

Heritage International School defends dismissal of acting principal

By Barbra Kabahumuza

Heritage International School has rejected allegations surrounding the dismissal of its former acting principal, Stowe Kymmerli, insisting that her termination followed verified evidence of falsified academic credentials, misrepresented work history, fabricated references, and repeated violations of the school's professional and ethical standards.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

According to the school, independent checks by Educational Verification Services (EVS), university registrars and the National Student Clearing House, it was confirmed that her purported degrees were either honorary, incomplete, or entirely fabricated.

Administrators claim her conduct during her probation at the school was marked by dishonesty and manipulative behaviour, despite explicit human resource (HR) officers' directives.

They allege that HR recommended a non-

continuance of probation, and a meeting was scheduled for Friday, October 24, 2025.

DISPUTED DISMISSAL

In line with her contract signed on August 1, 2025, Kymmerli was allegedly given until October 31, 2025, to vacate school housing and finalise departure arrangements.

The school authorities maintain that the move was lawful and appropriate under the institution's policy and Section 71 of Uganda's Employment Act, which allows immediate termination during probation when continued employment is not in the employer's best interest. Kymmerli was hired in June, this year, and began her three-month probation in August.

QUESTIONED EXPERIENCE

The school states that she had claimed prior experience as acting head of school at The American School of Benguerir in Morocco, but correspondence received in October indicated she had actually been on leave and engaged in a legal dispute with the school, information



Stowe Kymmerli

she allegedly did not disclose. They noted that a recruiting agency later told them (school) that Kymmerli had previously been screened and placed on a 'Do Not Contact' list due to repeated integrity and professional concerns.

The organisation, which requested anonymity, reported numerous red flags during her vetting.

Heritage said it was unaware of this history because she

BETWEEN THE LINES

• The school says an internal investigation found that several of Kymmerli's claimed academic qualifications were not legitimate.

had not applied through the agency, and HR will now start cross checking all senior candidates with the partner firm to prevent a recurrence.

They noted that a formal written warning had already been issued on September 9, for dishonesty, misconduct, and breach of Christian standards.

The chairperson of the school board, Tim Stevenson, said the board invited her for a meeting after uncovering "a recurring pattern of behaviour," but she allegedly refused to attend. He alleges that Kymmerli had previously targeted institutions with accusations. "Rooted in racism and other inflammatory language," which he said posed a serious risk to the school's reputation.

The school also refuted allegations that a qualified

Ugandan candidate was overlooked for the position of Bible teaching assistant in favour of a foreign applicant.

The school HR manager, Tiffany Stevenson, said she had no role in the interviews and rejected claims that a foreigner had been chosen.

"When Kymmerli asked us to hire her friend, who was not qualified for the role of Bible teaching assistant, I made it clear that this is not how we operate at Heritage International School," she said.

Tiffany added that the school had not hired any Bible teaching assistant at all and could not afford to employ foreign assistants. "We follow a structured hiring process and policy, and all appointments must go through the Head of School and the HR team," she said.

KYMMERLI SPEAKS OUT

This followed a petition to the labour ministry in which Kymmerli, an American national, alleged that her dismissal was a discriminatory and retaliatory move after her alleged resistance to unethical practices within the institution.

In her petition, she alleged that her trouble started when she was instructed by Tiffany, to bypass a qualified Ugandan candidate for the position of a Bible assistant in favour of a less qualified foreign candidate.

Kymmerli said she informed her bosses that doing so would contravene Section 5 of the Employment Act.

When contacted by *New Vision* for a comment, Kymmerli dismissed the allegations as false, insisting she has never falsified her credentials or misrepresented her employment history.

"I have all my original credentials, along with notarised and apostilled records," she said.

She stated that this was not her first instance of whistleblowing against a school for child abuse. Although attempts were made to undermine her credibility, she pursued legal action and prevailed. As a result, she is owed a judgment totalling \$600,000 (sh2.1b).

Heritage International School is located in Kansanga, Kampala.