



WESTERN PROVINCE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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WPPS

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Dear Parents

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT ON WETPUPS

There has been a flurry of media attention on the school since the letter I wrote to our community on 25 January 2022. Owing to this, I thought it wise to communicate once more and explain what has happened in this regard.

I sent out a letter, initiated and sanctioned by the Board, outlining our proactive response as a school to the ongoing investigations into sexual abuse of children in schools across the country. Although we are not currently dealing with any such incidents of sexual abuse, we felt that it was essential to initiate a process to acknowledge any past abuse and assist the victims of this abuse, if indeed any come to light.

Sadly, unspoken power dynamics often perpetuate a code of silence that keeps abuse victims from speaking up or out. It is this code of silence that we are trying to break by pre-emptively opening up this discussion. We also want to reach out to any possible victims of abuse. In so doing, we want to learn how to protect our current children at the school even more – ensuring that this life-changing and evil behaviour never impacts our Wetpups boy.

It should be pointed out that the letter that we wrote to the community about abuse at Wetpups was intended for our community only and we did not in any way reach out to the media about this. However, on Thursday, 3 February, Deon Wiggett phoned the school and spoke to me about our letter. I have no idea how he got access to the letter. He congratulated us as a school for embarking on this course of action and told me that he would be writing about it. A News24 article titled "*Were you abused while at Western Province Preparatory School? Audit launched into 108 years of 'injustices'*" was then published on Monday, 7 February. Whilst the heading of the article did not paint the school in a good light, the body of the article was complimentary about the proactive action taken by the school. Still, the fact that the bulk of this positive content was hidden was also particularly unfortunate.

The article then resulted in me being contacted for a short interview on Cape Talk, on the John Maytham show, on Wednesday, 9 February. This was then followed by a short interview on Etv. Both interviews were very positive. Deon Wiggett, who was interviewed before me on Etv, was glowing in his praise of Wetpups and the stance the Board was taking with respect to this very important issue. He implored other schools in the country to follow our lead.

It should be made clear that through all of this, we are trying to ensure that we protect and safeguard our boys at Wetpups and that we reach out to all those who may have been adversely affected by abuse in the past. We must address this scourge in our country, and from it, we hope that we can all heal and grow.

Kind regards

SIMON WEAVER
Headmaster



WESTERN PROVINCE PREPARATORY SCHOOL
MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA