

E. Staff Support

1. Consideration should be given to the setting up of a support group for all staff within the school.
2. When a crisis has occurred, or when a particularly upsetting incident has taken place, then staff involved may well require individual counselling from someone outside of the Education Authority.

F. Caretaker Role

1. The role of a future caretaker should be clearly defined.
2. Such person undertaking the job of caretaker should not be asked to undertake other duties within the school, such as becoming part of the care staff, as that will blur the responsibilities of the two jobs and may well serve to put the appointed person into a conflict situation.
3. The caretaker must be given clearly defined lines of communication and formal reporting back of any incidents involving the safety of children. That person will not be in a position to interpret certain occurrences and, therefore, must report everything of any significance.
4. Guidance must be given about what incidents are significant.
5. There should be briefing sessions on a regular basis to ensure that the person appointed is not being intimidated in any way and, therefore, prevented from carrying out his job adequately.

At the time that the intruder was known to be lurking around the school premises it would have been extremely advantageous if an injunction had been taken out against that person approaching the school or any of the boys from the school. It is probably too late from a legal point of view to take such action now. However, should there be any further occurrence of any unwanted person being reported in the vicinity of the school, serious consideration should be given to the taking out of an injunction. This would not only provide some legal protection, but it would also give a very clear message to both the boys and the staff that the Education Authority is carrying out its best endeavours to protect them.

The author is conscious of having no formal background in education and, therefore, has avoided making any recommendations which properly should come within the province of Education Officers.

Finally a review of the situation at Knowl View School in six months' time is recommended.

DPA

VALERIE P. MELLOR (Mrs),
Consultant Clinical Psychologist,
Director, Jubilee Children's Centre