

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

NICHE Ref No: 24000659041

Statement of: LUCY MCLOUGHLIN

Age (if under 18): N/A

This statement 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.

Signature

Signature

Date: 29-07-2024

The content of this statement has been prepared by interviewing the witness and taking notes. The statement was then typed not in the presence of the witness. The time and date that the witness reviewed the statement is logged below. Any changes are recorded in the statement.

I am the above named person of an address known to Merseyside Police.

I am the Head Teacher at Presfield High School, Preston New Road, Southport. This is a specialist school for autism. We take children from the ages of 11 to 19. I have been working there since September 2014 and have been Head Teacher for a year.

There are 124 children that go to this school, with about 10 students in each high school class and 12 to 13 in each sixth form class.

I am making this statement in relation to a pupil at my school, Axel RUDAKUBANA. Axel came to us on 28th March 2022 after he was referred to us by Lancashire County Council. I believe he came from Acorns Pupil Referral Unit which is a pupil referral unit that works with students who have been excluded from mainstream high-school. Prior to coming to us I am aware that Axel was excluded from Range High School, Formby, because we believe he had taken a knife into school due to being upset over being racially abused at the school. We have been told that when he got to school he had told someone he had brought something with him, and a teacher then took the knife off him.

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Date: 29-07-2024

Statement started: 29-07-2024 22:03:52

Statement completed: 29-07-2024 22:29:26

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Looking back at Axel's previous education history, it would appear that he came to the North of England in January 2013 from the Cardiff area. Students are not interviewed to be accepted into our school, but Axel had come for some visits prior to starting with us.

Axel's mother and father are Laetitia MUZAYIRE and Alfonse RUDAKUBANA. Laetitia I believe is a careworker and she works nights, and Alfonse is a taxi driver. Axel also has a brother who I believe is younger but I do not know his name. I have met his mother and father on a number of occasions and have been to their home address previously. I believe that both parents are Rowandan refugees.

One of my roles is to conduct welfare visits to see students safe and well at home. I have been to the address numerous times in relation to Axel's lack of attendance at school. He only had a 0.7 per cent attendance rate. On some of these occasions I have attended with a police officer. Alfonse would be welcoming if police were with me, however he was often not receptive if police were not in attendance. He did however attend parent coffee mornings and would be receptive to us during these. Axel's mother was less welcoming but this was usually because she had been working a night shift. When I have entered the house I noticed it was usually quite clean, and was in an acceptable and fine condition.

By 23rd March 2023 we had not seen Axel for weeks so we asked Lancashire Police to do a welfare visit and referred into social care. However Lancashire Police said this was not their area.

The Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) and Constable BAKER subsequently visited Axel's home address and spoke to his parents over his attendance but it did not improve. Axel stated on numerous occasions that he did not want to go to school and struggled with his anxiety. When he did come in he would not engage, and would sit at the back of the classroom. When his anxiety got very bad he would begin drooling from the side of his mouth and Alfonse stated Axel did not want to be seen by other pupils so he was then taught in a separate room and would often only engage with male staff. Regardless of all the welfare interventions by Lancashire social care, Lancashire Police, Lancashire Missing In Education and ourselves, Axel's attendance got no better. Due to this in May or June 2024 Lancashire Council withdrew the funding for his education, meaning he could no longer attend the school. Alfonse emailed the school and stated that Axel still needed to be in education.

Axel was diagnosed with anxiety and autism and I am aware that in February 2024 he had been referred to Alder Hey for ADHD however they stated he would not be diagnosed with this. Axel was also under CAMS.

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Some other incidents of note are on 3rd May 2022 when a teacher from our school went to the address. They reported to me that Alfonse had answered the door and said that he wouldn't encourage Axel to engage with them because he was worried Axel would become violent or trash the house.

On 23rd May 2022 Axel had been reviewed by a psychiatrist at Alder Hey and there were concerns highlighted about his sudden weight loss. He was also being supported by CAMS in relation to his anxiety and saliva production. Axel was on medication for his anxiety but had stopped taking it due to him saying it was giving him heart burn.

In March 2023 Alfonse told the DSL that they were not allowed into the address else he would pay the price when they left. The DSL told me they then asked if he could instead bring Axel to the window and Alfonse said no. Alfonse has also told me that on one occassion Axel poured his food onto him whilst he was eating, poured milk into Alfonse's bed and put Alfonse's laptop in the sink and turned the tap on.

I am willing to attend court as a witness in this matter.

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