

## Child Protection

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### **CHILD PROTECTION**

The School will follow the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and the Child, Young Person and their Families Act 1989.

#### **Child Protection Policy**

This policy outlines the board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

The board of trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act, any person in our school/kura who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the board, the board delegates responsibility to the principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
3. Make this policy available on the school's internet site or available on request
4. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal

10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child with the board or designated person
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.
14. All complaints will be taken seriously, but it is also important to protect students and staff from unwarranted allegations of abuse.
15. School staff will follow the Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse flowchart and notes.
16. If the alleged abuse involves a staff member, it may be appropriate for the staff member to be removed from the school during the investigation. However, she/he must be treated in accordance with the Employment Contract and the process of natural justice followed.
17. All documentation regarding all aspects of the situation will be confidential and kept on file in a secure place by the Principal. The informant's identity must also remain confidential and only CYF and the Police are to deal with the situation.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to maintain vigilance of this possibility in all environments and follow correct procedures, as professional early intervention is important for the safety and well-being of the child.

**Review schedule:** Within 3 years

Related Policies:

- Bullying
- Child Abuse or neglect
- Discipline/Behaviour Management
- Student search/surrender & retention of property

*Resource: Vulnerable Children Act 2014*

*Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989*

*Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse flowchart and notes.*

## **Related documentation and information**

- Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz)
- Ministry of Education website [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)
- [Vulnerable Children Act 2014](#)
- Further information and sample child protection templates are available in the Children's Action Plan guideline Safer Organisations, Safer Children:  
<http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

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