



January 2018

Friends,

Over the past weeks and months we, like many of you, have been shocked and disgusted by the Dr. Larry Nassar sex abuse story. Child sexual abuse sadly permeates many areas of society and for years we have had policies in place to keep predators away and our students safe. Yet we are still left wondering, how could this have happened?

Everywhere we've been over the past few days – work, church, restaurants, school, and on the phone – there have been questions. This topic, it seems, is on everyone's mind.

Last Friday we were thankful for the opportunity to share with [WXII News](#) how we at Salem continually work to protect your kids. The story was linked to our [Facebook page](#), where we were able to further explain our policies. Recognizing that not everyone uses Facebook and that you are likely to be wondering as well, we would like to share the same information with all of you on our e-mail list.

Safety is our number one concern at Salem Gymnastics & Swim. Our staff is not only background checked and Safety Certified, we all take part in "Safe at Salem" training. As part of this comprehensive training, we teach our employees what abuse looks like. We instruct how to recognize both "grooming" signs in adults and common signs of abuse in children. We know how to handle suspicious behaviors and are trained in what to do if a child discloses abuse to one of us. We teach which behaviors are appropriate and what is inappropriate when working with children, and why. Our policies require that a student never be alone in the building with an instructor and that every encounter with a child be both observable and interruptible.

Attached you will find two documents from our handbook. Until now, this information was used only in employee training. In light of recent events, we think it best for you to know how we think and what we do on a daily basis to keep your kids safe.

We also ask your vigilance. If you see suspicious or questionable behavior within the Salem sphere of responsibility, please immediately contact one of us or any person of responsibility about your concerns.

One final thought. We still believe as we always have, that gymnastics is a fabulous sport for girls & boys to take part in. It builds strength in body, mind and spirit, teaching children to face their fears and never give up. Last week we saw that strength again and again in the young women as they faced their abuser. It was inspiring.

We love our jobs, we love our sport, and we want to be sure every child and parent is safe here. Thank you for placing your confidence in Salem Gymnastics & Swim!