closed door in an out of the way office. I wish I had not witnessed this sickening event as it has had very serious repercussions for me. I later reported this 'grooming' of a student event to Victoria Police [REDACTED]. I am unaware of any police action regarding my report made to them. I am unaware how the child victim feels about this encounter with this priest or if he was of age to fully grasp what was happening (The student victim was in grade 3). I feel I interrupted the priest just in time and the evil look he gave me and the shaking of his head (being extremely displeased) supported my belief. From that moment my whole career in Catholic Education began to unravel.

The priest's reaction showed that he instantly recognised I was a real threat to him and he used his power and position as the school overseer to set about destroying my reputation and career. I went from being a well respected REC (Religious Education Coordinator) within the school and parish to being alienated and stood down from work, all within a relatively short time. I had allegations of serious misconduct made against me by the principal, after consultation with her employer the priest and I was stood down from work by school leadership on three separate occasions, one was for a period of 6 months. I was professionally isolated and I was banned from contacting work colleagues. During the 6 month stand down, the investigator, Ms K (CEO-Melbourne) cleared me of any misconduct after three weeks; however I was kept off work for a further 5 months after I made my allegations of bullying and expressed concerns about my safety on returning to work. Before I was forced to resign, CEOB on the overwhelming evidence I presented to this body, had little choice but to instigate an internal investigation into workplace issues at the school. This was a response to concerns raised by me and others in the community. As I had shared my case with Ms K who was a high ranking person in the CEO Melbourne (she identified herself to me as a "Whistleblower Protection Officer). I believe the CEOB felt pressured to act as events within their diocese, and control, were now being looked at by Catholic Education Melbourne.

Ms K told me at a later meeting that prior to my whistleblower allegations she could not understand why I had been put under investigation for serious misconduct as there was no case to answer. Despite being cleared, I was not allowed to return to work as I made various allegations against the priest and school leadership to her – this was not about the grooming incident but related to other criminal acts such as bullying. It was clear the CEOB and CEOM did not know what to do about my allegations and the evidence I had submitted (including detailing the unethical behaviour of the vice principal in commencing a relationship with a parent of a child at the school). The persecution of me had only just begun. The priest must have been very displeased that this first investigation was conducted by Ms K (CEO – Melbourne) and was determined to silence me.

I was kept off work for over 5 months whilst CEOB hatched a planned response to my allegations. They needed this time to decide how best to proceed and protect their organisation and the priest. Instead of standing down these people during an investigation into the school, these 'bullies' remained at work, fully supported whilst I was kept off work and professionally isolated. I was never informed as to why I was not allowed to return to work even though I was cleared of any wrong doing by the investigator of the first round of serious misconduct charges. When I contacted Ms K at a later date to ask what was happening (as I had not been kept informed at all), she expressed surprise to find that I was still off work. Later Ms K also stated to me that she was considered 'persona non-grata' by the school leadership after her findings and recommendations were handed down.

The act of standing down an employee (on full pay) that is making allegations against a clergy member is a calculated response by the CEOB. It makes it very difficult to pursue legal redress as you have not incurred a financial loss. Catholic education does not provide you with any information as to how long you will be stood down. They professionally isolate you and distance you from support networks and colleagues. In a small community rumours start to spread as to why you are not working (the inference is that clearly you must have done something wrong) and catholic education encourage any wild speculation by not allowing you to explain in a public forum what is happening. They discredit your character and encourage others to do so (my

wife had a parent at the school share that she was informed that I was having anger management counselling for 6 weeks in a neighbouring town– this was never the case and a pure fabrication). This and many other rumours are spread to destroy your reputation and credibility. They give themselves all the time they need to decide their response and how best to silence you permanently. The lack of governmental regulations makes this an all too simple a process for this powerful body to use the standing down of an employee as a punishment.

In my situation the not guilty result did not go to plan for the priest, the school leadership or CEOB. It was all too easy for the priest to then simply fabricate a fresh round of serious misconduct charges. This was an act of retaliation, yet no protection was forthcoming from the whistle blower protection officer, even though she was well aware of this matter as emails had been CC'd to her. The priest put these new allegations to me in a hastily written letter (**Appendix A**) and stood me down from work once again. I had been back at work for less than one hour after 6 months being stood down and not being allowed on the school grounds. He used the CECV (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria) Industrial Relations lawyers to hatch a plan to get rid of me. This time he would control proceedings by investigating the matter himself and deciding if I was guilty or not – A true kangaroo court! There was only ever going to be one outcome.

One of the allegations relates to me expressing concern about charges made relating to child sexual abuse against the chairperson of the school board (his suicide following charges being laid should be of grave concern). Yet I was accused of 'serious misconduct' in the priest's letter, for allegedly raising this matter. The extent of the internal cover up in relation to the former chairman demonstrates why catholic internal investigations into abuse just perpetuate it. I am very concerned by the possibility of student victims from this man's actions and unhindered access to the school. Victims will not come forward whilst the charade that he 'was a good man' is maintained as the message that they will not be believed is loud and clear.

As the employers at the schools the clergy are all powerful and there is no accountability for their actions. Just to make this clear, the local parish priest, not the catholic education office or the catholic education commission of Victoria, is the legal employer at catholic schools throughout the Ballarat diocese. This is truly concerning considering the overwhelming evidence of sexual abuse by the clergy currently subject to parliamentary inquiry in Victoria. It is particularly concerning to me that a priest I witnessed grooming a child is still currently active and in charge of another school with unfettered access to the children there.

The Bishop of Ballarat decided to shift this priest to another parish once my 'resignation' was finalised. This means this priest remains in control of another catholic primary school and continues to do as he chooses at this new location today. He will have free reign of the Parish school he controls and can use his power and position to prey on and groom a fresh batch of unsuspecting child victims. It is only a matter of time before he is successful at his grooming attempts in obtaining a child victim. Once I signed the separation agreement that I felt pressured to sign – I heard no more of the serious misconduct charges this priest had made against me; they all just magically disappeared as part of the separation agreement. It also meant that I was silenced and unable to take further action beyond informing the police.

This priest not only abused his power to continually bully and victimise me but also to protect and enable a person suspected of being a **paedophile** to gain the position of

chairperson of the school board and access to the school. This man [REDACTED] soon came under police suspicion and investigation. **He committed suicide within 24 hours** of being charged on summons for indecent assault of a minor (14 charges). [REDACTED] was considered by the priest as a good man and a personal friend. The priest was determined to silence anyone such as myself voicing concerns about [REDACTED] access at the school and the potential for child sexual assault victims. So a man who was a suspected paedophile facing charges was protected by a catholic school's priest and principal whilst they attacked a staff member with concerns for the students. The catholic school leadership were more interested in protecting their reputation than the students they have a duty of care for. Very few people in the catholic school community that I was employed at are aware of the charges, allegations and suicide of [REDACTED]. This was all covered up and kept secret. It was easy to cover up because the school board remains dysfunctional and full of the cronies appointed by the then priest and principal. The priest had power of veto to decide on the appointments to the school board. The principal remains in power and current staff continue to make bullying allegations to the new priest and senior CEO personal. As far as I am aware the CEOB continue to do nothing to address the many issues they have had for many years been made aware of surrounding the nepotistic leadership at this school.

