

HOKOWHITU SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (2023)

PURPOSE

Hokowhitu School Board is committed to child protection and the prevention of child abuse and neglect through providing a safe environment for children that is free from all forms of abuse. The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern, and the child is at the centre of all decision making when responding to suspected abuse or neglect.

GUIDELINES

1. The Hokowhitu School Board is committed to the prevention, identification, and reporting of all forms of abuse.
 - a. Child abuse is defined in accordance with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.”
 - b. The Board delegates to the Principal the role of Designated Person for Child Protection, and the responsibility for developing and implementing appropriate child protection procedures.
 - c. The Principal and all staff are expected to act in accordance with the Education Council Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession.
2. Staff recruitment and appointment will be conducted in a manner to ascertain the candidate’s suitability and safety to work at Hokowhitu School.
 - a. All appointments are subject to safety checks as required by the Children’s (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015.
 - b. This policy will form part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.
3. Staff will be trained and supported in order to fully and confidently implement this policy.
 - a. Regular training will be provided to teachers to ensure they are kept informed on current, and relevant, legislation and school procedures.
 - b. All teachers will be regularly briefed on procedures for managing suspected or disclosed child abuse, and supported in the timely implementation of those procedures as necessary.
 - c. All staff will be supported to work collaboratively with partner organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
4. School activities will be conducted in a manner that reduces the risk of abuse to an absolute minimum.
 - a. Staff should take all practicable steps to not be left alone in toilets, pool dressing rooms, or other places that put both staff and students at risk.
 - b. Staff should not be expected to carry out personal hygiene tasks of students that put either party at risk.
 - c. School sports team coaches and/or managers should take all practicable steps to not place themselves in 1:1 situations with students that put either party at risk.
 - d. All parents attending overnight camps or excursions must have a police vetting completed at least 3 yearly.
 - e. Contractors must sign in at reception whenever they enter the school, must take all reasonable steps to ensure children’s safety, and must not have unsupervised access to children.

5. Allegations against staff will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
 - a. The school promotes a culture whereby staff will feel able to raise concerns, either formally or informally, about other staff.
 - b. Allegations of staff misconduct should be made directly to the Principal, as Designated Person for Child Protection, and allegations of misconduct by the Principal should be made directly to the Presiding Member of the Board.
 - c. The Board/Principal will immediately seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisers on employment matters and other relevant agencies where suspected or disclosed child safety issues arise.

6. It is the responsibility of staff to be vigilant and to report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse immediately.
 - a. In the case of a disclosure to school staff, the Disclosure Procedures must be followed:
 - i. The child should not be questioned further once sufficient information has been obtained to make a report of concern.
 - ii. The child should be made to feel safer and reassured that their disclosure is of concern to the adult and will be acted on.
 - iii. The child should be supported in the manner outlined in the Child Abuse Procedures.
 - b. In the case of concerns from staff or third parties:
 - i. Third parties should be given the contact details for the Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children phone referral line and a record made of the concern.
 - ii. Teachers suspecting abuse should follow the Child Abuse Procedures.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/HANDBOOKS

Legislation

- Children’s Act 2014
- Children’s (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Privacy Act 2020

Employment Agreements

- Primary Teachers’ Collective Employment Agreement
- Our Code Our Standards: Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession

Guidelines

- Vulnerable Children Act 2014: A Practical Guide (Ministry of Education)
- Creating a Safe School: A Guide to Writing a Child Protection Policy (Child Matters)

School Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents

- Appointments Policy
- Child Abuse Procedures
- Complaints and Concerns Procedures
- Disclosure Procedures
- Education Outside the Classroom Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Ratification date: 14 February 2023

Review date: Term 1 (February-March) 2025

Presiding Member

Principal