



The Great Public Schools' Association of Qld Inc.

Dr John Kinniburgh, GPS Chair
C/- Jodie Watson, GPS Executive Officer
PO Box 465
Spring Hill Qld 4004

March 14, 2022

Dear John,

Late last year, the AIC Management Committee wrote to the GPS Association of Queensland regarding scholarships provided on a free or reduced-fee basis to students at Associated Independent Colleges. Our letter followed the GPS Association's decision to reject our request for changes to the GPS Association Eligibility By-laws. We had requested that AIC member colleges were afforded the same considerations as GPS schools relating to recruitment processes. We advised that the AIC Management Committee would meet early in 2022 to discuss the implications of your decision for our Association, and for individual Member Colleges. This letter advises the outcome of our meeting.

Communication on this topic dates back almost a decade to a letter from the then AIC Management Committee, following the increasing loss of students from our schools to GPS schools, offering free or reduced-fee deals. After that communication in 2013, protocols were established around this practice. However, over time, these protocols have been ignored which prompted us to seek clarification from GPS schools on this practice.

AIC Principals fully accept that families have the right to choose the school they believe is best for their son's education. However, we remain concerned at the practice of staff, Old Boys and/or coaches from GPS schools approaching our students rather than allowing families to make their own educational decisions. We note that your by-laws prevent GPS schools from recruiting students from other GPS schools – a courtesy that was afforded to AIC in previous by-laws. We also note that your by-laws do not require GPS Principals to provide the professional courtesy of informing AIC Schools of the recruitment of a student. This courtesy was also afforded to AIC in previous by-laws.

Our intention in addressing the issue of GPS recruitment of students, was to initiate a broader conversation about the place of sport in schools, and the negative impact that sporting scholarships have on all schools, including GPS schools. Our hope was that our request would lead to a level of collaboration and partnership that would enable sport to continue to thrive, in and between, our respective associations. AIC Colleges have the largest combined boys' enrolment of all regular Queensland school sporting competitions, with more than 1200 teams participating in healthy, respectful competition in 2021. The GPS Association advised that our requests were rejected for "commercial and educational" reasons. The use of the term "commercial" to describe matters around sport and enrolments, clearly highlights the differences between our associations in relation to the purpose of school sport.

We did not believe that our requests were onerous. One element we sought was a simple notification from a GPS school principal to an AIC school principal, when one of our students was recruited. Currently, notification is left to the parents of the student once they have accepted a free or reduced-fee deal.

Your reluctance to engage with us on the issue is disappointing, however the AIC Management Committee remains open to meeting with the GPS Association. Until this occurs, our member schools have unanimously agreed not to play any sports trials or participate in supplementary fixtures with GPS schools. This will include any trials that have already been arranged. We will maintain our requirement that representatives from GPS schools wishing to attend AIC sporting events, seek permission from Principals of the relevant AIC Colleges.

We are also aware that Queensland school sport by-laws, prohibit staff from any school attending carnivals and events, to offer inducements to attend their school. This matter will be addressed at an appropriate level in due course.

We intend to inform our communities of our concerns.

Again, we are only too happy to continue a dialogue with the GPS Association about this matter.

Yours sincerely



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Rector, Padua College
AIC President



Trevor Goodwin
Principal,
Iona College



Fr Michael Twigg OMI
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Michael Newman
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Ray Celegato
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Chris Leadbetter
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