Although teachers are advised in catholic education of the requirement of mandatory reporting there is little or no supporting network enabling you to do so. As staff are advised to consult the principal about mandatory reporting I had no network to access. There was no way I could rely on the corrupt and bully principal to take mandatory reporting seriously. It is apparent that staff in catholic schools are not supported if they make any allegation against a priest and are well aware that to make such a report may well end your career. Trying to make such a report ended my career in catholic education. My case demonstrates why clergy or religious guilty of child sexual abuse have nothing to fear from current mandatory reporting laws.

[REDACTED] was not the only suicide associated with this workplace. The former receptionist / school office worker had also **committed suicide**. Her death coincided with the beginning of a school year. There may well be many reasons for her suicide however it is my belief that she could not cope with the thought of another year working in such a dysfunctional and toxic workplace; a final straw so to speak.

I raised workplace issues and made allegations of bullying and other unethical behaviour to the CEO – [REDACTED] visiting child psychologist. Although he seemed concerned he simply said I should talk to the principal even though I clearly said to him she was actively bullying me. I already knew that the principal consultant was a close personal friend of the principal and that any complaints made to her would be quashed. I had experienced her earlier attempt to silence me as she called me out of the classroom when she visited the school and found a quiet place in the library to 'have a chat'. She then threatened that I had almost lost my job (As I had questioned decisions made by the priest and principal). She also suggested that if I did not become quiet and compliant that I would lose my job.

I also raised my concerns with the union. The Independent Education Union (IEU) who represented me during my struggle for a period of 12 months. However this organisation proved to be of little help. Industrial laws are such that they were powerless, under resourced, disorganised and disinterested in representing and protecting the interests of a member. In fact the union case officer was more concerned with maintaining his standing and relationship with hierarchy within the Catholic Education Office (CEO). My union case officer suggested that my case was

not unusual and catholic schools throughout his region were struggling with bullying and abuse claims made by staff. The union threatened on more than one occasion that if I was to seek any other form of independent legal advice that they would drop me. They also warned me that I was not to make further contact with the whistleblower protection officer. If I did they would no longer represent me.

Rather than be supported by the CEO staff I was viewed as a trouble maker and was ordered by the CEO to have a mediation session with the very people (the priest and vice principal) who were actively bullying me. I contacted Work safe – they could not help me unless I had a Work cover claim in with their organisation. Work safe's response to my bullying claims was inept and very disappointing. I did not want to do this and submit to Work cover because I did not want to be further stigmatised and victimised. I had no confidence in Work safe or Work cover to adequately deal with this situation. I was also strongly advised by my union not to proceed with a work cover claim. The union suggested that this course of action could impact significantly on any future employment prospects.

I also raised my allegations with the appointed 'independent facilitator' and head child psychologist of CEOB in a meeting I was forced to have with him. I made it very clear to him my fears of child victims at the school at the hands of [REDACTED] and how the priest's ongoing support had enabled this man to access the school. I also detailed the ongoing bullying the priest and school leadership were doing in response to being informed of my bullying allegations. The head child psychologist suggested that I needed to drop all my allegations and unless I did so, he would not let me return to work. This concept that the facilitator was free to decide on my return to work was never detailed in numerous emails from the CEOB before the prearranged meeting. He had been described as an independent facilitator to me. Clearly the catholic concept of independent is different to that of the general public.

This psychologist's handling of this matter during this meeting further victimised me. Whilst maintaining the farce that the process was underway to return me to work, he held on to the letter (appendix A) until after he had held a meeting to suit the agenda of the school. He knew I would not be returning to work yet he did not disclose this. It was clear from this meeting that my witnessing of a priest perpetrator grooming a child had destroyed my career in catholic education and caused my entire family hardship. This priest had made it his mission to get rid of me to protect himself from suspicion and allegations that were coming to light.

As a registered teacher I made various calls to my professional body, the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). The VIT seemed interested in my case but unless I made a formal written complaint against a teacher there was little they could do. As I had been forced into signing a separation agreement I was unable to take action for fear of being sued by the catholic church. A teacher should be free to go to the VIT and make any disclosure without fear or favour. Additionally, the VIT cannot take any action against a priest. The clergy are not registered teachers. This is another system failure as the clergy are in some cases actively involved as educationalist in schools, even though most have no teaching qualifications and are the employer of teachers in Victorian catholic schools.

It is my understanding that my former employer is in breach of Victorian Law as they failed to inform the VIT of the resignation of a teacher accused of serious misconduct (me) as required by the Education and Training Reform Amendment Act in Victoria 2010 section 28. The CEO and employer did not meet this obligation because the

allegations against me by them were false and fabricated yet they used these as a tool to bully a resignation from me. They did not want these trumped up and ridiculous allegations to come under scrutiny. I was alienated, unsupported and felt I had no choice but resign as it was clear that if I continued to fight these allegations I would be out of the classroom for a very long period of time and be found guilty of serious misconduct by the same priest I had made allegations against. The system provided me with no natural justice at all. To go on with my fight would have been even more detrimental to my whole family and my career than what it already had been.

The fact that a 'memorandum of understanding' exists between the VIT and catholic education enables catholic leadership to conduct their own investigations into allegations made against their teachers. This means that the limited scope of the VIT in effect is helping to protect paedophile priests, as any staff that raise an allegation will not firstly make it through the internal scrutiny of the catholic system. The CEO can use the threat of finding 'whistleblower' teachers guilty of 'serious misconduct' and threaten the whole career of registered teachers they have issues with. How can a government body such as the VIT maintain any form of memorandum of understanding with an organisation that has obvious corruption that enables abuse by clergy and bullying?

It is also my belief that as a registered teacher in Victoria in the catholic system you are provided less protection than a state teacher even though you pay the same registration fee to the VIT. This is because the state education system has an Ombudsman type system with an appeals process that public servants can follow. The state system also has a proper whistleblower response in place. A catholic teacher has no appeal process to follow. A catholic teacher is not provided with the procedure that internal catholic investigators will follow and put them into. Their human rights are not considered or supported by catholic education. Investigations are not transparent, they are ad hoc and not open to scrutiny. Catholic teachers are provided unreasonable timeframes to respond to written allegations made by employers (2 days compared to 2 weeks for the state system). Why would the state authority (VIT) maintain a 'memorandum of understanding' with an organisation that does not provide transparent and accountable investigation procedures? This situation enables catholic education and the church to maintain the veil of secrecy surrounding abuse by clergy and prevents whistleblowers raising concerns or making allegations.

Before my forced resignation my wife and I attended a meeting with the Director of CEOB – (then Mr B). During this meeting he conceded he was aware there was an 'us and them' culture at the school. He suggested he could offer me a choice of two non-ongoing positions at other schools in the Ballarat Diocese central zone. My union case officer described these offers as unprecedented. Why would the director of CEOB make such an offer unless he recognised there was serious bullying and abuse issues surrounding the school? Mr B. described these positions as supernumery and I believed they were just another calculated way of getting rid of me from the catholic system. With the stroke of a pen these funded positions would have been axed the following year leaving me unemployed. The Director's reply (**Appendix B**) to my wife's letter (**Appendix C**) to him highlights his lack of empathy, his lack of action and interest in the issue of workplace bullying and abuse allegations within a school he provided funding to. It is clear to me that from the top management down in catholic education in this state there is a clear response aimed at alienating and victimising anyone making allegations or raising concerns.

