

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2016

Papatoetoe East Primary Mission Statement

To provide a good all round education in a relaxed, secure environment where children can develop academically, personally and socially

The Vulnerable Children Act of 2014 which came into effect on 1st July 2015 requires all children related agencies to work together to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

This document is structured into seven sections

1. **Introduction:** introduces the policy and confirms the commitment of our Board of Trustees and staff.
2. **Key terms and definitions:** explains the term and definitions used throughout the policy and when dealing with child safety.
3. **Relevant Legislation / Guiding Documents:** includes information about existing policies and procedures which relate to this Child Protection Policy and references relevant legislation.
4. **Roles and Responsibilities:** outlines the specific roles and responsibilities and how the various policy elements apply to Papatoetoe East Primary
5. **Responding to Suspected abuse or neglect:** describes the required process to follow when abuse and / or neglect of a child is suspected or disclosed.
6. **Information sharing and recording:** outlines the policy elements related to sharing and recording of information in relation to child protection concerns.
7. **Appendices:** includes additional information and resources which support the implementation of this policy.

Introduction

The Papatoetoe East Primary School Board of Trustees is committed to the safety and wellbeing of students in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve through educational programmes, modelling of school values (TRUMP) by staff, promotion of a safe and positive environment and policies and procedures designed to safeguard children from harm. We 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.

This policy outlines the board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff to 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 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.

Key Terms and Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used in this policy:

- **Child:** a person up to the age 17 years
- **Child protection:** activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected or risk of abuse and/or neglect.
- **Child Abuse:** the harming (physically, sexually, emotionally), ill-treatment, abuse , neglect or deprivation of a child
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child causing long term serious harm to their health or development. It may also include neglect of their basic or emotional needs.
- **Physical Abuse:** non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. Physical abuse includes the fabrication or inducing of illness.
- **Sexual Abuse:** an act involving circumstances of indecency with, or sexual violation of, a child or using a child in the making of sexual imaging.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on child and the seeing or hearing of ill treatment of others.
- **Cumulative Harm:** the effects of pattern of circumstances and events in a child life, which diminish a child's sense of safety, stability and wellbeing. Cumulative harm is the existence of compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or 'layers' of neglect. The unremitting daily impact on the child can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of a child's life.
- **Disclosure:** information given to a staff member by the child, parent, caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Child Safety Team (CST):** designated team within the school who is responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or want advice about the child protection policy. The CST is responsible for the oversight of contact with agencies and lawyers who are acting on behalf of children.
- **Parent:** the person (or people) responsible for having the role of providing day to day care for the child; and may include biological or adoptive parent, step-parent, partner of a parent of a child, legal guardian or member of the child's family whanau or other culturally recognised group.
- **Family Violence:** violence or abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with. This can include siblings, children, adults, elderly and intimate partners.
- **Staff / Employee:** this applies to all staff, including volunteers, part-time or temporary

roles, group co-ordinators and any other person employed or engaged by the school on a sub-contract basis.

- Social Worker In Schools (SWIS): trained professional employed to the support the school with ensuring child safety and wellbeing

Relevant Legislation / Guiding Documents

In addition to identified school policies (appendix 1) the following legislation has been identified:

- Education Act 1989
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- Crimes Act 1961 (Crimes Amendment Act 2011)
- Privacy Act 1993
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Children, Young Persons and their families Act 1989
- 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.pdt>

Roles and Responsibilities

Papatoetoe East ensures that all staff working with children, both paid and voluntary, have been appropriately safety checked. As part of Teacher's Practising Certificate all teachers are police vetted. All non-teaching staff will be police vetted by the school.

Staff will always act and be seen to act in the child's best interest and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

The Principal on behalf of the Board of Trustees 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 website and 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 organisation to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented;
9. 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;
10. Seek advice as necessary from advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issue arise;
 11. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy so 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;
 12. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.
 13. Ensure that all staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors adhere to our school policy
 14. Ensure all staff will agree to and follow this policy and abide by the Code of Ethics
 15. Ensure necessary Pastoral care is accessed for staff as and if required

Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect

This section provides information and guidance about how to respond when child protection concerns are disclosed, suspected or alleged. The first priority must be ensuring the immediate safety of the child. If it is assessed that the child needs immediate action to secure their safety action should be taken without delay.

