



October 18, 2011

Dear Fessenden Alumni, Parents of Alumni, Parents, and Friends,

It saddens me to write to you today about a difficult and disturbing issue of sexual abuse that was widely reported in the news media in the 1970s involving a former Fessenden administrator. Because our first priority as a School is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the boys here, it is especially hard to confront the realization that boys were abused at Fessenden. Out of great care and concern, I apologize on behalf of The Fessenden School to anyone who was harmed or hurt in any way while attending our school or by individuals who were part of our school community.

In November 1977, the Boston Police arrested then Assistant Headmaster Arthur Clarridge for his involvement in a case of sexual exploitation of minors in Revere, Massachusetts. Clarridge resigned immediately. At the time, there was no indication that Fessenden boys were abused or that any misconduct occurred on the School's campus. Thirty years later, in 2008, the School received a letter stating that a friend of Clarridge sexually abused a Fessenden student off-campus in the mid-1970s. In response, we met with the alumnus to offer compassion and professional counseling, and to share our current policies and guidelines regarding adult/student interactions. The case was settled following mediation. In April 2011, the School received a second letter claiming abuse on campus by Clarridge; the young man was not a Fessenden student. As the Board of Trustees and administration absorbed this disclosure, we recognized the likelihood that these incidents were not necessarily isolated, and additional victims of Clarridge likely exist in our community.

Last spring as a result of these two Clarridge-related claims, the School initiated a thorough historical review which established that the School had also received three claims in the 1990s. The first claim involved a sexual impropriety in the early 1990s. The second and third claims were from alumni about sexual abuse that occurred when they attended Fessenden in the 1960s and 1970s. One of these claims involved Clarridge. Following meetings and discussion, the matters were settled to the satisfaction of the three claimants and the School. None of the adults named in these claims work at Fessenden today. Our research also indicated that, over the years, other alumni have alluded to knowledge of inappropriate sexual behavior in the 1970s and 1980s. Deeply concerned, the School leadership has come to the realization that this intolerable behavior in past decades may have been broader in scope than we once had reason to believe.

The Board of Trustees and I are resolved to help the healing process by making counseling available to those who suffered abuse by an employee of The Fessenden School or in incidents connected with the School. We have created a confidential procedure to access free counseling and treatment for any member of the Fessenden community who was victimized. A psychiatrist is available for consulting and referral services to help heal emotional injuries. To access this service, please call 888-720-4480 and identify yourself as someone seeking assistance from The Fessenden School.

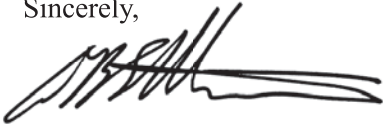
I want to assure parents and alumni that the safety and well-being of the boys at Fessenden are our highest priorities. With our faculty and staff, we have emphasized the importance of raising our collective consciousness and reiterated our expectation of vigilance in identifying and recognizing signs of questionable behavior. Our administrative team and faculty have reviewed and revised the existing policies and guidelines regarding interactions between adults and children in our school community. In our opening faculty meetings this fall, as we have done in previous years, we held discussions on maintaining boundaries in our relationships with our students, and we are committed to sustaining ongoing training. We are reexamining our school-wide wellness curriculum to affirm that we are giving our boys the tools and understandings that they need in order to help maintain their own safety. As required by Massachusetts state law, our hiring process for faculty and staff includes mandatory Criminal Offender Record Information and Sex Offender Registry Information background checks. We have zero tolerance

for sexual misconduct and abuse. As many of you know, a faculty member's employment was immediately terminated last June when the School received a report that, within the past few years, she had engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct on one occasion with a just graduated student. The School immediately informed the former student's parents of the report and filed the required documentation with the state.

Parents in particular may want to know if we plan to address this communication and its content with our students. At this time, we do not plan to talk directly with the boys about it. In the course of our wellness curriculum, the issue of boundaries is addressed in age-appropriate ways and will continue to be emphasized. If you would like advice for speaking with your son about this topic, please contact our school psychologist.

We offer sincere apologies to those whose lives were affected and harmed by the intolerable actions of a few, and we are devoted to providing help to those who have suffered. We expect Fessenden boys to embody our School's core values of "honesty, compassion, and respect," and we must be unwavering in our resolve to model this behavior ourselves in every action and decision. We reaffirm our commitment to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our boys. We will maintain and continue to foster the healthy relationships between faculty and students that are one of the hallmarks of a Fessenden education. I encourage you to contact me to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Stettler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David B. Stettler
Headmaster