Mr B. also appointed Dr L. to conduct a workplace bullying investigation at the school (**Appendix D**). It was obvious from the very first contact with this so called investigator that this internal investigation was put in place to cover up the serious nature and extent of the bullying going on at the school. Among the many failings of this investigation are the following: The investigation took many months to get started (in contrast to the limited time I had to prepare when put under investigation). She even failed to follow her own organisation's procedure outlined on the CECV's website (See part of Appendix C that was attached to Carol's letter). She failed to take evidence or interview anyone other than current school staff. She failed to interview witnesses to bullying incidents. She completely ignored my written submission to her investigation (**Appendix E**). In this submission I highlighted being physically assaulted by the deputy principal when he repeatedly poked me in the chest very hard ordering and yelling at me to get back into a meeting. I had reported this assault to her in a verbal and written format and had asked her to investigate this matter by contacting a witness to the event. Dr. L completely ignored this allegation. She held interviews at the school in the office adjoining the principal's office, separated by paper thin walls (I had previously expressed concern about the privacy of this room that adjoins the Principal's office). She sent people that I and others accused of bullying to fetch staff members for her meetings in order to intimidate and silence them. Those who were supportive of me and who were also being bullied, felt intimidated and further bullied by the process she employed. She did not allow people to bring notes, even when they asked to go and get them. The investigation was designed to downplay and mitigate complaints. It was all about refuting any claims I and other staff had made. As a result there are staff at this school that continue to be bullied, victimised and intimidated. In short, Dr L did everything possible to limit the scope of her inquiry and provide damage control for her organisation. Her inquiry was a total cover up.

Having left the catholic education system after being bullied, victimised and harassed for years, I reflect on how this experience has impacted on me in many ways. Fortunately I had worked in various fields before becoming a teacher so this has given me many life skills and enabled me to handle this workplace bullying as best I can with some resilience. My experience in other work settings enabled me to recognise a toxic bullying culture that I had not encountered in any other workplace (including the military). I now pity any teacher that enters the catholic system; a corrupt system that will protect the clergy and church hierarchy from allegations of child sexual abuse, and other forms of abuse such as bullying, even if that means destroying a teacher's reputation and career.

I am currently employed as a full time classroom teacher at a school next door to my former school. It is not ideal to be working so close to this former employer's site but I know that my success in gaining meaningful employment in a properly managed school provides hope for the current staff being bullied at my former school – many of whom are desperate to get out of the toxic culture at the catholic school. This is more difficult when living in a rural town. They cannot just apply for a job at a catholic school in the next suburb like catholic teachers in metropolitan areas can. It is appalling that the high turn over of staff at this catholic school, the related suicides, the real and current paedophile threat and the many parental complaints to the CEOB and Bishop of Ballarat has fallen on deaf ears. Catholic education management and senior church clergy all pass the buck as no government agency holds them to account.

Being in a small town I have faced many tormentors. The catholic school has left the public believing that I am somehow guilty of serious misconduct as they have never made public that I was cleared of any wrong doing. They did nothing to restore my reputation. This is despite their own investigation documentation stating that teachers found innocent of serious misconduct must be given every assistance to restore their reputation in the community.

My wife and children have also suffered throughout this ordeal. I removed my three children from the school I worked at as soon as possible. We still fear for their safety and acts of reprisal from staff and students at the school. My family face constant stress and fear bumping into the bullies at the supermarket, etc. We were also forced to sell our house near the school and now reside out of town in a rental property as we were under surveillance by school leadership and their cronies at our former residence. My resignation also meant that we could not be certain of servicing a mortgage. We are currently renting as I no longer have an ongoing position and now being on a short term contract would not qualify for a home loan. This situation has had far reaching personal and financial consequences for my family and I.

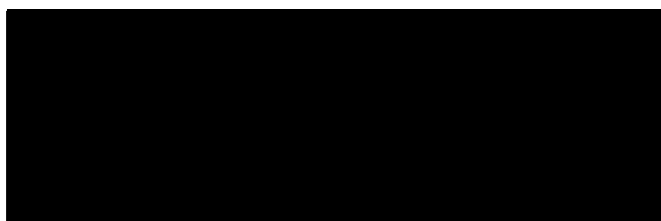
During my seven years working in catholic education there was never any professional development or training concerning workplace bullying. There was a focus on 'Kids matter' and mental health issues for children but a complete lack of education regarding workplace mental health issues for staff. The school did not have a workplace bullying policy for staff whilst I worked there and I have since learnt from current staff still employed at the school that the CEO and school leadership have tried to intimidate them further suggesting that they need to 'drop the rope' as part of a response to the bullying investigation conducted by Dr L. These staff have shared with me how adhoc the leadership response has been; they have been rushing to create a response to the lack of training on O.H&S issues for staff. This omission and lack of training of staff regarding bullying and workplace safety has enabled school leadership to bully unchallenged for a long period of time. Current staff have shared how in reality not much has changed with school culture as the CEO has continued to support the principal; they still feel bullied, harassed and intimidated by a nepotistic school leadership group.

Another failure of the catholic education system to protect against clergy abuse of students is their response to Whistleblower protection laws. The CEO-Melbourne's Ms K, after finding me not guilty of serious misconduct then identified herself as 'The whistle blower protection officer'. As a catholic teacher I was totally unaware that such a position even existed. She made this claim after I started to share that the reason I was put under investigation was part of a bullying plot involving school leadership. I submitted to her various supporting documentation. Basically her whole demeanour and attitude toward me changed and she offered her protection as the whistle blower protection officer. I then shared many elements of my evidence with her. It was because of CEO-Melbourne intervention that CEO – Ballarat felt they had to act to get their house in order. However when I shared my concerns with Ms. K that I would be returning to work and would be 'a sitting duck' she failed to provide any support or assistance from further bullying by my employer. I believe CEO-Melbourne have deliberately altered their whistleblower protection position as they have a clear conflict of interest. The whistleblower protection position supported an individual teacher making claims against a member of the clergy and clearly the catholic organisation (CECV) felt threatened by this. I do not believe that Ms K currently holds this role in catholic education anymore. I do know that I was provided no protection as a whistleblower at all despite the procedures and policy outlined on

the Catholic Education Melbourne website (Policy 2.23 Whistleblower protection). This was despite having had three long meetings with the then CEO whistleblower protection officer. My subsequent treatment can only be described as retribution yet catholic education provided no whistleblower protection at all. It is incredulous that they make the claim that they have a whistleblower protection system. I believe they use this process in a way similar to 'towards healing' and the 'Melbourne response'; to gather information so they can best contain abuse situations and silence victims.

My submission details a culture of fear and intimidation within Catholic Education that exists and enables predator clergy and the principals they appoint to conduct illegal activity in the catholic schools. The clergy can bully with impunity in the schools they control. This prevents allegations against them seeing the light of day. Considering the Federal Government and State Government combined provides massive funding to the Catholic Church to run schools surely the Government must have some form of regulatory system and laws completely independent of catholic or other independent education providers that can handle abuse claims within these schools. The Catholic system will not self regulate or make themselves accountable for bullying or sexual abuse within their organisation. The clergy's ongoing sexual abuse of children cases supports this point. Clergy abuse is not historic; it is real and current and is still being hidden from authorities in Victoria. Child victims of clergy sexual abuse continue to be silenced by the church. There needs to be government regulation and checks to ensure catholic education maintain a proper duty of care for their workforce and students. Teachers at the coalface must be made safe to report their concerns to an independent body without having to risk their careers. Abuse not only affects those on whom this heinous crime is perpetrated. The secondary victims of this crime are those who witness it.

