



## Message from the Principals

16<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear Parents,

In our years as Principals, no single statement by the order that founded our schools has been as important as that made by the Spiritan Superior, Fr. Martin Kelly, today.

It is now published on our school websites as we, the current guardians of the schools, commit ourselves fully to every word and to its tone - one of profound contrition. We also publish a joint statement by four past pupils of Blackrock and the Spiritans which announces an independent Restorative Justice programme.

Great harm has been done to many pupils over an extended period. We must acknowledge this, as Fr. Martin has done, on behalf of Blackrock College and Willow Park.

A school must, first and foremost, be a place of complete safety for children of all ages. That this most fundamental tenet was breached by members of the staff in both Blackrock and Willow is something we, as an institution, must acknowledge.

As the three people now in charge of the schools we want to endorse every word of the Spiritan apology and fully commit ourselves to the process of healing that will be led by the restorative justice programme announced today.

We also want to express our admiration for and thanks to the four past pupils without whom this step change in how the Order and its schools are going to address this great need, would not have been possible.

Philip Feddis, Corry McMahon, Louis Hoffman and John Coulter, all of whom left school at the end of the 1970s, showed extraordinary courage in bringing the scale of the problem to attention. Over the last number of years the determination these four men and indeed many others have displayed, warrants our collective gratitude.

More than anything it's to all those hurt and damaged, directly and indirectly, by what occurred and was allowed to occur over decades in our schools that we must turn. We want to add our names to Fr. Martin Kelly's words, **"what was done to you as innocent children was cruel and indefensible. We are deeply ashamed of these actions."**

Finally, we would encourage parents, senior pupils and past pupils to read and consider carefully, the attached documents.

Alan MacGinty  
Principal  
Blackrock College

Alan Rogan  
Principal  
Willow Park 1<sup>st</sup> Year

James Docherty  
Principal  
Willow Park Junior School