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Sunday Times (London)

November 12, 2000, Sunday

College for deaf faces more child abuse claims

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SECTION: Home news

LENGTH: 314 words

DONALDSON'S College for the deaf is facing new allegations that some former staff members physically abused young children and encouraged them to watch violent and pornographic films.

Craig Walker, 21, a former primary pupil, has made a complaint to Lothian and Borders police. He will make a formal statement in the next few days through a sign language interpreter. None of those accused of cruel or inappropriate behaviour are teaching at the school at present.

Walker's allegations follow last week's conviction of David Scott, the former principal, for assaulting a pupil.

Walker, who was born deaf, said that he was locked in a freezing room at the top of a turret of the Edinburgh building when he was seven years old.

Walker, who lives in Stonehouse, Lanarkshire, will also tell police that from about the age of eight he and others were encouraged by some members of staff to join them watching adult porn videos depicting sex and violence.

Walker said he would give police the names of other children who he believed had been assaulted and would identify the perpetrators.

He said he was angry last week when Scott was convicted of assault but given an absolute discharge. "Anyone who can't deal with difficult behaviour without lashing out should not be working there," he said.

Donaldson's is the world's oldest school for the deaf. Allegations emerged more than two years ago that pupils had been assaulted by some former members of staff. After a lengthy investigation and an inspection of the school's methods, Scott was charged with nine assaults. Stuart Harley, 51, a woodwork teacher who is deaf, was charged with five indecent assaults.

Harley was cleared last week of all charges. Scott was cleared of all but one charge and was convicted of attempting to control an unruly boy by kicking him on the bottom.

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LOAD-DATE: November 17, 2000

CORRECTION: ENGLISH

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