

## HOKOWHITU SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (2026)

### 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. Child abuse is defined in accordance with Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 as the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.
2. 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.

### Safety Checking and Appointment of Employees

3. 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 staff employed by the Board are defined as children's workers because their work will involve regular contact with children without a parent or guardian's presence.
  - b. Core children's workers are defined as working in roles involving being either the only person present with children or having primary responsibility or authority over children.
  - c. Non-core children's workers are defined as working in roles with regular but limited child contact and never being alone with children.
  - d. The Board is responsible for determining whether children's worker roles are core or non-core, where there is doubt, based on the requirements and circumstances of each role.
4. All employment decisions and student placements are subject to safety checking, including obtaining a Police vet and the assessment of risk, in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015.
  - a. Police vetting for teaching staff is undertaken by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand as part of the registration and practising certificate process.
  - b. Police vetting for student teachers, Gateway students, and other placements in the school is undertaken in advance by the relevant education provider.
  - c. Teaching staff cannot continue working as a children's worker if their teaching practice certificate has lapsed unless the Board undertakes a new Police vet and an updated risk assessment.
  - d. Safety checking must be undertaken by the school for all non-teaching and unregistered employees (who are not children's workers) who work at the school during normal operating hours.

5. Any Police vet of a current or potential employee that raises potential concerns for child safety will be assessed by the Board.
  - a. The Board's consideration will be conducted in accordance with Ministry of Education guidance on risk assessment.
  - b. People who have been convicted of offences specified in Schedule 2 of the Children's Act cannot be employed or engage in core worker roles.
  - c. If the Board determines that there is an unacceptable risk this must be discussed with the individual, who will be allowed to see the results of the risk assessment and correct anything that is not accurate, prior to an employment decision being made.

#### Safety Checking and Appointment of Contractors

6. All contractors, and employees of contractors, who are not children's workers but will be on school grounds during normal school hours are subject to this policy.
  - a. All such workers must sign in at reception whenever they enter the school.
  - b. All such workers who are undertaking routine or urgent maintenance are not required to be Police vetted, but a member of the senior leadership team must in advance assess the risk posed by their presence and where necessary ensure mitigations are in place to minimise the likelihood of unsupervised access to children.
  - c. All such workers who will be on school grounds for extended periods (e.g. construction projects) are required to be Police vetted in advance of commencing work and will be subject to a school access plan that minimises the likelihood of unsupervised access to children.
7. Any Police vet of a contractor, or employee of a contractor, that raises potential concerns for child safety will be assessed by the Board prior to granting approval to enter school grounds.
  - a. The Board's consideration will be conducted in accordance with Ministry of Education guidance on risk assessment.
  - b. If the Board determines that there is an unacceptable risk, this decision will be communicated to their employer or the project manager (as appropriate), without disclosing the personal information that led to the determination.

#### School Operations

8. Staff will be trained and supported in order to fully and confidently implement this policy.
  - a. This policy will form part of the initial induction programme for each staff member and student placement.
  - b. Regular training will be provided to teachers to ensure they are kept informed on current, and relevant, legislation and school procedures.
  - c. 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.
  - d. All staff will be supported to work collaboratively with partner organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
9. 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 with a child in a secluded place (e.g., toilet, pool dressing room, etc.) that puts either party at risk.
- b. Staff should not be expected to carry out personal hygiene tasks for students that put either party at risk.
- c. Volunteers involved in low-risk activities (e.g. a parent coaching or managing a sports team, a parent invited to talk to a class, etc.) are not required to be Police vetted but should take all practicable steps to avoid 1:1 situations with students that put either party at risk.
- d. Volunteers involved in high-risk activities (e.g. overnight camps) must have been Police vetted within the last three years.
- e. The Board may trespass any parent, caregiver, or other member of the community from school grounds if there is reasonable basis for believing they pose a risk to children.

### Disclosure and Reporting

10. The school will promote a culture whereby staff will feel able to report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and know that these will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
  - a. 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.
  - b. Any staff suspicion of abuse should be reported in accordance with the Child Abuse Procedures.
  - c. Any disclosure to school staff should be reported in accordance with the Disclosure Procedures.
11. Third parties who raise any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse should be given the contact details for the Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children phone referral line and a record made of the concern.
12. The school will act immediately in response to the disclosure or reporting of any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse to ensure the safety of all students.
  - a. Any adult suspected of abuse will be removed from school grounds while any investigations by external agencies and employment processes are conducted.
  - b. Any child suspected of abuse will be subject to a safety action plan while any investigations by external agencies are conducted.
  - c. The right to privacy of any accused individual will be maintained to the greatest extent possible while also ensuring the safety of all students.

### **ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/HANDBOOKS**

#### Legislation

- Children's Act 2014
- Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989
- Education and Training Act 2020 – Schedule 4: Police Vetting
- 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)
- [Child protection in schools](#) (Ministry of Education)
- [Who Needs to Be Safety Checked at School](#) (Ministry of Education)
- [Risk Assessment after a Police Vet](#) (Ministry of Education)

### School Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents

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

#### **APPROVAL DETAILS**

Review frequency: Two yearly  
Ratification date: 5 May 2026  
Review date: Term 1 (March) 2028



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Presiding Member



Principal