

Bradford School Child Protection Policy

This policy outlines the board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us and supports our staff to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect.

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

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 Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, 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 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. Therefore, the principal 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 internet site or 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/whānau 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 organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal
10. 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
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member

Review schedule: Yearly

Related Policies and Procedures:

Flow Chart for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse
Suspected or Disclosed Abuse or Neglect Procedure
Complaints Against Staff Involving Sexual Abuse Procedure

Employer Responsibility Policy

- Appointment Process
- Police Vetting Procedure
- Safety Checks
- Complaints Procedure against Principal /Teacher /Staff

NAG 5 Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

- Transport Policy
- EOTC Guidelines and Procedures
- Digital Citizenship Policy and Agreements

Definitions related to the Child Protection Policy and Procedures:

a. **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

b. **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

c. **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:

- Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others.
- Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
- Exposure to family/whā nau or intimate partner violence.

d. **Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

Training

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff are made aware of the policy on child protection. Annual professional learning on areas relating to the protection of children will be provided for staff.

Identifying child abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either a colleague, manager/supervisor or the Designated Person for Child Protection.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.

We recognise the signs of potential abuse:

- *Physical signs* (e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases).
- *Developmental delays* (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- *Emotional abuse/neglect* (e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- *Behavioural concerns* (e.g., age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression).
- The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).

We recognise the signs of potential neglect:

- *Physical signs* (e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight).
- *Developmental delays* (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- *Emotional abuse/neglect* (e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- *Behavioural concerns* (e.g., disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).
- *Neglectful supervision* (e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).
- *Medical neglect* (e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).

Confidentiality and information sharing

We will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service manager or designated person. Staff should be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, 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.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles – i.e., the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used: Who can see the information: where it is held: what is compulsory/voluntary information: and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatments or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

Promotion of a culture of Child Protection

- Observations are recorded by the class teacher on any children identified as 'at risk'. These will include observations on social development and/or particular areas of concern that have risen.
- Keeping in mind children's welfare is paramount. Whānau will be consulted about changes in behaviour so together with the school, we can try and identify causes or possible reasons.
- The school will through health programmes teach 'Keeping Ourselves Safe' alongside the Police Education Officer to increase children and staff awareness and confidence in talking about issues that may arise.
- Safety of children is paramount and if information is disclosed, or observations are made that leads a staff member to believe they are in danger or in an unsafe situation, action needs to be taken quickly to secure his/her safety. Oranga Tamariki (formerly CYFS) and the Police should be advised quickly.
- Staff who have any concerns about a child can discuss these with the public health nurse and / or senior management. In efforts to work as a team of support for the child, the concern or disclosure will be confidentially shared with the Principal (designated Child Protection staff member) – unless the disclosure is about the principal. (*see reporting disclosures procedure*)
- Where further action is necessary the staff member and / or principal will contact the appropriate agency of support and seek advice on appropriate action.
- All information / discussions, including the identity of the informant will be confidential to the relevant staff involved. Data will be stored in a secure place known to the senior staff. This will be forwarded to the next school at the discretion of the principal.
- If the concerns are about the child's safety or suspected abuse, the school will seek and follow advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the police (as per Reporting Suspected Abuse Procedure). Staff may action this themselves or they may seek the principal's support. Incidents are to be documented. Records shall be kept of disclosures for the duration of the child's stay at school in a confidentially and securely. Decisions about informing parents /caregivers will be made after consultation with Oranga Tamariki or the Police.

- Whenever an interview is held with a child, a staff member or an appropriate adult whom the child trusts must be present. The welfare of the child must be first priority, and wherever that is compromised the interview must be terminated. Any staff members attending such an interview will have the ability to make this judgment. Anyone from statutory or outside agencies who come to school to interview a child must verify their identity to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Support for staff and the child concerned will be sought from the agency involved. Staff also have access to counselling at 'Workplace Support' and children have access (if given permission by parents) to the Chatbus service that visits school weekly.

