



PRESS RELEASE - ST COLMAN'S COLLEGE, VIOLET HILL, NEWRY

The Board of Governors has been informed that the Diocese of Dromore has recently settled a claim in relation to the sexual abuse of former pupils by Fr. Malachy Finnegan (deceased) who was employed in the College from 1967 – 1971 and then as a teacher from 1973 - 1976 and who was President of the College from 1976 to 1987.

The Board of Governors condemns in the strongest possible terms the physical, sexual and emotional abuse inflicted by Malachy Finnegan when he was in the employment of the College over 30 years ago. The Board of Governors is devastated that any pupil who was entrusted to the care of St. Colman's College should ever have suffered abuse.

The Board of Governors is aware that while this abuse took place over three decades ago, victims and their families carry its impact with them throughout their lives.

When informed in October 2017, that a case had been settled by the Diocese of Dromore, the Board of Governors instructed that Malachy Finnegan's image be removed from photographs which were on display in the College.

In line with best safeguarding, care and welfare practice, the Board of Governors advises anyone who has been a victim of Malachy Finnegan's abuse to bring this to the attention of the PSNI.

The Board of Governors of St. Colman's College places the highest importance on all aspects of child protection, care, safeguarding and welfare and ensures that St Colman's College is wholly compliant with all Department of Education (DE) regulations.

Effective child protection, safeguarding, care and welfare measures underpin the professional conduct and behaviour of all members of staff. Safeguarding procedures within the College are and have been subject to inspection by the relevant statutory authorities (Education and Training Inspectorate) which in turn protects the welfare and well-being of all students and staff.

The abuse that Malachy Finnegan inflicted is the antithesis of all that the College stands for in terms of its aims, objectives, ethos and culture and it is a matter of absolute regret and sorrow that such behaviour should ever have occurred in St. Colman's College.

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