



November 12, 2020

Dear Catlin Gabel Alumni and Community Members,

Although this year so far is unlike any other in the history of Catlin Gabel, with students and teachers engaging in learning remotely, we remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a safe and healthy educational environment so that every student can thrive. We continue to refine our policies and procedures using what we have learned from professional experts, peer schools, our students, and alumni.

ONGOING MANDATORY TRAININGS

We started this school year, as we have for many years, with mandatory trainings.

- All employees, including coaches and substitute teachers, were required to complete the 2.5 hours of SafeSchools online training modules in early September.
- Training sessions used to be conducted by a live presenter on average every three years, but now we require them annually. This year we retained David Wolowitz to lead our mandatory professional development workshop on sexual misconduct and abuse prevention for all employees. (Due to COVID-19, this session was conducted via Zoom.) Wolowitz is a national expert on educator sexual misconduct who advises schools on best practices for creating a safe school culture; he regularly presents to independent schools nationally and internationally. His workshop focused on the ways in which employees could help prevent misconduct by candidly and openly sharing any potential concerns with each other, rather than remaining silent. Wolowitz encouraged employees to hold each other accountable and to model appropriate behavior. More information about David Wolowitz's training can be found [here](#).
- We have reviewed and reiterated Wolowitz's main points at employee meetings and will continue to do so throughout the year.

ANNUAL PARENT FORUM

This year we also held the second annual Safety Presentation for parents and guardians as part of the Parent Faculty Association's start-of-the-year general meeting. The goal of this presentation is to share and discuss our written policies and procedures in a live forum and to create an ongoing dialogue with parents. The presentation included:

- Review of recent policy updates, including revised reporting mechanisms, updated volunteer requirements, and information about training for employees.
- Examples of the types of conversations teachers have with students regarding sexual misconduct and abuse based on grade level.
- Overview of the types of curriculum lessons students receive (e.g., safe touch, how to communicate, how to report), and a reminder that parents and guardians are notified when students receive any of these lessons. To see more specific information on our student safety curriculum, click [here](#).

POLICY REVISIONS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT

We reviewed school policies to refine processes that will provide the safest environment possible to protect students within the school community; this information is available on our [Safety Resources webpage](#).

- All employees must annually sign an acknowledgment that they have read and will comply with all school policies outlined in the Employee Handbook for 2020-21, which has included sexual misconduct policies for many years and now includes the [Adult-Student Behavioral Standards Guide](#).
- The Behavioral Standards Guide was updated to include clear definitions and examples of the following terms: Unlawful Discrimination, Legally Protected Status, Harrasment, Sexual Violence, and Other Types of Harrasment (Disability, Racial, Religious, Sexual Orientation).
- Our long-standing [Sexual Assault and Misconduct Support and Resources Guide for Students](#) was updated to include concrete steps students can take to recognize and report sexual assault or misconduct.
- The Beginning and Lower School, and the Middle School, produced Climate Guides to establish guiding principles and practices, shared community expectations, definitions of behaviors, and responsibilities for teachers and families. These guides complement existing policies in place in our Upper School.
- We expanded requirements for school volunteers, who now all need to take online training modules through SafeSchools. They will continue to be required to undergo and pass background checks before they can interact with students on campus. Parents and guardians also must complete background checks through the Oregon State Police before they can volunteer.
- We have hired SOS ThreeSixty, a firm specializing in safety policy, risk management, and training for schools and educational organizations, to conduct an assessment of Catlin Gabel's policies and training around sexual violence prevention and victim response. This work will take place in 2021, and we will share the results with our community.

REPORTING

Catlin Gabel's safety systems and processes were reviewed two years ago to align with recommendations from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) on Prevention and Response on Educator Sexual Misconduct. This audit led to methods that strengthened our safety protocols.

- We launched our SafeSchools Alert Tip Line. This system allows any student, parent, employee, or graduate to anonymously report any concern. Catlin Gabel's identification code for reporting is 1832. Phone or text: (971) 351-1754; email: 1832@alert1.us; online: <http://1832.alert1.us>.
- Last school year, we established a Response Team. Any report that is made to the SafeSchools Alert Tip Line is sent simultaneously to each member of the Response Team: the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Director of Human Resources, and the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- All employees of Catlin Gabel School are mandatory reporters, which means under Oregon law that employees themselves must file a report with the Oregon Department of Human Services should they suspect a child is being abused.

We ask that if you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed any form of harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, or abuse, to report the incident. In addition to the SafeSchools Alert Tip Line, there are additional resources available to you:

- Detective Chuck Anderson at the Washington County Sheriff's Office. He can be reached at chuck_anderson@co.washington.or.us or (503) 846-2704.
- RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656-HOPE or hotline.rainn.org, which can be used to access confidential and anonymous immediate support services—including crisis intervention, information, and resources—24/7, in both English and Spanish.

OUR COMMITMENT CONTINUES

Our therapy fund, which is managed by [RAINN](http://rainn.org), the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the nation, is still available for survivors of educator sexual misconduct or abuse during their time at Catlin Gabel. All inquiries and access to funding (up to \$10,000 for current or past therapy) will not be shared with the school. The dedicated hotline number is (855) 944-2235.

We take seriously our responsibility to actively protect student health and safety, every moment, every day. We also expect the same commitment from every member of the Catlin Gabel community, as each one of us plays an important role in creating a healthy environment that fosters a culture of prevention and awareness.

Thank you for your support, and please feel free to contact us should you have questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Indira Nallakrishnan
Chair, Board of Trustees



Tim Bazemore
Head of School