Thank you for reading and considering my submission – Michael Crowe



Michael Crowe
Registered Teacher
29/7/12



Dear Mr. Crowe,

APPENDIX A

[REDACTED] Parish [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - St. [REDACTED]
PO Box [REDACTED]
Victoria [REDACTED]
Ph: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]@vic[REDACTED].com.au

I have received a number of reports from members of staff concerning alleged incidents involving yourself that allegedly occurred on your return to [REDACTED] Primary school [REDACTED] today.

It is alleged that:

1. You accelerated your motor vehicle towards Mr. [REDACTED] at 8.20am in the school's car park. Mr. [REDACTED] states that he felt fearful and the motor in your car was displaying high revs and sound.
2. In the staff room where a number of staff were present that you, in an agitated state made a number of statements about Mr. [REDACTED] whose funeral occurs today at 2.30 pm. Those statements included that the deceased person was a pedophile and it was a disgrace that he was connected to the School. Unbeknown to you, the partner of Mr. [REDACTED] was on the phone to the Principal, Mr. [REDACTED] was the Chairperson of the Parish Education Board and a number of staff and parents are grieving his loss. Mr. [REDACTED] was obviously unwell and was found to have committed suicide.
3. That you you bumped into the Principal of the school into her left arm. This incident occurred also in the staff room.
4. That you then approached the teacher who has been replacing you and asked her a number of questions including what the teacher had been told " has the leadership team approached you and asked what is happening. The teacher responded that she was getting ready for the school day. You seemed very agitated and left the room."

At the request of your Union, you were not to attend the school today. You were expected to attend a meeting with the CEO Ballarat psychologist and the parents and student from the school who was involved in the earlier incident that was investigated by Ms [REDACTED].

Given the seriousness of these allegations and the unethical and unprofessional nature of the alleged incidents, I am required to investigate these matters.

I therefore require a written explanation from you as to these allegations. The explanation is to be provided to me within 48 hours of you receiving this letter. During the next 48 hours you are directed that you are not to have any contact with any employee of the school. Failure to comply with the directions contained in this letter will be seen to be serious misconduct.

Pending the outcome of this investigation, you are not to attend the school until further notice. You will be paid for the absence from work.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED] 18/7/2011
Rev [REDACTED]

APPENDIX B

18 July 2011

Ms Carol Crowe

I

Write in response to your letter of 15 July which I received by email. In this letter you raise a number of concerns relating to your husband's employment at [REDACTED].

In the first place I reject your comments regarding the investigation conducted by Dr [REDACTED] Assistant Director – School Operations. Dr [REDACTED] is a senior member of the staff of this office and is the person responsible to me for the operation of schools in the Diocese of Ballarat. She is a highly qualified and experienced educator and I have complete confidence in her capacity to undertake an investigation of this kind.

Dr [REDACTED] found that the allegations were substantially unfounded. However she did draw attention to some matters and it has been agreed by the Canonical Administrator that Mr [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Senior Psychologist at the Catholic Education Office will work with the staff of [REDACTED] to address these matters over the coming two terms.

While I note your concern for your husband and understand your desire to support him, you are not an employee of [REDACTED] School. Your husband is being represented by his union in this matter. All of the matters you have raised are under discussion between the union, the IR Unit of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Canonical Administrator.

In these circumstances I am confident that the matters you raise are receiving appropriate attention.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Director

APPENDIX C

Mr [REDACTED] - Director Catholic Education Office - Ballarat (CEOB)
CC: Bishop [REDACTED] Ballarat Diocese
CC: Fr. [REDACTED] - Vicar General Ballarat Diocese

15th July 2011

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

I write in relation to a recent 'investigation' conducted by Ms [REDACTED] at your request. This 'investigation' failed to address Michael and my complaints forwarded to you by Ms [REDACTED] (CEOM). Over the course of two meetings held on 3rd March and 23rd March 2011 my husband and I made allegations and complaints in good faith to Ms [REDACTED]. This was after Ms [REDACTED] identified herself as the "Whistleblower Protection Officer". I had, and still have, very grave concerns for Michael's safety in an environment where bullying is accepted, and questionable ethics abound.

Michael and I provided detailed accounts and supporting documentation of ongoing and serious instances of bullying and improper behaviour by [REDACTED] School [REDACTED] leadership including by the employer Fr. [REDACTED], the principal [REDACTED] and the deputy principal [REDACTED]. In a meeting we had with you early in the year, you acknowledged you were aware of an inner and outer group within school staff. We detailed to Ms [REDACTED] systematic, cultural and ongoing bullying employed by this inner group to intimidate, bully and harass some staff. Michael received a report from Ms [REDACTED] that was supposed to investigate our complaints; I am yet to receive any response myself.

Ms [REDACTED]'s report failed to address the majority of my husband's allegations and complaints detailed to Ms [REDACTED]. Further she failed to address any of the complaints I made to Ms [REDACTED]. Whilst Michael's union is acting on his behalf to seek to have these complaints addressed, no-one is acting on my behalf. I am concerned that my complaints have been 'lost' in the system and I want them to be addressed.

In relation to the investigation that was undertaken, Ms [REDACTED] did not establish her independence and the methodology she employed to investigate the bullying complaints was flawed. This calls into question her credibility as an investigator. It appears she has not even read the file passed on from Ms [REDACTED]. She failed to investigate or even recognise as serious bullying, many bullying issues including physical contact (repeated chest poking) by the DP against my husband as witnessed by another staff member (who was named as a witness but was not interviewed). Ms [REDACTED] certainly did not employ the procedure detailed on the CECV website titled 'Investigation and mediation of bullying' (See attachment.) *Why did she not follow your own organisation's procedures and documentation?*

Despite this significant flaw, even with her own report's blatant attempt to mitigate the seriousness of the ongoing bullying at [REDACTED], she detailed that a minimum of 13% of staff felt there was a culture of bullying and another 13% believe there is an undercurrent. She used the words, "my investigation did not prove a serious culture of bullying" in relation to this. *What percentage of workplace bullying does the CEOB find acceptable at their schools? When does it become serious? If leadership bullies one person at a time so the percentage stays under 5% is this acceptable?* I can assure you it is quite a serious problem for the victim. Significantly more concerning is that

her report provides few detailed recommendations that will impact and force change of the bullying by leadership at the school. Thus ██████████ will remain an unsafe environment.

My three children were removed from the school because of concerns for their safety and wellbeing and I was also concerned about retribution. These fears have been justified by the tone of Ms ██████████'s report. In my workplace, a public hospital, there is a Zero Tolerance to bullying and all reports are considered serious; anything less than this puts people at risk. Ms ██████████'s report states "my investigation did not prove a serious culture of bullying", which implies there is some form of bullying present, yet she does not consider such bullying a problem. Acceptance of any bullying has dangerous implications.

As a manager, you have the responsibility to ensure that complaints are not ignored. *When are my complaints going to be properly investigated?* My husband will return to work on Monday 18th July and I continue to have grave concerns for his safety because the workplace has remained substantially unchanged since our complaints were made in March. I am disappointed to find in the course of my own investigation, that many of these issues have been longstanding and should have been dealt with before now. I am prepared to provide any information necessary to clarify details contained within Ms ██████████'s file as she informed us our complaint was forwarded to the CEOB. Within this file a number of school parents and parishioners were named, who were prepared to witness to the bullying, yet it appears not one of them was contacted in the course of Ms ██████████'s investigation.

