

ST JOSEPH'S OTAHUHU

Child Protection Policy

RATIONALE :

Respect for oneself, others and for all of life is a fundamental value of St Joseph's School and intrinsic to our Catholic Special Character. In particular the care and protection of children must always be our main priority. All students have the right to be educated in a safe and caring environment and all steps taken to protect them from any harm. The Board of Trustees is conscious of its overall responsibility to meet the Health and Safety requirements of the National Administration Guidelines and obligations under the Vulnerable Children's Act, 2015 .

The board of trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care and are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse. We support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Child Youth and Family in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.

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.

All staff members are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures, related policies and protocols and abide by them. Every effort will be made to keep staff aware of their responsibilities through information, copies of the relevant documentation and ongoing professional development.

PURPOSES:

1. To ensure that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
2. To establish guidelines and procedures for safety checking of all workers to meet the requirements of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2015. (*refer to Procedures for Safe Recruitment*)
3. To provide guidelines and procedures for staff to follow when faced with disclosures of abuse or evidence of suspected abuse
4. To ensure that all suspicions or allegations of abuse are reported to the Principal or appropriate personnel (*refer to Procedures for reporting suspected and/or disclosed abuse*)
5. To ensure that staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and are able to take appropriate action in response
6. To support and care for students who disclose that they are or have been abused
7. To ensure that the interests of the child are paramount in all circumstances
8. To establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop. (Refer to various Safety Procedures)

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outwards signs of abuse. The school will therefore

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they feel worried.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from 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 (See related policies and procedures)

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. Therefore, the following are delegated to the principal

1. Develop and update procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make the Child Safety Policy available on the school's internet site or available on request at the Office.
4. Establish guidelines and procedures for safety checking of all workers to meet the requirements of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2015 (Refer Procedures for Police Vetting, Identification processes and in the case of teachers, Registration status)
5. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children
7. Establish guidelines and procedures for staff to be 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 and follow the school procedures. (See relevant procedures)
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 raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information with the board or designated person(s), in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child.
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

DEFINITIONS:

CHILD ABUSE: Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential for serious harm to the child.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: any acts that may result in physical harm of a young child or young person

SEXUAL ABUSE: any acts that involve forcing or enticing children to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning and development.'

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

FAMILY VIOLENCE may be witnessed /experienced by children and involve physical, sexual and emotional abuse

DISCLOSURE: Information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect

APPENDIX: RELATED PROCEDURES and POLICIES

1. Safe practices in the school procedures
2. Emergency and Evacuation procedures
3. Procedures for dealing with and reporting suspected or disclosed sexual, emotional and/or physical abuse
4. Procedures for ensuring the safety of all core and non core workers working
5. Police Vetting procedures
6. Administration of medication procedures
7. First Aid Procedures
8. Attendance Management Policy and procedures
9. Internet Use Safety Policy Procedures
10. Playground Supervision Procedures
11. Protected Disclosures Policy
12. Road and Traffic Safety procedures
13. School Excursions and EOTC Policy and Procedures
14. Health and Safety Reporting to the Board procedures
15. Board Checking Procedures for Health and Safety.

Approved: BoT meeting 25 August 2016