We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we shouldn't act alone and should speak to a member of the Senior Management Team immediately

Consultation with the Principal and the Child Safety Team (CST) will be used to plan what actions or communications with outside agencies or whanau will be taken.

The responsibility for taking action such as a Report of Concern remains with the Principal, the CST and where appropriate the child's whanau.

The child safety team (CST) will consist of:

- The Principal or their delegated representative/s
- A staff member with relevant training and experience. E.g.; Social Worker in Schools (SWIS), SENCO or a member of the Health curriculum team.

Procedures for reporting suspected abuse: See Appendix 2 and 3

Information Sharing and Recording

All suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviors will be recorded in writing noting any observations, impressions and communications in relation to a specific child / children. A register of reported concerns will be kept in hard copies and held in a secure place only accessible by the CST.

Staff will not inform whanau of suspected or actual abuse unless this has been discussed with and approved by the Principal. It is imperative that all requests for information are handled in a timely manner keeping the safety of the child / children paramount
The school will abide by custody arrangements and keep a copy of court orders on file.

It is critical to respond appropriately and follow the school procedures when dealing with disclosures related to children. An interview must not be completed and the following guidelines should be followed if seeking clarification to a possible concern.

Overview

- Listen, allowing the child to tell you only as much as they want to disclose
- Ask as few questions as possible - Do not interview the child, limit questions to open prompts eg. Can you tell me more?
- Ensure that questions are not leading or presuppose a response, or invite the child to reflect a statement back eg new ask “did mummy do this to you?” instead ask “What happened?”
- Reassure the child they have done the correct thing
- Provide comfort and let them know they are not in trouble
- Record, word for word, what the child said as soon as possible, Include quotation marks to differentiate your observations from reported speech.
- Don't panic – the child will be observant of your reaction and is in a position of vulnerability, if the child believes you cannot handle the situation, they may cease disclosure
- Seek assistance immediately

Ratified at the BOT Meeting held on

**M. Wilkie
BOT Chairperson**

Appendix 1

Related School Policies

1. Safety Checking of Staff

- 1.1 Police Vetting
- 1.2 Complaints
- 1.3 Staff Conduct
- 1.4 Staff Discipline
- 1.5 Staff Induction
- 1.6 Teacher Competency

2. Safe Working Practices

- 2.1 Staff Code of Ethics
- 2.2 Special Needs and Procedures
- 2.3 Behaviour Management
- 2.4 Blood Borne Viruses
- 2.5 Educational Trips and Visits
- 2.6 Playground Supervision
- 2.7 Restraint of children
- 2.8 Stand downs and Suspensions
- 2.9 Lockdown
- 2.10 Attendance
- 2.11 Emergency and Evacuations
- 2.12 Search and Seizure
- 2.13 Anti Bullying

3. Suspected / Disclosures of Abuse

- 3.1 Reporting Child Abuse
- 3.2 Protected Disclosures
- 3.3 Sexual/Racial Harassment
- 3.4 Traumatic Incidents

Appendix 2

Procedures for Disclosure of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

A child discloses they are being abused, or you see signs of possible abuse, or another person reports a concern

- Listen to the child
- Reassure the child
- Do NOT interview the child
- Report concerns to a member of the Child Safety Team (CST)

Child Safety Team identify where an immediate response is required to ensure the child's safety.

If the child is NOT in immediate danger

CST to engage child in an activity and school program

If the child IS in immediate danger

CST to organise appropriate supervision and inform appropriate agencies immediately (SWIS / Police / CYF / Publish Health Nurse)

As soon as possible prepare a written record:

- Word for words, what the child said
- To include the date, time, location and names of any staff / persons that may be relevant
- The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect
- Any other information that may be relevant

Appendix 3

Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse by a Staff Member

Complete Procedures as identified in
'Procedures for Disclosure of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child'

Principal to discuss and maintain any contractual obligations subject to investigation of employee. The employee will be advised of their right to seek support and advice from union or legal representatives.

Principal working with appropriate agencies will advise employee and seek a response, (depending on outcomes of discussion with statutory agencies).