

The Daily Telegraph

Prep school teacher 'let girls have free rein on web only for them to Google naked boys'

A teacher at a £10,000 a year girls' prep school was sacked after he gave six and seven-year-olds free rein to search the internet only for them to look up pornography, an employment tribunal has heard.

The young pupils searched for "the Queen's underwear" and "naked boys" on their school computers during a lesson from newly-qualified teacher Werner Nel.

When Mr Nel realised what they were trying to do, he closed down the files and later allegedly tried to delete the search history before his bosses discovered what had been happening during his class.

The tribunal heard however that senior staff found out about the web searches after some girls told their parents they had seen "willies in mouths" at school.

On Tuesday the fee-paying Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School near Newbury in Berkshire was being sued for public interest disclosure, unfair dismissal and breach of contract by Mr Nel who was sacked from his job as IT teacher after an internal investigation.

HR manager Rachel Harper said Mr Nel, who lives in Hermitage, had told a co-worker about the incident while waiting in the lunch queue but downplayed its severity, saying the year 2 pupils had only found images of "people in their underwear."

She said: "We went straight to the search history and saw that a search had been made for 'naked boys'.

"We clicked on it immediately and without doubt what was displayed on screen was multiple images of hardcore pornography involving men.

"Unfortunately there were some of small boys mixed in with them.



Werner Nel is accused of allowing the girls to search "the Queen's underwear" and "naked boys" CREDIT: VAGNER VIDAL/INS NEWS AGENCY LTD



The tribunal heard however, that senior staff found out about the salacious web-sites after some girls told their parents CREDIT: VAGNER VIDAL/INS NEWS AGENCY LTD

"My immediate thought was that I could not believe a teacher who saw these images did not instantly push a big red safeguarding button.

"I was shocked at both the images and why someone very senior had not been immediately made aware of what the children had seen."

The tribunal heard that Mr Nel had not known that these search queries had been discovered by his superiors and printed out on that same evening.

Miss Harper said that when he brought his version of the documents to her the next morning, she noticed the two searches, from Terminal 13 and Terminal 17, had gone missing.

IT consultant Chris Jones at Infratek Limited, who was hired by the school to prevent the breach from happening again, said the search history had been changed by deleting the queries and manually changing the computer's clock to enter a new query with the same time stamp.

Following his formal dismissal from the prep school, Mr Nel contacted the school to raise a formal grievance, saying that during the investigation there had been "a complete lack of HR support, causing him considerable stress."

In a letter read out at the tribunal, he said the school had made him a "scapegoat" by assuming at the first instance that he had been responsible for changing the browser history.

During cross-examination it was revealed that experts from **Answers Investigation**, a firm hired by the school to determine how the searches were deleted, revealed that the search words would have been changed before Mr Nel logged onto the system at 9.35am on a Monday morning.

The employment tribunal in which Mr Nel is suing his former school employers was adjourned until today



Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School CREDIT: JASON HEDGES/INS NEWS AGENCY LTD



Mr Nel is suing Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School CREDIT: JASON HEDGES/INS NEWS AGENCY LTD