Also of concern to me is that despite the fact Michael was cleared of misconduct in February, there has been no attempt whatsoever to "re-establish his credibility in the eyes of colleagues and the community"- (taken from 'Protocol for the Management of allegations of Misconduct involving Students Against Lay Employees in the Service of Catholic Education'). We live in a small community and this has been difficult for all of my family, not just Michael. We still have received no support from the school at all and Fr ██████████ has failed to provide or arrange for any pastoral care for my children, Michael or myself.

Will you please provide a detailed response to my questions raised in this letter and explain how you are going to rectify this unsafe situation and address my complaints. I understand that as some of the complaints relate to Fr ██████████ you may need to involve Church authorities. I have no issue with you sharing information from Ms ██████████'s file for this purpose and am forwarding a copy of this letter to the Bishop and the Vicar General to this end.

Yours Sincerely,

Carol Crowe

Investigation and Mediation of Bullying

WorkSafe's recommended method of the investigation and mediation of bullying includes:

1. Commence the investigation of a bullying complaint within 2 working days of receipt of the complaint.
2. With the Principal Officer designate, determine who is the appropriate person to investigate the complaint.
3. The investigator must be someone who is impartial and who has been trained to conduct investigations. This person may need to be sourced from outside the organisation.
4. The investigator must speak to the parties involved and all witnesses if any. The investigator must report on whether or not the complaint has been substantiated and the proposed actions to be taken in response.
5. The investigator must document all findings, outcomes and key dates/dates of conversations including messages, etc.
6. Keep the complainant and the person against whom allegations were made informed of progress. This should be done in the form of written reports.
7. Mediation should be the first consideration in resolving a bullying complaint. This informal form of dispute resolution is appropriate only if the person making the complaint agrees.
8. The appropriate action based on the findings of the investigator must be undertaken promptly. Such action may include:
 - Apologies
 - Changes in work practices
 - Disciplinary action
 - Training

Investigator's discussion with the complainant

1. Determine whether an interpreter is required.
2. The complainant may bring a support person with them (e.g. Chaplain, family member or friend).
3. Arrange an appropriate venue to meet with the complainant. The venue should be private and free of interruptions, and wherever possible put the complainant at ease. The venue must be conducive to maintaining confidentiality.
4. Allocate enough time to discuss the complaint in full.
5. Explain how the investigation process is conducted and the possible outcomes.
6. Advise the complainant that the matters discussed are confidential, and that the complainant must only discuss the issue with those persons investigating the complaint, or who are formally supporting them through the process.
7. Obtain a broad outline of the complaint, followed by a detailed description of what is alleged to have happened, when it is alleged to have happened (including dates and times), where it is alleged to have happened and by whom. Obtain and record all relevant facts.
8. Ask the complainant whether there are any witnesses, or other evidence that supports their version of events. Record the names of any witnesses to the alleged bullying and obtain copies of any documentation provided to support the allegations. Advise the complainant that witnesses will be interviewed and that the complainant should not speak to the witnesses about the issues.
9. Explain any other action that will be taken, e.g. speaking to the alleged bully.
10. Ask the complainant what they want done in regard to the alleged bullying. It is at this point that mediation should be offered as a means of resolving the complaint. If mediation is accepted, the mediation should be arranged to occur as soon as possible.
11. Advise the complainant when they can expect to be advised of an outcome to their complaint.

Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines

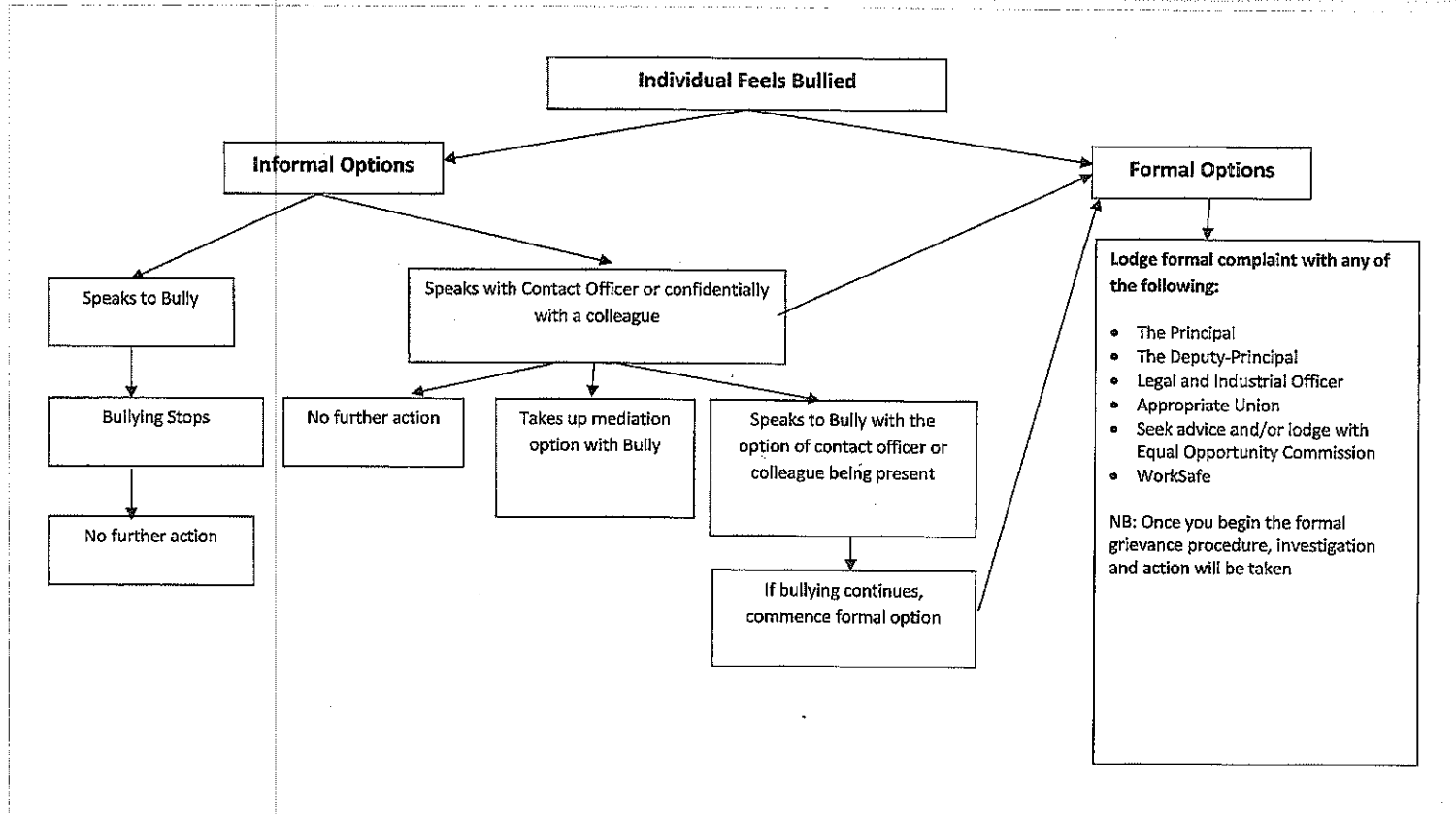
Investigator's discussion with the person about whom the complaint is made

