



# TEDDY BEAR CLINIC

FOR ABUSED CHILDREN

## Head Office

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23 November 2016,

Dear Rabbi Bernstein,

We have analyzed the recent social media postings and the case of sexual abuse, which took place at the Yeshiva College campus, outside of the normal school hours. I would like to highlight the following:

- The children involved were all minors and their identities are therefore protected in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act and the Children's Act. The press code also prohibits the identification of victims of sexual abuse. Accordingly, these children (perpetrator and victims) cannot be named and listed.
- All children involved have received the necessary diversion and protective skills, which are recommended by the Teddy Bear Clinic. This ensures the rehabilitation of all children involved, to prevent this from happening again.
- The Teddy Bear Clinic would like to remind parents and caregivers, that in the event of abuse, the appropriately qualified experts should be immediately consulted. Individuals claiming to be able to assist with these issues should not be taken seriously. Child abuse is a highly specialised area, which involves both academic and practical knowledge in the medical and mental health fields, which takes years to attain. It is not only misleading for untrained individuals to claim that they are able to assist victims of abuse and involve themselves in these matters, but it is also extremely dangerous and could lead to a potentially disastrous outcome with far reaching damage to the children involved.
- The management at Yeshiva College has followed all of the required steps to ensure the safety of those involved as well as the safety of their pupils. The fact that the incident was dealt with in such a manner as to protect the identities of the children involved and the confidential nature of the matter, should not be confused with the matter having been "swept under the carpet". The applicable procedures and protocols were at all times followed and complied with by Yeshiva College, who engaged with the appropriately qualified experts from the inception of the matter.
- The Teddy Bear clinic would like to remind the parent body that abuse is often opportunistic and can happen to any child, anytime and anywhere. The parents remain accountable for their children's safety when not at school and should be aware of their children's associations and vigilant in relation to their whereabouts and interactions. Further, every parent should educate his or her child about possible abuse and how to handle this constant threat.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shaheda Omar  
Clinical director

Dr Efrat Barnes  
Medical director