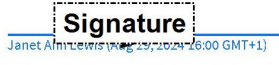


OFFICIAL – Sensitive
(For Criminal Justice related purposes only)

MG11(W)

CPS Use Only

WITNESS STATEMENT			
(Criminal Procedure Rules R16.2, Criminal Justice Act 1967 S9)			
		URN	
Statement of	Janet LEWIS		
Age if under 18	Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')	Occupation	Retired
<p>This statement (consisting of 5 page(s)) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.</p>			
Signature	 <small>Janet Alim Lewis (02/08/2024 12:00 GMT+1)</small>	Date	28/08/2024
Signature of parent / guardian / appropriate adult		Relationship of parent / guardian / appropriate adult	
<p>Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(supply witness details on MG11 Back)</i></p> <p>I am the above-named person and I reside at an address known to Merseyside Police. This statement is my account of events leading up to the attendance of Police Officers to speak with me regarding a former pupil of Acorns School, namely Axel RUDAKUBANA.</p> <p>Prior to my retirement in August 2023, I spent 15 years working at Acorns School, Ormskirk, where I held many roles, from High Level Teaching Assistant to Pupil Support Manager and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL). I have extensive experience in working with children who have Special Educational Needs and I have worked in various specialist schools throughout my career.</p> <p>Part of my duties within Acorns school was to monitor attendance and submit relevant safeguarding referrals for children who raised cause for concern.</p> <p>Axel joined the school in mid-October 2019. At this time, I was Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Manager. Axel was admitted to Acorns School on 17th October 2019 after being referred from Range High School in Sefton where it had been reported that Axel had taken a knife into school “on more than ten occasions”. It was deemed by the Headteacher that Axel would be permanently excluded from the school following this incident. As Acorns is a Pupil Referral Unit, it</p>			

WITNESS STATEMENT

(Criminal Procedure Rules R16.2, Criminal Justice Act 1967 S9)

URN

Statement of

Janet LEWIS

is common for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools to move to Acorns School.

There is a computer system which Acorns use to record any incidents to note; this system is formally known as the Child Protection Online Monitoring System but is often referred to as CPOMS. CPOMS acts as an online record which can be accessed by teachers and staff alike to record all incidents and communication with children, support agencies and their parents. It is essentially a formal way of recording safeguarding and wellbeing concerns at school.

It was in November that Axel first came to my attention as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. One of the other teachers at the school made me aware of an incident in an ICT lesson where Axel had been researching mass shootings in America rather than doing the task he had been given. This had been challenged by the teacher and Axel attempted to engage in conversation about the topic before he was told that this would not happen. Axel's Father was telephoned about the incident who stated that Axel was copying another student. This incident was documented on CPOMS. Another number of incidents occurred which were a cause for concern over the next few weeks after this incident but without having access to the documents, I cannot recall their detail given that it happened over four years ago, but the incidents will be recorded on the CPOMS log. I hadn't personally worked with Axel at this point, but my concerns led me to submit a Prevent Referral form on 5th December 2019. I did this in an attempt to get the right support in place for Axel who I remember was displaying escalating behaviour.

I did not really have a lot of personal interaction with Axel. My main involvement with him as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. I was also present during some of the classes that Axel was in. This was at the request of another teacher, Maggie ALLRED, who was worried about Axel's

WITNESS STATEMENT

(Criminal Procedure Rules R16.2, Criminal Justice Act 1967 S9)

URN

Statement of

Janet LEWIS

escalating behaviour. Mrs Allred reported to me that Axel was 'trying to run the lessons' and as such, I said I would support her by sitting at the back of the room to do my own work.

In December 2019, I submitted a further prevent referral when I was made aware of an incident where Axel had telephoned a taxi and travelled to Range High School, (his previous high school) and assaulted a pupil with a hockey stick. I was advised that he had been arrested for this incident and during his arrest, a knife was found in his bag. I was alarmed by this incident as I had learnt that Axel had telephoned a taxi to arrive at the same time as the taxi that he would normally use to travel to school. The pre-meditation of this concerned me so I felt that I had to submit the referral for some immediate intervention.

Following this incident, Axel was not allowed to come back to school whilst the relevant authorities made decisions about the next steps for Axel's future at Acorns. During this time, work was sent home to Axel to complete so that he could maintain some education whilst he was absent from school. To my knowledge, it was only Axel's father who had any involvement in this process, I don't remember Axel's mother having much to do with the school or Axel's education.

During the time I did spend with Axel, I did not find him to be particularly forthcoming and engaging. A lot of Axel's behaviour depended on his mood but in general, he always appeared very shut down. Axel would often challenge teachers when speaking with him and I found that the best way to communicate with him was to speak in a monotone way, leaving no room for interpretation or arguments.

I would describe Axel as a bit of a loner. I am not aware of any friendship groups or social interactions with other children. I cannot recall of any altercations that Axel was involved in at school as he did not really interact with other children. I would not say that this was uncommon

WITNESS STATEMENT	
(Criminal Procedure Rules R16.2, Criminal Justice Act 1967 S9)	
	URN
Statement of	Janet LEWIS
<p>though as this is something that is commonplace with a lot of children who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p> <p>I do not believe Axel was subject to any bullying whilst he was at Acorns School. Axel was in a class that I would describe as particularly 'bubbly'. What I mean by this is that there were a lot of big personalities in his class which can be a challenging learning environment. However, I was not aware of any bullying that took place either by Axel or directed towards him. What I am certain of, is that Acorns took any allegations very seriously and had there been any suggestion of any kind of bullying, it would have been investigated thoroughly.</p> <p>Axel's attendance at school was rather limited due to Covid 19. Axel was operating on a reduced timetable with the view to increasing his hours at school long term. However, this was never possible due to Axel's attitude towards school. There were numerous occasions where Axel refused to attend so it meant Axel remained on a reduced timetable where he was only ever getting his 'PM' mark in the afternoon. This greatly affected his attendance figures.</p> <p>As a school, we did not receive much information about Axel's history, there were no real records from his primary school in Cardiff and this made it difficult to determine whether there were any issues within his records that we could assist him with.</p> <p>I can confirm that I am willing to assist Merseyside Police in their investigation and I will be willing to attend Court if required to give my account as detailed above.</p>	
Statement taken by (print name)	Constable 1133 FRY
Station	Operational Command Centre
Date, time statement taken	28 th August 2024







MG11(W) - Witness Statement - J LEWIS

Final Audit Report

2024-08-29

Created:	2024-08-29 (British Summer Time)
By:	Charlotte Fry (Charlotte.Fry@nwrocu.police.uk)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAFTaqhSDKcR5n74anAb-OIII4uMu6KON

"MG11(W) - Witness Statement - J LEWIS" History

-  Document created by Charlotte Fry (Charlotte.Fry@nwrocu.police.uk)
2024-08-29 - 15:38:41 GMT+1
-  Document emailed to DPA for signature
2024-08-29 - 15:43:34 GMT+1
-  Email viewed by DPA
2024-08-29 - 15:43:53 GMT+1
-  Signer DPA entered name at signing as Janet Ann Lewis
2024-08-29 - 16:00:05 GMT+1
-  Document e-signed by Janet Ann Lewis DPA
Signature Date: 2024-08-29 - 16:00:07 GMT+1 - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2024-08-29 - 16:00:07 GMT+1