1. Determine whether an Interpreter is required.
2. The respondent may bring a support person with them (e.g. Chaplain, family member or friend).
3. Arrange an appropriate venue to meet with the respondent. The venue should be private and free of interruptions, and wherever possible put the respondent at ease. The venue must be conducive to maintaining confidentiality.
4. Allocate enough time to discuss the allegation(s) in full.
5. Explain to the respondent your role in the investigation of the complaint against them, and that it is important that their version of events is obtained.
6. Advise the respondent that the matters discussed are confidential, and that the respondent must only discuss the issue with those persons investigating the complaint, or who are formally supporting them through the process.
7. Explain to the respondent exactly what it is that they have been accused of saying or doing, including names, dates, times and locations.
8. Provide the respondent with a written memo stating the allegations.
9. Ask the person to respond, either verbally or in writing, to the allegations.
10. Take notes of the respondent's version of events. Obtain and record all relevant facts.
11. Ask the respondent whether there are any witnesses, or other evidence that supports their version of events. Record the names of any witnesses and obtain copies of any documentation. Advise the respondent that witnesses will be interviewed and that the respondent should not speak to the witnesses about the issues.
12. If the allegations are denied, ask the respondent if they can think of a reason why these allegations have been made.
13. Ask the respondent what they believe may resolve the matter.
14. Inform the respondent that they must not victimise or bother the complainant in any way. Doing so will result in immediate action against them, e.g. being stood down pending the outcome of the investigation.
15. Counselling should be offered to the respondent. If accepted, this may be arranged through the Employee Assistance Program provider.
16. Advise the respondent when they can expect to be advised of an outcome of the investigation.

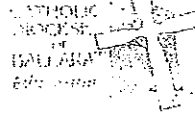
The outcome

1. Determine whether or not the allegations are substantiated, or whether there is insufficient evidence or information to make a conclusion. Record in writing your conclusions and the reason for them.
2. If the alleged bullying is substantiated, there may be a basis for disciplinary action against the person responsible. If termination of employment is appropriate, this must comply with unfair dismissal laws.
3. If the allegations of bullying are unsubstantiated, ensure that there is no action taken against the person whom the complaint was made and that no notes about the complaint are retained in their personnel file.
4. If there is insufficient information to make a determination in regard to an allegation of bullying, the report notes should be kept in the confidential files and no action is to be taken against either party.
5. Advise the complainant and the person about whom the complaint was made of the investigation findings and actions. If the allegation is substantiated, action will include a written record of the investigation being placed in the perpetrators personnel file.
6. Provide a written summary to the **Principal / Parish Priest**
7. Store all bullying complaints files securely and confidentially.

Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines
Bullying Investigation Flow Chart



APPENDIX D



24 June 2011

Dear Michael

Re: Complaint regarding workplace issues at [redacted]
Portland South

I wish to advise you that I have completed my investigation at the request of Mr [redacted], Director, Catholic Education Office Ballarat, of the issues contained in your complaint regarding workplace issues at [redacted] School [redacted].

Return to Work

My first recommendation to Mr [redacted] is that you return to your teaching position at [redacted], at the commencement of Term 3.

In conjunction with this return to work the following actions are recommended:

- o A meeting is held with you, [redacted] (student) and his parents to reconnect relationships on your return to work.
- o A facilitated process is conducted between you and Mrs [redacted] in the first week of Term 3. The CEOB will lead this. Additional sessions may need to be held over the next six months.
- o Communication to parents and staff regarding your return is developed with the assistance of the facilitator.
- o If available, the replacement teacher for your Year 1 class is employed for the first week of Term 3. This will allow for team teaching to establish student progress and future requirements and also release time to attend mediation sessions.
- o I will advise Fr [redacted] (Canonical Administrator) and Ms [redacted] (Principal) that you will be returning to your teaching position on Monday 18 July 2011.

Feedback on the investigation of your complaint

I also wish to provide you with feedback on my investigation into your complaint, which you provided me through a communication titled *Mediation meeting requests*, at a meeting held at the [redacted] Catholic Education Office on Wednesday 27 April 2011. Mr. [redacted] from VIEU was also in attendance.

In conducting this investigation I interviewed 23 staff members and viewed appropriate documentation over four days. I also completed a telephone interview with you on Tuesday 21 June 2011. In that interview you indicated that you wished to reply in writing to my questions, which I received on Wednesday 22 June 2011.

In interviewing staff, the following questions were asked:

1. Do you believe there is a culture of bullying among staff in the school?
2. Do you believe that you are adequately briefed on the needs of individual needs of students- especially those outside of your class?
3. Do you believe you have been given at times unreasonable workloads or expectations?
4. Do you believe you are adequately consulted regarding changes?
5. Do you believe staff meetings are effective in allowing staff to participate and enter into discussion?

Note: All teachers were asked Questions 1-5, Administrative Assistants Questions 1, 3 and 4 and Teacher Aides were asked Questions 1, 2, 3, 4. Administrative Assistants and Teacher Aides do not go to staff meetings. Two teachers in their interviews indicated they do not usually attend staff meetings and therefore did not provide any comments for Question 5.

Responses

1. Do you believe there is a culture of bullying among staff in the school?

- 74 % of staff members believe there is not a culture of bullying among staff in the school.
- 13% of staff members do believe there is a culture of bullying among staff in the school.
- 13% of staff members believe there is in fact an undercurrent, which could be attributed to certain personalities and personal issues.

Some staff members provided examples of one-off incidents and general low level issues. Some of these issues were centred on the approachability of leadership.

While my investigation did not prove a serious culture of bullying among staff, there are areas for improvement. These areas include:

- The need for professional development and training in OH &S issues and policy processes.
- Professional development to enhance conflict resolution and building relationships.

Two underlying issues in my investigation were around the personal relationships of staff and conduct towards Union activities.

In regards to personal issues of staff, it is more complex when staff members are related to each other and the separation of professional and personal is more difficult. As such, social invitations may be viewed as exclusion when they are in

fact personal. As part of my feedback to Fr [REDACTED] and Mrs [REDACTED]. I will discuss this issue.

In relation to you being excluded from a social evening in Term 1, Mrs [REDACTED] was advised not to have contact with you while you were on leave with pay as a result of the incident on the yard.

In relation to conduct towards Union activities, the conduct of people in Union meetings is not the guardianship of principals. You also believed that you were sometimes denied Union representation. You would need to take up these two issues with the VIEU.

2. Do you believe that you are adequately briefed on individual needs of students- especially those outside of your class?

- 85% of staff members believe that they are adequately briefed on the individual needs of students - especially those outside of their class.
- 15% of staff members believe they are not adequately briefed on the individual needs of students - especially those outside of their class.

It is clear that information regarding students' medical conditions is well displayed and teachers are quite informed of these needs.

It is evident that the staff members have participated in professional development for specific students' needs such as autism. It is not clear from my investigation that all teachers are aware of Behaviour Management Plans and specific educational disadvantage of some students, or if some staff have not engaged in familiarizing themselves with such information.

I will recommend that communication processes in general are reviewed by the school including relevant policies such as Student Needs.

