

22 February 2023

Christ's Hospital has heard from a number of former pupils, at both Hertford and Horsham, about abuse they suffered at school. Between 2017 and 2020, six former members of staff at Horsham were convicted for offences dating from the late 1960s to 2001.

For some former pupils, the School's letters and public statements have not offered sufficient acknowledgement.

We have engaged with representative victims and other Old Blues from both Hertford and Horsham. We now wish to make the following statement, which marks the culmination of this independently facilitated process.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As current leaders of Christ's Hospital,

We acknowledge that

There were times when members of staff failed to act on disclosures of sexual, physical and emotional abuse that were made by pupils.

We consider they had a moral obligation to do so, but some members of staff failed to report disclosures of abuse.

We have heard from former pupils that there were times when members of staff responded to disclosures obstructively, such as with punishment and deflection.

We have also heard from former pupils of their experiences of the manipulative use of gratitude and threats, including expulsion.

Some School leaders failed to establish and maintain clear structures of accountability.

By allowing perpetrators to resign, or by providing references that would enable perpetrators to seek employment elsewhere, there were times when the School's leadership failed to protect children at other institutions.

Due to the charitable focus of the School, pupils at Christ's Hospital were particularly vulnerable.

Some past members of the School's leadership teams were complicit in a culture that allowed abuse to flourish – by adult staff members toward pupils, and within the community of pupils.

A culture of abuse, cover-up and complicity existed in wider society. This was reinforced at Christ's Hospital, where some members of staff gravely abused their power and position.

*Christ's Hospital failed in its duty to safeguard pupils in its care.
We apologise unreservedly and wholeheartedly for past failures.*

We understand that

The impact of abuse in childhood and adolescence can be traumatic, lifelong and life-changing. Pupils who were abused during their time at Christ's Hospital will carry this experience for the rest of their lives.

The trauma of abuse is wide-ranging, causing distress and harm to family members, friends, former pupils who were aware of abuse during their time at Christ's Hospital, and members of the Christ's Hospital community who now grapple with the knowledge.

In recent times, for some Old Blues, the School's letters and public statements have not offered sufficient acknowledgement.

Pupils who were abused during their time at Christ's Hospital may not tell their story for many years. The experience of coming forward may trigger fresh trauma. The School's current leaders have a responsibility to respond to these disclosures with compassion and clarity.

We commit to

Collaborating in the provision of ongoing, long-term support to victims, their families and the wider community.

Creating spaces, structures and opportunities for gathering, through which victims can share their testimony, and feel that they are not alone.

Learning from mistakes, apologising for them and doing all in our power to safeguard the pupils of Christ's Hospital, present and future.



Simon Reid, Head Teacher



Christopher Steane, Treasurer
on behalf of the Council of Christ's Hospital

For information on the School's current safeguarding arrangements and contact information for support for Old Blues, click [here](#).