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# College slap U-turn

by **Andy Gayler**

LATE evidence threw into doubt a college's decision to exclude a student for slapping a girl's behind.

Luton Sixth Form College had to overturn their own guilty verdict on a 17-year-old boy they sent home in February.

The new evidence in a case, which saw protestors at the gates of the Bradgers Hill college, came in the shape of a mobile phone text message sent to the accused youth. The message came from one of four other suspects in the attack on the girl and suggested that despite his innocence the teenager should take the blame so all of them could get on with their lives.

fish how the student may resume his studies."

In a letter to the teenager Vice Principal Dr Harland wrote: "I do not feel in a position to conclude that you were not the perpetrator, but equally I can no longer conclude with any conviction that you were the perpetrator."

The college said the investigation into the attack remained open but no mention would be kept on any of the student's records or reference made in any letters to future employers.

The college's Suzy Crowe said: "The decision of the appeal has now been reversed and the college is in communication with the parents and student to estab-

The teenager was excluded from college in February for allegedly hitting a female student on her behind.

The girl could not identify her attacker, there were no independent eye witnesses and CCTV cameras were pointed in the wrong direction when it happened.

However, five Asian boys were seen near the spot where it happened and during questioning by college staff two youths pointed the finger at the student.

The exclusion caused an uproar and led to a campaign by family and members of the Mitalae Youth Association.

## Consumer watchdogs bare their teeth to shopkeepers

SHOPKEEPERS will have to be extra vigilant when serving age restricted goods as the Trading Standards are out in force. Consumer watchdogs are carrying out test purchase exercises over the next year on products such as alcohol, cigarettes, fireworks, DVD's and computer games.

Volunteer kids who are at least 18 months under-age are sent to shops to buy goods. If they are asked their age they have to reply truthfully. Last week sellers and licensees appeared before Luton magistrates for selling goods to underage girls and were fined.

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