3. Do you believe you have been given at times unreasonable workloads or expectations?

- 78% of staff members believe they have not been given at times unreasonable workloads or expectations.
- 22% of staff members believe they have been given at times unreasonable workloads or expectations.

It is evident from my investigation that there has been significant effort from the leadership to minimize staff workloads through restricting staff meetings to every 2-3 weeks, providing a day release for report writing and commencing parent interview times earlier. Some staff indicated they believe there are not enough staff meetings.

Teacher release per week is 2 hours and 40 minutes which is above the minimum requirement.

In the feedback you provided by email on 21 June 2011 you were concerned about safety in being left alone at night in the school at parent teacher interview times and not receiving reports back from the principal in a time that allowed you to organize them for distribution. I will raise these two issues with Mrs [REDACTED].

4. Do you believe you are adequately consulted regarding changes?

- 70% of staff members believe they are adequately consulted regarding changes.
- 26% of staff members believe they are not adequately consulted regarding changes.
- 4% of staff members did not have an opinion.

My investigation indicated that day to day changes are indicated on the whiteboard in the staff room and through informal process. It is noted that informal communication can sometimes lead to misinformation.

You had raised a specific issue around frequent changing of classroom or year levels. Mrs [REDACTED] verified your teaching history:

2005- Grades 3/4
2006- Grades 1/2
2007- Grades 3/4
2008- Grades 3/4
2009- Grades 3/4
2010- Grades 3/4
2010- Grade 1

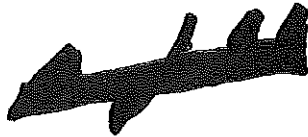
The changes related to difficulty with behaviour management in your first year. You were encouraged to develop your skills in this area and I believe that you also in-serviced staff members as a result of your learning. The change back to Grades 3/4 in 2007 related to your role as Religious Education Coordinator. This placement would assist your role as it was a sacramental grade. The change in 2010 to Grade 1 related to Mrs [REDACTED] wishing to have an Extended Mathematical Understanding (EMU) trained teacher at each level. In your time at [REDACTED] Parish, [REDACTED] your actual classroom has changed, in addition to a new class level due to student need and building of programs.

It is at the principal's discretion where to deploy staff each year based on educational requirements. It is noted that in your 2010 ARM there is reference to your position in 2011 being in Grade 1.

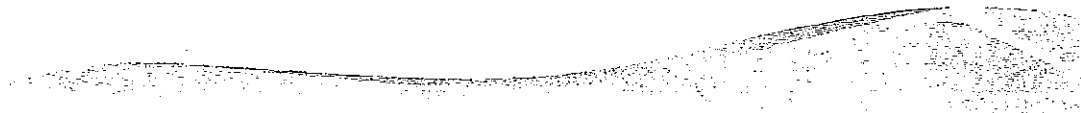
Emotional support provided by the Psychological and Health Institute: As this is for personal reasons the school is not required to assist with costs. I acknowledge that to go to such services may require consideration for special leave. I will raise this issue with Mrs [REDACTED].

I know that you are looking forward to returning to your teaching position at [REDACTED]. I hope that this letter will assist in your return and that the facilitation process will be beneficial for all concerned.

Yours Sincerely



[REDACTED]
Assistant Director – School Operations



APPENDIX E

Dear [REDACTED], here are my responses to the questions you asked me on the phone on the 21st June 2011 at approximately 9.30am

Do you believe there is a culture of bullying among staff at [REDACTED]?

Yes. [REDACTED] has an 'in crowd' and an 'out crowd'. The in crowd are encouraged to intimidate and bully the out crowd with impunity. The crowd that are in favour with [REDACTED] (including family members) receive preferential treatment. This may include easier leave access, more time to complete tasks, more release time, less scrutiny, better resources and more PD opportunities. The leadership of [REDACTED] have bullied me and other staff members. They have also used other staff members to intimidate and harass me and others. [REDACTED] has abused her power and manipulated many situations to bully, harass, intimidate and victimise me in various ways. These are only *some* examples:

She does not greet me very often, she does not say hello often, she often snubs me and ignores me, and sometimes she grunts at me. Her manner is often **rude** and abrupt. She is not very approachable. I have heard her say openly in the staffroom, "I don't get mad, I get even." She does not knock to enter the classroom; she uses her finger to gesture to come to her. She does not talk yet expects you to follow her without **explanation or communication**.

[REDACTED] made me sit in her office to fill in the REC survey on her computer with her watching me and even editing my comments herself. I was not free to answer the survey honestly. [REDACTED] was not prepared to provide me with the code I required to access the survey. I felt **intimidated** by her.

[REDACTED] sat in the middle of the IT room watching staff fill in the school online survey on a swivel chair. We had to fill the survey in at this set time. I felt unable to complete the survey as I wished as I was **scared of reprisals** that would result if [REDACTED] saw what I had entered into this so called confidential survey.

[REDACTED] conspired with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to prevent me having a union representative in meetings. [REDACTED] changed previously agreed scheduled times and dates of meetings in such a manner that I was unable to even seek union advice before meetings.

[REDACTED] repeatedly changed my classroom and/or year level from one year to the next without any valid reason or consultation. This has included frequent team member changes. This I feel was intended as a **punishment**.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] (As deputy principal) has used his relationship with his aunty to bully, harass, intimidate and victimise me without fear of any consequence for his actions. During the union meeting held mid 2010, [REDACTED] did not sit, he stood over others. His supporting group ([REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]) walked in together as a block and sat on desks, they did not sit at the same level as everyone else already sitting on chairs. This block tried to stop free speech and the whole meeting. [REDACTED] made a loud intimidating speech. During it he made various remarks suggesting that this meeting was not allowed as there was no prior agenda. [REDACTED] asked [REDACTED] what his problem was and that a union meeting of members did not require an agenda. [REDACTED] stated that there could be nothing that you should not approach [REDACTED] about at work. He also stated that he felt nobody here supporting this meeting could be trusted. I made one short suggestion in

response to [REDACTED] as he was intimidating [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Who had asked a reasonable question of [REDACTED]) I simply suggested that there could be workplace relations issues that you would not want to speak to the Principal about.

As he is family with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] it is my view that he took this as a personal insult. Things said in the union meeting should be in confidence however I believe that [REDACTED] has informed [REDACTED] of everyone's stance at this meeting and anyone with a possible reason to want to talk to the union has been cast by leadership in a negative manner. It is my understanding that this union meeting was simply for staff to consult with their union over a daily routine change. The leaders of the school react negatively to any consultative process or opinion that is not the same as their own.

From this meeting [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have become hostile towards me and they have treated me differently and I have felt **victimised**. I was no longer acknowledged as part of the leadership group and was not invited to attend any further leadership meetings. This was **professional exclusion**. As REC I was no longer supported in this role. [REDACTED] no longer sat at the front of the church and to assist me with music as she had previously done. Exclusion from leadership meetings made it very difficult for me to do my role.

[REDACTED] followed me from an unscheduled full staff meeting called by Fr. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The meeting was called to discuss the non appointment of [REDACTED]. Father [REDACTED] began to speak with no regard to [REDACTED]'s feelings and without warning that she would be the topic of the discussion. [REDACTED] left upset and I followed her to make sure she was all right. [REDACTED] chased after me and **repeatedly shouted** at me to get back and listen to Fr. [REDACTED]. He was excessively close to me, invading my personal space and began **poking me repeatedly in the chest** whilst he badgered me and called me unprofessional. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] heard [REDACTED] yelling, she came back into the foyer and witnessed this encounter. Staff members have since told me they heard [REDACTED] yelling at me from the staff room.

