



Important Message on behalf of the Board of Trustees

April 15, 2024

Dear Miss Hall's School Community,

I am President of the Board of Miss Hall's School. Our Board is composed of twenty-five active Trustees who are alumnae, parents of former students, and friends of the School. We work in close partnership with school leadership to advance the mission of Miss Hall's.

We Trustees are directly involved in addressing the issues identified in the message you received from Head of School Julia Heaton on April 8. The School has been in contact with legal counsel representing three alums who have shared that former History teacher Matthew Rutledge sexually abused and/or engaged in other sexual misconduct with them between the years of 2001-2010. We are deeply saddened by this, and we commend these women for their extraordinary courage in coming forward. Others also have written directly to the School and on social media about a range of experiences as MHS students during additional timeframes. We are listening and we hear you.

With respect to current students, the School took immediate actions to protect their safety. Mr. Rutledge was banned from campus and will not return, campus safety measures were increased, and the School is cooperating fully with local authorities. We have increased counseling resources on campus and will continue to provide time and space for students to process their emotions, ask for what they need, and seek support from advisors, counselors, and other trusted adults in their lives.

As Board President, an alum, and a past parent, I am devastated. Any abuse of children by someone in authority over them is absolutely unacceptable and intolerable. The MHS Board of Trustees takes issues and reports of sexual misconduct very seriously. We are following all [school policies](#) and ensuring that the MHS mission, vision, and core values guide all decisions. We are grateful for Julia Heaton's compassionate leadership during this challenging time.

I also want to share additional important information about what happens next. The Board of Trustees has authorized an external, neutral investigation into allegations of improper sexual conduct toward MHS students by School employees to be conducted by trained, trauma-informed investigators from Aleta Law. Aleta Law also will be examining what faculty and administrators may have known about any alleged improper conduct and how they responded. If a School employee subjected you or your child to any sexual conduct while a student at MHS or if you have other information relevant to the investigation, we encourage you to contact the following people who will be conducting the investigation for Aleta Law:

Sara Hellstedt (she/her), Senior Director - sHellstedt@aletalaw.com

Kai McGintee (she/her), Managing Director - kmcgintee@aletalaw.com

Amber Attalla (she/her), Director - aattalla@aletalaw.com

All communication with the investigators will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and your name and other identifying details will not be shared or made public without your authorization or except as required by law. After this investigation concludes, we will share what the investigators have learned and next steps with the full community. It is our goal to be as transparent as possible while protecting survivor/witness anonymity and taking into account any trauma-related concerns.

In the meantime, we are eager to provide you with important crisis intervention resources, listed below.

These are very challenging times for MHS. Julia and I have heard directly from many in our community who have offered support, shared experiences, and voiced concerns. Our hearts go out to the survivors and all those affected directly and indirectly. We know you are hurting and appreciate your care for each other. As difficult as it is to face these painful truths, we are committed to addressing any past misconduct, and making Miss Hall's a stronger community for students today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ault '73, Board President

Resources:

- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network): Contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or visit <https://www.rainn.org/>
- STESA (Standing Together to End Sexual Assault): Access STESA's crisis hotline at 805-564-3696 or visit <https://sbstesa.org/>
- Crisis Text Line (free 24/7 crisis support via text message for any type of crisis): Text HELLO to 741741