



## From the Principal

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ABN 54 448 559 588

23 MARCH 2015

Dear Members of the Saint Ignatius' College Riverview Community,

It is with some sadness that I write to members of the school community about information that I have recently received from the Professional Standards Office of the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus. A former student of Saint Ignatius' College Riverview has made allegations concerning child sexual abuse over 30 years ago. This matter has been reported to the NSW Police Force, and Riverview has actively assisted the Professional Standards Office with their investigations.

There are clear limits on what I am able to reveal about the allegations. Despite this, I believe it important to inform you about the situation as I understand it and to offer reassurance that such matters are the object of direct and sustained vigilance at the school. I am also communicating with all the boys today, in an age-appropriate manner, so that they do not hear about this matter in a piecemeal way or in a situation where they have no reassurances. This communication will provide an opportunity to reinforce our message to the boys about child protection and safe environments.

Riverview takes seriously its duty of care to its students and the school community. It follows the requirements articulated in State legislation applicable to all schools, such as Working with Children Checks on all eligible employees. Beyond these statutory requirements, there are the school's own policies, procedures, and staff code of conduct. In recruiting employees and engaging volunteers or contractors, the College uses a range of safe recruitment practices. Professional development training is provided to staff on mandatory reporting laws, child protection in the workplace, and the importance of professional boundaries. I am of the view our procedures to safeguard students are of the highest standard. Moreover, these are continually monitored and improved where necessary.

In relation to allegations concerning past events, we recognize the importance of such matters being brought to light for whatever healing might be possible into the future. For this reason, given that the current matter concerns alleged events in the past, I have written separately to the Old Ignatians' Union. In that letter, I encouraged our alumni to make contact with the Province's Professional Standards Office (03 9810 7300) if they have any information or concerns related to child abuse or other professional standards

matters. I now extend that same encouragement to all members of the school community. Of course, if you feel more comfortable making initial contact via the school, feel free to contact me personally (0455 231 777) with any queries or concerns. In addition, Towards Healing is an agency of the church which has been developed to support those who have been victims of child abuse; they can be contacted at 1300 369 977.

The College and the Jesuits wish to express, in the strongest possible terms, their abhorrence of sexual misconduct or any form of abuse involving children. We wish to respond to past abuse and suffering with a commitment to healing, openness and accountability.

Finally, I would reiterate the sadness and profound regret with which I convey this matter to you. For a very long time Riverview has had a proud history of education and care for boys. This situation presents a salient reminder of the need to protect our young people both in policy and in practice.

Yours sincerely,



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PAUL HINE

Principal



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