

November 22, 2011

Dear Academy Community,

We have all been following with great sadness and concern the reports coming out of Penn State and now Syracuse University. Those chilling allegations hit at the core of our work with children. Above all, the faculty, administrators and staff at Phillips Exeter Academy hold the physical, mental, and emotional safety and security of our students, past and present, as our top priority. In our role of *in loco parentis*—a Latin term meaning "in place of a parent," indicating that a person or institution assumes parental rights and duties for a minor—all adult members of our community have a legal and moral obligation to protect our students from any form of harm, including sexual abuse or harassment. I am writing to express our sympathy for abuse victims everywhere and to summarize for members of our community our responsibilities, policies and procedures.

I want to assure you that the Academy has strong safeguards in place to protect the young people in our care. In addition, all of our long-standing policies and procedures are in strict compliance with the New Hampshire Reporting Laws. These regulations mandate that any person at the school who has "reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected" also has a legal responsibility to report that suspicion to the proper authorities. Our procedure is for a faculty or staff member with knowledge or suspicion of abuse to notify the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Campus Safety, which will in turn notify the Exeter Police. The faculty or staff member can also, however, make a report directly to the Exeter Police or to the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families.

We strive to make our community a safe place for the young people in our care by adult example, as well as by establishing rules, regulations and expectations for behavior around minors. These are detailed in various employee handbooks and are periodically reviewed in presentations on issues around child abuse or sexual abuse. In addition, all prospective Exeter employees and volunteers are subjected to background checks. Family members 21 or older who reside with faculty living on campus are also subject to background checks. All new employees also receive training on this topic.

We work diligently with our students to educate them about abuse and to make them aware of their rights and duties in this delicate area. New student proctor training begins in May before these students take up their duties in September. In the fall, another series of workshops and training sessions takes place both for proctors and for new faculty members. Special emphasis is placed on sexual abuse, not only reporting it but also responding to it. This year, an attorney who specializes in matters of abuse and abuse reporting spoke to student proctors and adult dormitory heads.

While the Academy has been extremely proactive in addressing the potential of predators abusing students, the recent news reports remind me that we need to remain vigilant and also review and re-examine our existing policies and practices. I am asking

members of the Academy's senior management team to conduct a review of our various policies and procedures relating to student safety issues and to develop a comprehensive Code of Conduct for adults in the PEA community that articulates in one document the limits of personal behavior and describes appropriate interactions with children.

Finally, we take seriously any concern that is raised about the well-being of any student, current or past. We have a trained Reporting Compliance Team that moves quickly to report to appropriate authorities under state Reporting Laws. Members of this group are Dan Morrissey, dean of students; Jeff Nelson, director of campus safety and compliance; and Melissa Mischke, associate dean of students for health. We are deeply committed to do all we can to protect our students entrusted to our care.

Sincerely,
Principal Tom Hassan