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Teacher sentenced over pornographic images

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National News



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A FORMER Bialik College and Mount Scopus Memorial College teacher who pleaded guilty to two charges of making child pornography has been sentenced to five months in jail, but has been freed on bail pending his appeal hearing in April.

Brendan Cohen made more than 80 up-skirting videos and superimposed the faces of other children onto adult images between 2015 and 2017.

An investigation was launched after the offending material was found on the 52-year-old teacher's hard drive after he left Bialik in 2016.

Following its discovery, principal Jeremy Stowe-Linder contacted the police, the Victoiran Institute of Teaching and Rabbi James Kennard, principal of Mount Scopus.

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The AJN understands that the majority of the 26 students identified were from Bialik. The only images found of Mount SCopus students were up-skirting, not of their faces.

As well as the jail term, Cohen was sentenced to serve a two-year Community Corrections Order.

Sentencing Cohen at Melbourne Magistrate's Court on Tuesday, magistrate Charlie Rozencwajg described his actions as "fundamentally wrong" and said his jail term would have been nine months if not for his guilty plea.

In victims impact statements read out in court, one student said she now suffered "heightened anxiety" around cameras and struggled to sleep.

"The whole community is appalled by Brendan Cohen's breach of trust and sickening behaviour," said Stowe-Lindner.

"I acknowledge and applaud the dignity and bravery of the victims – at our school, at his next school, at the dance school, in shopping centres and in the wider community."

In an open letter to the community read in court, Cohen admitted his actions constituted "a gross breach of trust", adding "I can see by the victim impact statements that the harm I have caused is real."

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