



Child Protection Policy

Rationale

All students have the right to be safe and cared for. Protecting children and ensuring their physical and emotional safety is everyone's responsibility. This Policy focuses on children attending and connected with Kahurangi School.

Purpose

- To protect students and maintain their welfare
- To ensure all staff are aware of the nature and implications of child abuse
- To ensure all staff take child abuse seriously and know what steps to take if child abuse is suspected
- To ensure the school has an accurate and meaningful record of concerns regarding child abuse
- To ensure the school complies with obligations (both legal and moral) to report suspected child abuse

Definitions

Student includes all children enrolled at Kahurangi School.

Staff includes all employees of Kahurangi School.

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse or neglect or deprivation of any child or young person (*Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, section 2*). Emotional harm includes emotional or psychological abuse (for example family violence, exposure to illegal activities, and rejection). Neglect includes medical neglect, abandonment or neglectful supervision.

Child, Youth and Family – CYF, or later name changes for that Government organisation.

Responsibilities

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

The Board 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 to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority.

Although ultimate responsibility sits with the Board, the Board endorses the Principal to operate under this policy as well as ensure that all safety procedures are implemented.

The Principal must:

- Comply with legislative requirements and responsibilities in relation to child protection;
- Make this policy available on the school's internet site;
- Ensure all staff are able to :
 - identify the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and

- know what to do if a student discloses something of concern; and
- take appropriate action.
- Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy;
- Make available professional development, resources and advice to ensure all staff carry out their roles in terms of policy;
- Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can raise related issues or concerns without fear of reprisal;
- Seek advice through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

Staff must:

- Be familiar with and adhere to this policy and its associated procedures; and
- Report any suspected child abuse to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Not to make decisions or undertake actions of suspected or actual child in isolation unless there are concerns for the immediate safety of the child.

Guidelines

The student's safety is the paramount consideration.

All concerns will be recorded and that information will be kept in a secure and preferably locked place within the school. The information recorded will be kept confidential (except if a decision is made that it needs to be provided to another agency or person to ensure the safety of the child).

A consultative approach is essential to ensure safety of the child and staff.

The Principal (or Chairperson of the Board) will err on the side of caution in deciding whether or not to contact Child, Youth and Family, Police or another agency.

Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation with an appropriate person (e.g. School social worker, an agency concerned with child protection).

Child Protection Guidelines

In the event of suspected neglect or abuse

If staff suspect child abuse:

1. The staff member will discuss concerns with the Principal or Deputy Principal (unless the allegations involve the Principal, in which case the Chairperson of the Board should be contacted).
2. Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented. The information documented will include date and time, details of what was said and who was present.
3. If the staff member and Principal or Deputy Principal consider that there are immediate concerns about child abuse, they will report those concerns to an appropriate agency (CYF/Police) as a matter of urgency.
4. If it is decided the concerns are sufficiently serious that the child's immediate safety may be at risk, then action to address that risk can be considered. This must be documented at the first opportunity and notification made immediately to CYF and/or Police.

5. The Principal or Deputy Principal will consult with the appropriate agency or person. That consultation process, and any decisions made as a result, will be documented.
6. Once reported, the Principal or Deputy Principal (or Chairperson of the Board) should thereafter follow the advice of CYF, Police or other agency to whom they might be referred.
7. If a decision is made that no further action is required, then that decision and the reasons (rationale) for it will be documented and held securely in accordance with the Guidelines under this Policy.

Where alleged abuser is staff

Where the alleged abuser is a staff member, the above process will still apply. Close liaison will be maintained with Police to avoid any action that may compromise their investigation.

The Principal (or Chairperson of the Board) will immediately seek advice from an employment advisor.

The Chairperson of the Board will be notified.

Communication with family

Some matters of child abuse may indicate communication to the family is not appropriate (e.g. parent as the alleged abuser etc.). In that situation the safety of the child is paramount and is to be considered. All considerations and action should be documented. Deciding when and who will inform the parent or caregiver of the child who is suspected to have been subjected to child abuse can be determined in consultation with CYF and/or Police.

Date approved by the Board 22 February 2017



Board Chair – Cathryn Curran-Tietjens

In the event of suspected neglect or abuse Guidelines Flowchart

