



October 14, 2021

Dear Catlin Gabel Community Members and Alumni,

Each year, we connect with our school community to share the latest information and developments regarding student safety on campus. This is part of our ongoing commitment to create a safe and healthy educational environment that allows every student to thrive. The path we take is informed by many resources, including professional experts, peer schools, and our own students and alumni. This work is never finished, but these updates serve as a snapshot of where we stand now and where we are headed.

EMPLOYEE MANDATORY TRAININGS

We started this school year, as we have for many years, with our annual mandatory trainings for all Catlin Gabel employees. Here's an overview of those trainings:

- In August, employees attended an in-person, interactive workshop on boundary training and abuse prevention. The workshop was led by Avery Mann, co-founder of SOS ThreeSixty and an international expert on abuse and misconduct prevention. The session included data on child abuse nationally and locally, relevant case studies with small-group discussions, and review of Oregon state laws.
- Employees also completed 2.5 hours of safety and risk management online training modules through [Vector Solutions](#) (formerly known as SafeSchools) in early September of this year.
- Another live training will be conducted later in the academic year to further review and reiterate best practices for creating a safe school culture.

PARENT AND GUARDIAN SAFETY PRESENTATION

We held our third annual Safety Presentation for parents and guardians in late September as part of the Parent Faculty Association's start-of-the-year general meeting. The goal was to share and discuss our written policies and procedures in a live forum to create ongoing dialogue with families. The presentation included:

- Announcement of a new policy: all volunteers must now be not only background-checked but also fingerprinted, adopting the highest standard for all adult interactions with students on campus.
- Review of current policies and announcement of policy updates or changes.
- Examples of how Catlin Gabel's anonymous tip line helps leadership respond to community concerns.
- 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.

More information regarding our safety resources for parents and guardians can be found [here](#).

COMMUNITY HANDBOOKS AND GUIDES

All school handbooks, as well as policies contained within them, are reviewed annually to ensure that we are providing the safest environment possible to protect students within the school community.

- All employees are required to annually sign and return to Human Resources an acknowledgement that they have read and will comply with all school policies outlined in the Employee Handbook, which has included sexual misconduct policies for many years.
- Within the Employee Handbook is Catlin Gabel's [Adult-Student Behavioral Standards Guide](#), which includes 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).
- Designed for Upper School students, Catlin Gabel's [Sexual Assault and Misconduct Support and Resources Guide for Students](#) includes concrete steps students can take to recognize and report sexual assault or misconduct.
- The Beginning and Lower School, and the Middle School, created "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.

Our commitment to the safety of our students requires continual assessment and refinement. Last year, our policies were reviewed by SOS ThreeSixty to provide the school with further guidance. Based on their input, we are expanding the ways in which our policies are communicated with the community: training meetings for department heads will highlight updated or new policies to increase awareness; training meetings for employees will include verbal review of key policies contained with the employee handbook to ensure understanding and additional scenario training to translate concepts into action; more specialized training will be developed to expand the number of in-house experts who can provide leadership on safety issues; and statistics will be added to the handbook to provide further context.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

As part of our safety policies and procedures, we require all school volunteers, including parents and guardians, to complete several external steps before they can take part in field trips or other activities beyond attending campus events.

- Volunteers are required to complete online training modules through [Vector Solutions](#). The certification of completion is then kept on file in our HR office.
- Volunteers must pass an Oregon State Police background check, and new this year, must also be fingerprinted—the highest standard for all adult interactions with students on campus.

Parents and Guardians can get detailed step-by-step information in the [parent portal](#).

REPORTING

Catlin Gabel's safety systems and processes align with recommendations on Prevention and Response on Educator Sexual Misconduct from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

- The [Vector Alert Tip Reporting System](#) (previously known as SafeSchools) allows any Catlin Gabel student, parent, employee, or graduate to anonymously report any concern online or via phone or text. If you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed any form of harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, or abuse, please report the incident.
- All reports made to the Tip Reporting System are received by each member of Catlin Gabel's Response Team which includes the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Director of Human Resources, and the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees.

OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT

We take our responsibility to actively protect student health and safety, every moment, every day, very seriously. 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 ongoing support, and please feel free to contact us should you have questions or suggestions on how we can continue to create a safe and healthy educational environment that allows every student to thrive.

Sincerely,



Indira Nallakrishnan
Chair, Board of Trustees



Tim Bazemore
Head of School