Services that may be helpful in supporting families and children:

- Chatbus – child counselling service (at Bradford weekly)
- Anglican /Presbyterian Support Services
- Catholic Services
- Otago Youth and Wellness
- Mirror Counselling
- Oranga Tamariki (formerly CYFS)
- Police Education Officer
- Public Health Nurse

Guidelines to follow when a child discloses abuse

Staff must be receptive and sensitive so that children feel listened to and believed.

Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse:

(i) Listen to the 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.
(ii) Reassure the child	Let the child know that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not in trouble. • Have done the right thing.
(iii) 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".
(iv) 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.
(v) If the child is not in immediate	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
(vi) If the child is in immediate danger	Contact the Police immediately.
(vii) As soon as possible formally record the disclosure	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word for word, what the child said. • The date, time and who was present.

Recording and notifying Oranga Tamariki of suspected child abuse or neglect:

What process to follow	For example	Key considerations
(i) Recording	Formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 further actions.
(ii) Decision-making	Discuss any concern with the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection.	No decisions should be made in isolation.
(iii) Notifying authorities	Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected.	Oranga Tamariki will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers in

		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 appropriated response options. Phone 0508 Family (0508 326 459) Email: contact@mvcot.govt.nz	(ii) consultation with your organisation. Advise what, if any immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Policy
(iv)	Following the advice of Oranga Tamariki	Oranga Tamariki advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Policy	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.
(v)	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.

Complaints Against Staff Involving Abuse

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be escalated to inform management and the Board Chair.

Follow the procedure 'Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse' as applicable to an employee.

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 and will not happen at our school.

Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

**Child abuse is either suspected or disclosed.
Ensure the child or young person is safe from immediate harm**

- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present).
- Consult immediately with the principal or nominated person in charge, or other staff member if the allegation concerns the principal.
- The principal or their nominated person in charge that received the information should contact Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or local Police.
 - If advised to do so, complete a referral form to Oranga Tamariki/Police.
 - The board chair should be advised.
- If there is disruption to the school or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, media interest or a public profile, seek support from Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator (0800 84 8326).

Alleged abuse by Board employee, including the principal. Note that there are two separate procedures to be followed at the same time.

**Alleged abuse by non-staff.
The principal or nominated person should:**

- (1) The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person:**
- Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki
 - Avoid further risks to the child(ren), or young person(s). Ensure there is no contact between the child and the person whom the allegation is against.

Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki.

(2) Process for employee investigation.

- Initiate an initial employment investigation.
- Maintain close liaison with the police and avoid any action that may compromise their investigation.
- Immediately seek advice from NZSTA or another approved employment advisor and advise your insurer.

- It is important that no one person has responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and employment issues as there is potential for there to be tension between the two.
- Notify the employee of the allegation and advise of the potential consequences.
- Consider whether it is appropriate for the employee to remain in the school (follow advice).
- Advise the employee of the right to seek support from union or other representatives.
- The board needs to determine whether they will defer their process while the police do the preliminary investigation, or whether they will proceed. Criminal investigations are separate from any employment investigation that the employer will follow.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and/or allegations, and follow-up action is taken.

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Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver will be determined by Oranga Tamariki and Police in consultation with the school.

Child safe practice guidelines

At times teachers/ support staff may be working 1:1 with a child, wherever possible this should be in an open, visible to others, area.

Toileting children – at times children may have a toileting accident. Staff can bring the child down to the disability toilet, and wait outside for the child to change into clean clothes. If the child needs adult support or will need showered, staff are to phone for a caregiver to come in to school.

Some children have High Health Needs Funding, where a support staff member is employed to help them with their toileting. A health and toileting plan are put in place at an IEP and the caregiver gives permission for a staff member to support toileting as per the plan.

Visitors, outside instructors and volunteers should be monitored at all times by staff.

Staff should avoid being alone with children when transporting a child, unless an emergency requires it, or parental permission has been received.

Except in an emergency, children are not to be taken from the school premises or programme without parental/caregiver permission, unless upon advice /direction from Police or Oranga Tamariki.