



TIROHIA SCHOOL

Operational Policy: 7.6

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

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

Review schedule: Within 3 years

Review schedule: Triennially

Chairperson:  _____

Date 26/10/16

Review Date: 10/19

Related documentation and information

- Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website www.nzsta.org.nz
- Ministry of Education website 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>

Supporting Child Protection at Tirohia School

Guidance on identifying possible abuse or neglect

Child abuse and neglect can take many forms. While there are different definitions and categories of abuse, the important thing is for staff to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to define or categorise the type of abuse or neglect.

Staff should feel empowered to act on suspected abuse and neglect, even when the symptoms or patterns of symptoms are subtle, while avoiding adhering to stereotypes and making assumptions.

It is normal for staff to feel uncertain. The important thing is that they can recognise when something is wrong, especially if they notice a pattern, or several signs that make them concerned.

What constitutes abuse or neglect?

- Physical abuse – any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
- Sexual abuse – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
 - Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
 - Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
- Emotional abuse – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:
 - Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
 - Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.
- Neglect – neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:
 - Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).
 - Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
 - Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
 - Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).

- o Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

Reporting and responding to suspected abuse or neglect

If a staff member at Tirohia School has a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing they will, in all instances, report this to the principal. This will be done at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child.

The severity of the suspected abuse or neglect is not up to the staff member or principal to determine. The principal has the ultimate responsibility to ensure appropriate authorities are notified.

In consultation with the principal, staff should always respond if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child, regardless of who may be involved, as follows:

- i. **Contact the Police** immediately if a child is in immediate danger. The primary response must be to ensure the safety of the child.
- ii. **Contact Child, Youth and Family National Contact Centre** to discuss appropriate steps where:
 - a) A child has disclosed abuse or neglect (see table below)
 - b) Abuse or neglect of a child has been disclosed by the person responsible
 - c) A staff member has observed abuse or neglect, or suspects abuse or neglect on the basis of their own observations
 - d) A third party has told a staff member of known child abuse or neglect, or of their suspicions of possible child abuse or neglect

**CYF Contact details: Phone: 0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774)
Email: edassist@cyf.govt.nz**

Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse

Listen to the child	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
Reassure the child	Let the child know that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing. While reassuring the child it is important that you do not agree 'not to tell anyone'.
Ask open ended prompts, e.g. "What happened next?"	Do not interview the child (do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue).
If the child is visibly distressed	Provide appropriate reassurance and engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.

If the child is not in immediate danger	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
As soon as possible formally record the disclosure	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word for word, what the child said. • The date, time and who was present.

Recording and notifying Child, Youth and Family of suspected child abuse or neglect:

What process to follow	For example	Key considerations
Recording	Formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything said by the child. • The date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant. • The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (e.g., any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns). • The action taken by your organisation. • Any other information that may be relevant 	Relevant information can inform any future actions.
Decision-making	Discuss any concern with the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection	No decisions should be made in isolation
Notifying authorities	Notify Child, Youth and Family promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected. A phone call to the National Contact Centre is the preferred initial contact with Child, Youth and Family (see below) as this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options. Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459) Email: cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz	Child, Youth and Family will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers, in consultation with our organisation. II. Advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police
Following the advice of Child, Youth and Family	Child, Youth and Family advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police	Child, Youth and Family is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether our organisation needs to work with the family/whānau

		or put them in touch with people in their community who can help
Storing relevant information	Securely store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record of the concern. • A record of any related discussions (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate). • A record of any advice received • The action your organisation took, including any rationale. • This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident). 	Records assist in identifying patterns

DEFINITIONS

Abuse – the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child.

Child – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.

Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect.

Child, Youth and Family – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection.

Children's services – any organisation that provides services to children or to adults where contact with children may be part of the service. These organisations should have child protection policies. Organisations that provide services to adults who may be caring for or parenting children should also consider developing a policy, e.g., adult mental health and addiction services.

Children's workforce/children's workers – people who work with children, or who have regular contact with children, as part of their roles.

Designated person for child protection (DPCP) - the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about the child protection policy.

Disclosure – information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

Family violence has been defined by the NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse as violence and abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with. This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate

partner against the other partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013).

Neglect – the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

New Zealand Police – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Safer recruitment – following good practice processes for pre-employment checking which help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children’s workforce.

Standard safety checking – the process of safer recruitment that will be mandatory for organisations covered by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. 1.

Workforce restriction – a restriction on the employment or engagement of people with certain specified convictions under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.