



St Columba's Catholic School

Child Protection Policy

Rationale

In regard to student safety the National Education Guidelines (NAG 5) require a school board of trustees and principals of each state and integrated school in New Zealand to:

- Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students; and
- Comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of students and employees.

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to establish an agreed approach to the reporting of child abuse and neglect by those working within schools. The protocol will ensure that:

- The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount considerations;
- Suspected and actual abuse of a child is responded to and recorded appropriately; and
- Effective child protection requires a full, accurate and prompt sharing of information (as permitted within the law).

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.

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.

Procedures

- The child's safety should always be the paramount consideration in the notification process.



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- No decisions or actions in respect of suspected or actual child abuse are to be made by any staff member in isolation unless there are concerns for the immediate safety of the child.
- A consultative approach is essential to ensure the safety of the child and the staff member. Staff must discuss their concerns with the principal or nominated person/advocate. Where applicable follow the board's complaint policy.
- Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation between the school and CYF.

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

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Reviewed: November 2016