



March 28, 2016

Dear Pingry Alumni,

We are writing to you today with distressing news concerning our past that we feel is important to share with you. We recently learned from a few of our alumni that students were sexually abused by Thad Alton, an employee of Short Hills Country Day School from 1972 to 1974 and, following the merger of the two institutions, an employee of The Pingry School from 1974 to 1978.

After leaving Pingry, Mr. Alton eventually moved to upstate New York and, by 1981, was working at a university there. In 1990, he was convicted in New York State of two counts of sexual abuse of minors. Mr. Alton was incarcerated until 1995. Currently, he is listed on the New York State Sex Offender Registry with an address in Manhattan.

We want to assure you that we are taking this matter very seriously. We have contacted local law enforcement, informed them of the allegations, and are committed to assisting them in their investigation.

While these events took place many years ago, we realize that they continue to cause pain for members of our community. It is sickening that an educator, entrusted with the responsibility of protecting children, would cause such suffering. Behavior of this nature is appalling and deplorable.

The safety and well-being of our students are our highest priorities. On a regular basis, Pingry undertakes a review of its policies and procedures to ensure safeguards are built in to the School's operating procedures. In addition to conducting a thorough vetting process prior to hiring an employee, we vet members of the community and other visitors to the School prior to allowing them access to our buildings. Our faculty and staff receive professional development that emphasizes student safety, maintaining appropriate boundaries, reporting requirements, and vigilance for the detection of inappropriate behavior. Our students receive education and guidance about appropriate, healthy relationships, both with peers and with adults, through our health curriculum, advisory system, and peer leadership program. Our counseling staff on both campuses is closely involved in these efforts and in creating an environment in which students feel empowered to voice any concerns that they may have.

We are committed to supporting those in our community who have been subject to this unconscionable behavior. The Board of Trustees has approved the engagement of T&M Protection Resources, a highly qualified, professional firm with significant experience in matters similar to this, to conduct a thorough, independent investigation into the events of the 1970s. Once the investigation is complete, we will provide a further update to the community.

If you have been affected personally, or know anyone who might have been harmed by Mr. Alton, we encourage you to contact us. We would welcome your phone call, email, or visit. Please reach out to Nat Conard by phone 908-647-5555 x1232 or email nconard@pingry.org, or contact Laura Kirschstein of T&M Protection Resources at 212-916-8852 or lkirschstein@tmprotection.com. We will make every effort to ensure the confidentiality of any information we receive.

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We are both deeply pained by and sorry for the harm caused by Mr. Alton, and we wish to be as helpful to and supportive of his victims as we can be.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel E. Conard, P '09, '11
Headmaster

Jeffrey N. Edwards, '78, P '12, '14, '18
Chair of the Board of Trustees