



LEARNING IS STRENGTH
BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Renwick School

Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Purpose: To provide staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

Principles: Renwick School is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the wellbeing of children. We recognise the family's primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained, however the child's safety and wellbeing should have priority.

Scope: This policy covers all staff whether paid or voluntary including staff contracted or on placement and community members who will be solely responsible for a child or group of children at any given time.

Definitions: See also Appendix 1: For the purposes of this policy "child" means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years. "Staff" is defined as anyone working for Renwick School whether paid or voluntary, contracted or on placement and includes members of our school community who will be solely responsible for a child or group of children at any given time e.g. on school camp.

Glossary: See Appendix 1

Relevant Legislation:

Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

The Privacy Act 1993

Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989

Identifying Possible Abuse and or Neglect

Physical: Physical abuse can be caused from punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family, and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

Injuries to a child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks, major fractures of the long bones or skull, to its most extreme form, the death of a child.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose.

While it may involve a stranger, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts. It includes, any touching for sexual purpose, fondling of breasts, buttocks, genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, an adult exposing themselves to the child, or seeking to have a child touch them for a sexual purpose. It also includes voyeurism, photographing children inappropriately, involving the child in

pornographic activities or prostitution or using the internet and phone to initiate sexual conversations with children.

Neglect: Neglect is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs.

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth
- Medical - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child
- Abandonment - leaving a child young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning
- Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision
- Refusal to assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse occurs when a child’s emotional, psychological or social well-being and sense of worth is continually battered.

It can include a pattern of criticising, rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting and terrorising a child. It may result from exposure to family violence or involvement in illegal or anti-social activities or inappropriate online content.

Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms of abuse occur.

The effects of this form of abuse are not always immediate or visible. The long-lasting effects of emotional abuse may only become evident as a child becomes older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviours or symptoms.

Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Rules for responding to disclosures

- **Breathe!!**
- **Stay calm, be patient, DON’T QUESTION**
- **Keep voice low and gentle**
- **Don’t be too quick to fill silences**
- **Thank the child for telling you and say you are there to help them**
- **Do not panic**
- **Do NOT promise confidentiality**
- **Follow our Child Protection Policy**

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| Listen to child | Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child’s cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language |
| Reassure the child | Let the child know that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not in trouble. • Have done the right thing |

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| Ask open-ended prompts – e.g., “What happened next?” | Do not interview the child (in other words, do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue). Do not make promises that can’t be kept, e.g., “I will keep you safe now”. |
| If the child is visibly distressed | Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities. |
| If the child is not in immediate danger | Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next |
| If the child’s parents have no knowledge or involvement with the disclosed abuse, neglect | Contact by phone the child’s parents immediately when there is a concern for the child’s wellbeing and welfare |
| If the child is in immediate danger | Contact the Police immediately. |
| As soon as possible formally record the disclosure | Record: • Word for word, what the child said. • The date, time and who was present |

- All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Person in Charge as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the child(ren), record the report and if there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse having taken place, the Person in Charge (Principal in the first instance, Deputy Principal and/or SENCO) shall notify the Children’s Team and/or Oranga Tamariki.
- Staff members will discuss suspicions with a senior staff member.
- Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.

Recording and Notifying Child, Youth and Family of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

| What process to follow | For Example | Key Considerations |
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| Recording | Formally record: • Anything said by the child. • The date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant. • The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (e.g., any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns). • The action taken by your organisation. • Any other information that may be relevant. | Relevant information can inform any future actions. |
| Decision making | Discuss any concern with the manager/ supervisor or the designated person for child protection. | No decisions should be made in isolation. |

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| Notifying Authorities | The school's designated person/s i.e. Principal, Deputy Principal and/or SENCO will notify Oranga Tamariki or the Police promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected. A phone call to the National Contact Centre (see below) is the preferred initial contact with Oranga Tamariki as this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options. Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459) Fax: 09 914 1211 Email: contact@ot.govt.nz | Oranga Tamariki will: (i) Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers in consultation with your organisation. (ii) Advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police. |
| Following the advice of Child, Youth and Family | Oranga Tamariki advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police. | Oranga Tamariki is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether we need to work with the family or to put them in touch with people in their community who can help. |
| Storing relevant information | Securely store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record of the concern. • A record of any related discussions, (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate). • A record of any advice received. • The action your organisation took, including any rationale. • This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident). | Records assist in identifying patterns. |

Allegations or Concerns about Staff

When a staff member is suspected, the same processes apply.

If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, consult with Oranga Tamariki or the Police before advising the person concerned, informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. They should also be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.

We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. This includes between preschool/school/secondary school. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the CYPF Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Recruitment and Employment (safety checking)

Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

This will include: a completed application form and declaration re any prior convictions, a police vet; two means of identity verification; references and an interview. A work history will be sought and previous employers will be contacted. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.

If any relevant issues are identified through the the safety checking process, the senior management team will decide upon the appropriate action to take regarding the application.

Relieving teachers: New relieving teachers will be required to supply two forms of identity verification, and referees who will be contacted prior to employment. Employment will be at the Principal's discretion.

Providers of experiences outside of the school who will be working with students without teacher presence will be required to provide evidence of police vetting and testimonials.

Training Supervision and Support

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:

- Understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse.
- How to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regard to child abuse.
- Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues.
- Planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk.
- Dealing with child/parents/family/whānau.

This policy will be part of the initial staff induction programme.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

BOT Date: 2015

Reviewed: 2019

Appendix 1: Definitions

Abuse – the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child.

Neglect – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Child – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.

Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect.

Designated person for child protection – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about the child protection policy.

Disclosure – information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect. e.g. Oranga Tamariki – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection.

New Zealand Police – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Children's services – any organisation that provides services to children or to adults where contact with children may be part of the service. These organisations should have child protection policies. Organisations that provide services to adults who may be caring for or parenting children should also consider developing a policy, e.g., adult mental health and addiction services.

Safer recruitment – following good practice processes for pre-employment checking which help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children's workforce.

Standard safety checking – the process of safer recruitment that will be mandatory for organisations covered by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Workforce restriction – a restriction on the employment or engagement of people with certain specified convictions under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. Child Protection Policies v 2.3 Feb 2015 Page 22 of 55

Children's workforce/children's workers – people who work with children, or who have regular contact with children, as part of their roles.