[REDACTED] stated to me at a meeting with [REDACTED] "You'd have to be feeling like shit" and "Your guts must be churning." The manner in which she said these things was not sympathetic, rather I felt she was gloating.

Fr. [REDACTED] has gone around behind my back asking parents at the school personal questions about me. This included things like How long has his house been on the market? What are his future plans? What do you think of Michael as a person?

Fr. [REDACTED] has **yelled** at me in a meeting with [REDACTED] [REDACTED], accusing me of being totally out of order and totally wrong. He questioned my non attendance at a church event during a meeting with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He questioned my commitment to my faith because of my non attendance. He did not let me communicate as he **shouted** me down. I was caring for my three children as my wife was at a work conference in Melbourne. He did not question [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s non attendance at Confirmation Mass as [REDACTED] yet he was 'picking up a boat'. I am treated less favourably.

On both of the occasions that I have been stood down from work, Fr. [REDACTED] as the employer has failed to meet with me to gain my version of events. This denies me **natural justice**. Fr. [REDACTED] does not seem to have an understanding of the concept of natural justice.

During the [redacted] incident [redacted] warned other staff members from talking to me as "I was walking a fine line". This was an attempt to isolate me from colleagues. He and other staff have on various occasions followed me in an **intimidating manner, hovered around listening to my private conversations, kept surveillance on me** and then reported back to either [redacted] or [redacted]. On numerous occasions the inner group were seen to conduct meetings behind closed doors, this is not merely routine as it did not happen with those out of favour.

When I or other outer group staff members enter the staff room, topics of conversation can stop or are quickly changed.

Did you make any complaint about bullying?

Yes. I tried to complain to [redacted] about Fr. [redacted] shouting at me. Far from being supportive, listening to my complaint and being taken seriously, she tried to dismiss my concerns and suggested that I was at fault suggesting that we were both equally to blame. She later called me over to speak to me in a quiet corner of the library post the mediation and warned me to be careful as I had nearly lost my job. I felt this was to **intimidate** me. I also felt that my concerns were not addressed at all.

My wife and I also approached [redacted]. She and I raised various concerns about leadership, favouritism, lack of consultation, unfair treatment and bullying; this extended to our children as well. I noticed after speaking to [redacted], that a few of the issues I raised with him began to be addressed. E.g. Those of the outer group who had ancient computers suddenly got told they were going to be upgraded and this did happen.

To whom am I suppose to make a complaint when it is those in leadership positions, including the Parish Priest who are actively doing the bullying and are complicit in the bullying culture created and enforced by the inner group. It has become very apparent to me that this cultural problem has been in existence long before my time at [redacted]. Even the Director of Catholic Education, Mr. [redacted] has admitted to me that he has known there has been a problem with an us and them culture for some time at [redacted]. I have never received staff PD on workplace bullying and harassment so did not have direction as to what to do if bullied.

Was it informal or a formal complaint?

The two previous examples were informal complaints. However as part of the investigation conducted by [redacted] I made more formal allegations against the leaders at [redacted]. I also detailed some other people's experiences of bullying that they had experienced by [redacted] and her inner group. [redacted] suggested to me that she could not ignore my complaints and allegations and that as part of her role she would have to investigate. I told her that even though she said I could return to work I did not feel safe to do this as I felt like I was being targeted. I feel that this targeting was related to having made the informal complaints and also due to my Union involvement.

Was I aware of the communication and grievance procedure policy at [redacted]

I was made aware of the communication and grievance policy & procedure information for staff document at the staff meeting at the start of the year. This was dated February 2010 however it is my belief that this document was backdated as it

was not part of the 2010 staff handbook. This document was not referred to in a mediation meeting held on the 10th November that was held as an outcome of the [redacted] termination. Both [redacted] and Fr. [redacted] were unaware of the existence of a communication and grievance procedure document. That is why they agreed as part of the outcomes of this mediation meeting as specified in the mediators ([redacted]) email - *the following was agreed upon:*
The development/review of a grievance procedure document. Possible people to be involved in this: [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]
Michael Crowe

I was not included in any process of this review. This is typical as consultation is minimal at best at [redacted] school.

Do you believe you are adequately consulted regarding changes?

No. Staff are not consulted about changes. It is obvious when a decision by leadership is going to be made at staff meetings as they use *think, pair share* strategy in staff meetings and distribute the inner group people around the room in such a way as to stifle open discussions and also to ensure no dissenting voice gets heard. Rushed decisions and changes often result with not all possibilities being heard or considered. If you are not in the inner group your opinion is not valued or given any weight. Changes are often made quickly in a reactionary manner with very little planning.

Do you believe during staff meetings that you are allowed to participate in discussions?

No... [redacted] is openly moody, she frowns and shows her displeasure about what is being discussed if she does not agree with it. As a result staff stay quiet and reserved for **fear of retribution**. [redacted] openly says in the staff room "I don't get mad, I get even". Think pair share is used to manipulate and stymie discussion. Agenda items are censored or moved about to avoid them or so discussion on something leadership do not want is kept to a minimum- we've run out of time on that one. It has also been made very clear that you are not allowed to be negative on any item leadership put forward. Group think rules the staff room. Staff that believe in and practice free speech are treated with hostility. The union representative is treated with hostility and any business she raises is put to last on agenda lists and she is not treated with respect.

Do you believe you are adequately briefed on the needs of individual students, especially those outside of my class?

No... Whilst some students with medical alerts can have posters displayed in the staff room there are children with serious behavioural issues that are not discussed. This can place a teacher into situations in which they have not been given the information needed to deal with issues in the best possible manner. My recent personal experience supports this view. The parents of the child involved in this incident were of the belief that all staff would be made aware of their child's needs. This was definitely not the case.

The student welfare officer does not communicate strategies she employs with children with the classroom teacher. There is no consistent discipline and behaviour policy that all students need to adhere to. Discipline and behaviour issues are handled in an ad-hoc fashion. ILP's are not updated correctly; the student in the incident I was involved in did not have a current ILP at the time of the incident.

Do you believe there are unreasonable timeframes or workloads set?

There are many issues surrounding unfair and different workload and timeframe expectations at this school. It depends on who you are as to how you are treated. For example I am moved classroom nearly every year even if I am staying in the same level yet other inner group staff are cemented in the classroom and level.

Report writing time is deliberately made more stressful for outer group members. Leadership ensure we get our reports back last and I believe our reports are scrutinized more. I am often made to make changes that do not change the substance of my reports but are just down to preference of expression. At the end of last year, even though I handed my reports in early I received my reports back after the proof reading process late Thursday afternoon to be handed out the next day. As REC I had Graduation Mass that evening. I had to make changes, resubmit, check, envelope and distribute my reports whilst teaching the next day. My teaching suffered that day because of this unreasonable expectation.

During Parent /Teacher interviews staff have been left at school with parents without anybody else being in attendance. I believe this is a safety issue and would not happen to staff in the inner group. Leadership leave whenever they like.

█ puts off classroom commitments to support teachers in their rooms for things like NAPLAN data entry or report reading time. Yet they expect staff to complete and write reports and complete extra commitments around their regular duties. Leadership do not lead by example yet demand respect and loyalty.

Michael Crowe