



MIST Statement – Non-Recent Abuse in Schools

During 2016-17 the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) commissioned a team of independent professionals to undertake the Methodist Independent Schools Safeguarding Review and Audit (SSRA); this reviewed all records of non-recent cases of abuse or allegations of abuse and undertook a thorough audit of each school's current safeguarding practices. The audits of current arrangements were thorough and rigorous and identified many examples of excellent practice; but there is no room for complacency. The report made a number of recommendations for MIST as a whole and for each school, on an individual basis, to support deeper and sustainable progress in this area. The review of known past cases has involved all schools reviewing their records of complaint and any allegations of abuse. In each case the actions taken by the school at the time have been reviewed. Wherever necessary fresh referrals have been made to the relevant authorities and lessons learned have been noted. MIST has put in place actions to address the recommendations of the SSRA, including a continuing routine and independent review of safeguarding arrangements in our schools and regular reports from each school to MIST.

The review of past cases confirmed that in some schools and on some occasions our schools employed people who abused their position of trust to harm children. Such individuals abused children in the very environments where they should have felt safe. We express our deep sorrow, deep regret and genuine compassion for those who have suffered. On behalf of the Methodist Independent Schools, MIST would like to apologise unequivocally and unreservedly to all survivors of child abuse in Methodist Schools. Our schools failed some pupils in the past; and we are working rigorously to ensure that these failures are never repeated.

MIST welcomes the extra child protection measures suggested in the Government's recent 'reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect' consultation but shares the disappointment expressed by organisations like the Boarding Schools Association (BSA) that the Government's proposals fall short of introducing legislation to support mandatory reporting of abuse. Our schools that have boarding are all members of BSA and access the support and training provided; MIST also provides support and training that helps to ensure that safeguarding awareness and procedures in all our schools are the very best that they can be.