



כ"ה כסלו תשע"ו
7 December 2015

Dear Parents, Yeshivah Community members, Friends and Supporters,

We are writing on behalf of the Yeshivah Centre to advise that we have established a Redress Scheme for victims of sexual abuse.

Yeshivah condemns any form of abuse and acknowledges the serious harm it causes the victim.

The Yeshivah Centre deeply regrets the failure to protect those who were victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by people in a position of trust in the Yeshivah Centre and its schools. The Yeshivah Redress Scheme has been established to ensure that the wrongs committed against children while involved in the Yeshivah Centre and its schools will not go unnoticed or unacknowledged.

In establishing this scheme, our primary concern is for the welfare of anyone who may have experienced such abuse. We are offering to victims, financial redress, access to specialist counselling, case management and support. And most importantly, we offer our sincere apology.

The design of the Yeshivah Redress Scheme has been guided by learnings from schemes across Australia and the recent *Redress and Civil Litigation Report* of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Yeshivah Redress Scheme will operate independently of Yeshivah and we have appointed an independent panel to operate the Scheme. The Panel comprises Mr Michael Debinski, the Scheme Coordinator and Mr John Leatherland. Panel members are highly regarded community services professionals.

Mr Debinski has recently overseen an abuse redress scheme at Jewish Care Victoria where he is currently President. Reviews will also be undertaken by Mr John Leatherland PSM, who was awarded a Public Service Medal for services to vulnerable families and children. Other reviewers will be engaged as required.

The Scheme has engaged Jewish Care Victoria to operate a confidential 1800 contact number for victims of abuse. This line will be operated by skilled social welfare professionals. A separate email address has also been established. All identifying information will remain strictly confidential to the Panel, the Jewish Care Victoria contact point and the third party administering payments. Details of any assessments or determinations made under the Scheme will not be provided to the Yeshivah Centre unless specifically requested by the applicant.

The Scheme will offer redress in the form of a direct personal response to the victim of abuse from Yeshivah, access to counselling and psychological care, and a monetary payment to recognise that sexual abuse should not have occurred. Receiving support under the scheme will not prejudice the individual's rights to pursue any further legal action.

Further information including the Scheme Policy and frequently asked questions are available on the Yeshivah website: www.redress.yeshivahcentre.org

The Scheme commences on 8 December 2015. Anyone who experienced sexual abuse at Yeshivah and is seeking redress under the Scheme should contact the confidential toll-free number 1-800-059-064 or email yeshivahredress@gmail.com.

This Scheme forms part of the Yeshivah Centre's commitment to address the impact of abuse in our organisation and to implement measures to ensure this never happens again.

At the formal announcement of the Scheme this morning, we will share the following message with victims, those known to us and those we may never know:

"You were each entrusted to the care of The Yeshivah Centre. All of you were blameless. All of you were just children. Each and every one of you had the right to be protected and cared for. You had a right to feel safe. You had a right to be educated in an environment that enabled you to reach your full potential. In each of these respects, we let you down, in ways that we can never fully make up for. For the abuse you suffered while you were in our care, on behalf of myself personally and The Yeshivah Centre management and staff, both past and present, I am profoundly sorry."

Yours sincerely,

Leah Balter

Yecheil Belfer

Yossi Franck

Joel Gerschman

Craig Goldberg

Shmuley Goldberg

Rafi Goodman

Meir Moss