



MLC

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Principal: Diana Vernon
BA PGCE MACE MACEI

5 November 2020

Dear MLC Community members,

We write today to inform you of details that we understand may be upsetting to members of our College community.

Methodist Ladies' College recently became aware that a former member of staff, Graham Partington, has been convicted and sentenced for historical child sexual offences. The conviction does not relate to his time at MLC and he is currently serving a prison term.

A search of our archives has established that Graham Partington worked as a PE teacher at MLC in 1987. Additionally, he operated an after-hours gymnastics program through his company Olympia Gym, on MLC premises from 1987 to 1993. This program was not connected to the College or the MLC Gymnastics Club and offered gymnastics coaching to both MLC and non-MLC students.

Upon learning of this matter, the College contacted the Victoria Police Child Sexual Offences Unit to advise that Graham Partington had worked at MLC. We have offered to provide any relevant documentation and assistance to Victoria Police, if requested.

Child Safety is our most fundamental of priorities; it informs everything that we do and we take these responsibilities very seriously. We would like to reassure all members of our community, that we are confident that MLC provides a safe, caring and supportive environment for all students.

We fully understand that raising the issue of child sexual abuse is a sensitive matter and are acutely conscious of the impact that reading such a letter may have on people for a variety of reasons, which we very much regret.

The decision to write to the community was not taken lightly. Ultimately, we decided that it was crucial that we be open with our entire community on such an important matter.

We have deep respect and admiration for any survivor of abuse who feels able to come forward to share their experience and speak out against any form of abuse. We would encourage any survivor of abuse to report their experiences to the police. We also encourage any member of our community who may have information regarding criminal activity relating to Graham Partington's time at MLC, to contact Tanya Peters, Detective Senior Constable, Knox Sexual Offences & Child Abuse Investigation Team via tanya.peters@police.vic.gov.au or (03) 9881 7049.

Additionally, if former Collegians believe it would be helpful to contact MLC regarding this matter, please contact Diana directly at principal@mlc.vic.edu.au.

The College is a member of the National Redress Scheme, through the registration of the Uniting Church. The National Redress Scheme was established by the Federal Government to support people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. (Should it be helpful, please find details of the National Redress Scheme here: <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>)

We will keep you informed should there be any relevant developments. Meanwhile, thank you in advance for working with us to uphold MLC's commitment to Child Safety and to provide care and support for members of the MLC Community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Peake', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tony Peake
Chair MLC Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Diana Vernon', written in a cursive style.

Diana Vernon
Principal