



March 19, 2019

Members of the Camp Belknap Community:

We hope this letter finds you well. Now that we are nearing spring and looking forward to welcoming boys back under the pines, we wanted to provide an update on an initiative that we have been working on over the course of the past year and a half. As you are undoubtedly aware, issues surrounding sexual abuse and misconduct have been pervasive in the news media. Much of this attention has focused on boarding schools and other K-12 institutions, but as recently as this past December, CBS This Morning ran a story about child sexual abuse at summer overnight camps. Camp Belknap, like any organization dedicated to the caring of children, has been actively engaged in discussions surrounding abuse prevention and response to ensure we are addressing this important topic in a comprehensive and responsible manner.

Much has evolved regarding our society's understanding of the impact and occurrence of sexual abuse and the laws and best practices pertaining to prevention and response. With that in mind, the Belknap Board of Trustees has created a Task Force charged with auditing Belknap's practices and making and implementing recommendations to strengthen our efforts in this area. The Task Force will continue these efforts throughout the coming year. It consists of the two of us, Tom Wintner, Chair of the Personnel Committee and incoming Chair of the Board of Trustees, Jonathan Igoe, Chair of the Risk Management Committee, and Frank Kenison, the current Board Chair.

The work of the Task Force to date has included review of our policies and protocols, including those on harassment, mandated reporting, employment, background checks, and other important topics. The Task Force has also developed a new and comprehensive "Protocol for Responding to Incidents of Sexual Misconduct," which was approved by the Board in February. We have also used this opportunity to refocus ongoing training for all staff on appropriate boundaries, supervision, and reporting. As an example, last summer we increased our pre-existing staff training on child sexual abuse by implementing a 2-hour prevention training program that centers on improving staff awareness of the prevalence, consequences, and circumstances of child sexual abuse. In addition, we continue to train our staff on boundaries and conduct role-play exercises that provide our cabin leaders and staff the opportunity to learn how to prevent, manage, and react to sexual misconduct. For more information on Belknap's work related to camper safety, please visit www.campbelknap.org/campersafety.

All of these efforts are directed to ensure we are creating an environment at Belknap that promotes trust and transparency, prioritizes safety, and encourages everyone in our community to share and respond to concerns regarding inappropriate conduct in a timely manner.

We recognize that this topic may be uncomfortable, but it is necessary that we all engage with it. On behalf of Camp Belknap, we wish to be unequivocally clear that we have zero tolerance for any form of sexual abuse or misconduct. The safety of our campers and staff - past and present - remains our highest priority.



We also believe in open dialogue and trust, and our commitment to the Belknap community on this issue is sincere. We encourage anyone who has questions or concerns, or who would like to discuss any issues relating to sexual misconduct by anyone in our community, to reach out to either of us, or to any member of the Task Force. Our door is always open, and the relevant Task Force contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Seth & Stephanie Kassels

Task Force Members

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