

SANDFORD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

(Under Sandford International Endowment)

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Date: 18.03.2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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SIS Board of Governors

Board Statement on Current State of Affairs of the School Management

Dear students, parents, teachers, and members of the SIS community,

The SIS Board of governors wishes to welcome our students to the second term of the 2016 (E.C) Academic Year. The SIS Board has been working relentlessly to introduce much needed and long overdue reform initiatives for the institution to rediscover its proud culture of academic excellence and to keep up to imperatives of current global competition. The Board is cognizant of the fact that most of the institutional limitations are not attributable to a particular period or administration and have emerged over a long period of operation.

Some of the reform areas the Board has handled in its short spell includes: a review of student admissions policy, extending scholarships, staff recruitment and retention strategy and policy, finance, procurement and property administration policy, safety and estate management infrastructure and the harmonization of national tuition fees. As we prepare to rollout our reform package, we are very much pleased to see active engagement of parents, staff and the labor union on various platforms. While SIS Board cherishes active participation of the SIS family in the reform process, the Board would like to underline that feedback from some corners has not been helpful.

Recently the Board has been made aware of an email from a former SIS staff member who made allegations of a series of irregularities in the administration of the school. The Board has confirmed that the email did in fact originate from the former staff member and the email has been disseminated to the SIS community. We are very concerned on how parents' emails have been able to be accessed. We are confident that this data breach did not emanate from the school.

The Board has examined the email and found the allegations to be unsubstantiated, libelous, vexatious and disturbing. The email alleges a senior school management 'harbors an unhealthy attitude and holds negative sentiments towards Ethiopia and its people' apparently because of 'his previous experience in Egypt [that] seems to have tainted his perception of Ethiopia and its people'. The email adds 'This unhealthy attitude has permeated his interactions with us, leading to a toxic work environment'. The Board believes that these assertions are unsubstantiated, made in bad faith and lack proper grasp of current geopolitical situations and diplomatic relationships. In particular, it falsely projects SIS as being unwelcoming to Egypt and its educational establishments contrary to SIS' cherished values of inclusivity and global outreach as an international school. There is no country or culture that SIS sees as an enemy and we welcome students and staff members from all corners of the world. The Board is very much disturbed and troubled to see such a lapse in comprehension of values of the school coming from a person who worked at SIS for over two decades. This brings the school into disrepute, insights hatred and potentially violence and puts the career and safety of the management staff in jeopardy. The SIS Board denounces such attitude and unequivocally distances itself from such assertions made in the email.

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Head of Secondary: 251-11-1242186
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HR and Admin Head: 251-11-1247877

The email has also made several unsubstantiated allegations relating to the management style and resource administration of the senior management personnel. While the Board is willing to note the allegations in its oversight of the school operations, the Board found the allegations to be contradictory to the former staff's resignation letter in which he remarked he 'loved working with each of (SIS administration) and 'thoroughly enjoyed [his] time in Sandford and [he is] especially grateful to (the senior school management member) for his recognition and ambition to develop the school' and wished 'all the best from the bottom of [his] heart'. The Board is totally bemused by the discrepancy in the recent email and the letter of resignation.

As the Board works with the law enforcement agencies and diplomatic channels to hold to account any excesses in the email, the Board would like to reassure families and our students that it is exercising all the required oversight in the operations of the school to ensure educational quality, safety of our children and staff, and efficient utilisation of SIS resources. The Board also would like to plead with parents to distance themselves from disruptive and ill-intentioned social media exchanges coming from some corners.

The Board further would like to reassure parents and SIS community that it is united in its pursuit of its reform agenda and will not leave any hurdle unturned in its effort to extricate the school from the shackles of unwarranted external and internal interests and will not be deterred by those hurdles. The Board is determined to make decisions that may be dubbed unpopular from some corners as long as they are the right decisions to protect the interest of SIS and our students. The Board calls upon the parents and the SIS community to stand behind its reform initiatives.

SIS Board
March 2024
Addis Ababa

