

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the Board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all staff in the protection of children. It includes the Board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected.

SCOPE

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

To be read in conjunction with:

- Ministry of Education website www.education.govt.nz
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Further information and detailed definitions can be found on:

<http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

DEFINITIONS

Child means a young person aged under 17 years (who is not married or in a civil union).

Child abuse: Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.

For information about identifying child abuse see:

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/27713-working-together-3-0-45ppi.pdf>

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. Note that under sections 6 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and the Child and Young Person's Act 1989, whereby 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 Oranga Tamariki 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 police vet; 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.

RATIONALE

The Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

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/kura procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local police (see attached flowcharts).

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. Therefore the Principal must:

1. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities;
2. Make this policy available on the school's website or available on request;
3. Ensure every contract, or funding arrangement, the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required;
4. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances;
5. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children
6. Ensure that all staff have training and 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
7. 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
8. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can discuss any matters of concern with the Principal or Senior Leadership Team without fear of reprisal
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 NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise
11. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
12. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

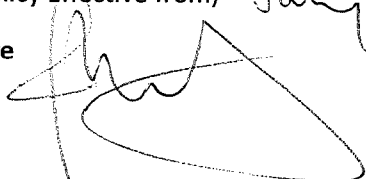
Date (Policy Effective from)

July 2018

Review Date

June 2020

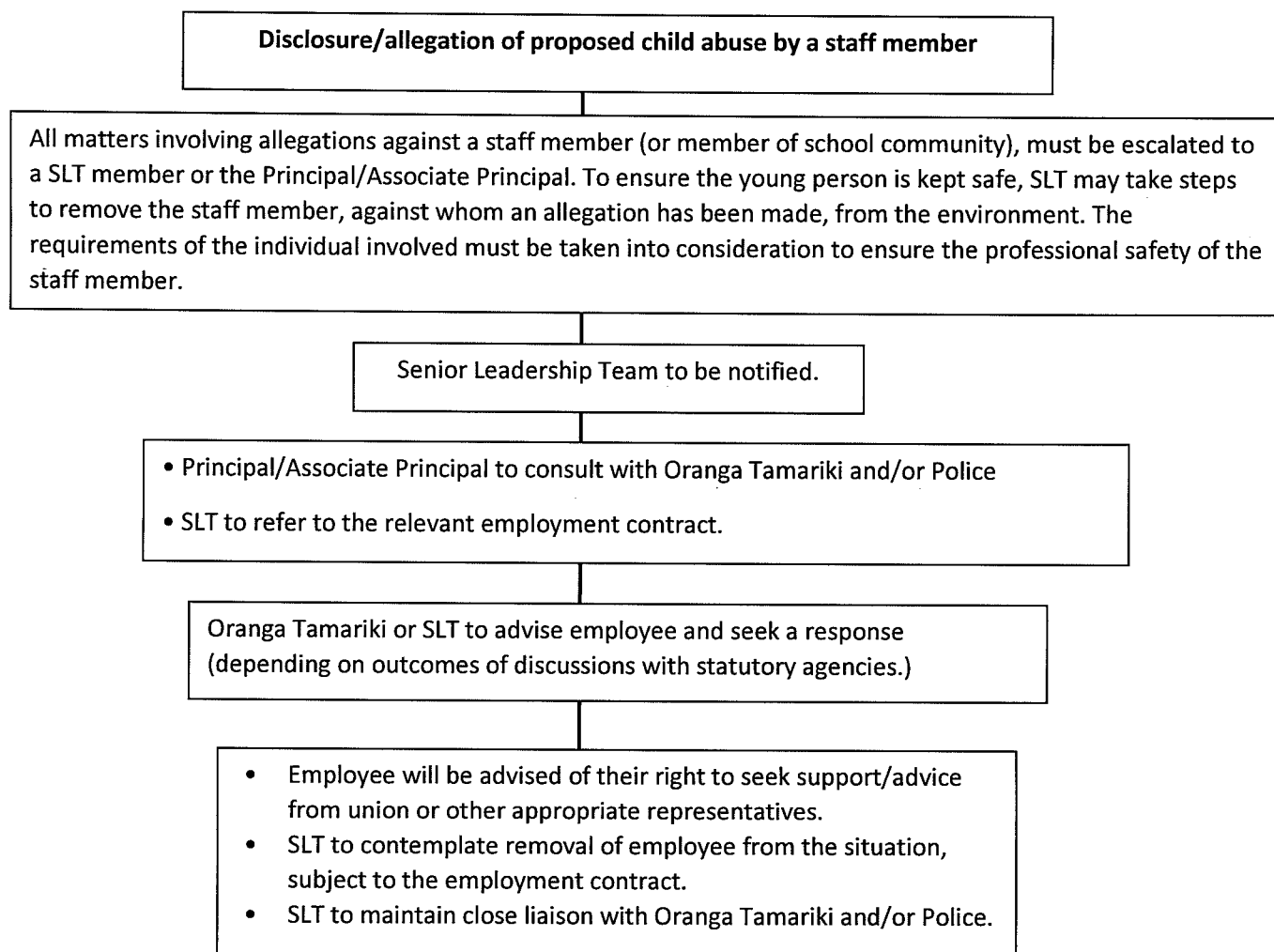
Signature



Disclosure Process

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (or volunteer)

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be escalated to the Senior Leadership Team. To ensure the child is kept safe, SLT may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law



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.

Disclosure of abuse or neglect is made

- Listen to the Young Person.
- Reassure the Young Person.
- Don't ask questions
- Explain to the child that immediate contact needs to be made with a member of the Learning Enhancement Team (Guidance Counsellor)

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 services

If the Young Person is not in immediate danger or distress

Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next

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 young person said
- 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 organization
- Any other information that may be relevant

Decision-making

Discuss any concern with the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection

Notifying authorities

Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected

Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459)

Fax: 09 914 1211

email: contact@ot.govt.nz