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**Ratified by B.O.T.**    **Date: 27 July 2020**

**Review Date: 27 July 2023**

**Signed by Chairman:**

**POLICY TITLE:                    Child Protection Policy**

**POLICY NUMBER:            38        NAG'S REF:**

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.

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 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.

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/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 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

## **Child Protection Procedures**

### **PURPOSE:**

In accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, Lake Taupo Christian School establishes procedures to ensure that all pupils receive the highest possible standard of care and protection. These procedures state the school's responsibilities for and to children, the procedures to follow to prevent abuse of children and to follow if abuse is suspected. A list of indicators of child abuse is attached as an appendix to these procedures.

### **General Code of Practice**

- a. All permanent and relieving staff of Lake Taupo Christian School are responsible for the care and protection of pupils and will act in the way a responsible parent in a similar setting to the school would be expected to act.
- b. All staff and long-term relieving teachers will be made aware of these procedures.
- c. All staff will:
  - i) Present as good role models in all their dealings with students. Pupils learn by observing the way people around them behave.
  - ii) be supportive and non-abusive in their management of students
  - iii) use language that could not be considered from the child's point of view, intimidating, threatening, demeaning or sexually suggestive.
- d. Staff will support one another in preventing situations where abuse to students or staff could occur

### **Responsibilities to and for children**

- a. The prime responsibility for the welfare and pastoral care of pupils rests with the pupils' Learning Centre Supervisor.
- b. The supervisor is expected to take an active interest in the child's welfare and be vigilant and proactive in ensuring the pupils emotional, social and physical well-being.
- c. The supervisor has a responsibility to keep parents informed of any issues or concerns regarding, and any significant incidents involving, the pupil.

- d. If a member of staff has serious concerns for the welfare of a pupil he/she must immediately inform the principal or a senior member of staff.
- e. Staff members may make referrals to child protection agencies where they have serious concerns for a pupils' welfare.

### **Prevention of abuse**

- a. The school curriculum will include topics to increase children's knowledge and understanding of issues related to their welfare, and the prevention of abuse
- b. Keeping ourselves safe and being confident will be taught to increase children's assertive skills in dealing with uncomfortable situations, and to help raise teachers' consciousness of the issues.
- c. Individual profiles are kept on children. These will include observations on social development.
- d. Keeping in mind children's welfare is paramount. Parents should be consulted about changes in behaviour to try to identify a reason.

### **Suspected child abuse**

- a. Adults will be receptive and sensitive to children so that the children feel listened to and believed.
- b. Teachers will use the checklist of indicators of abuse (Appendix 1) to help identify children possibly at risk
- c. Members of the senior staff will be the resource people for issues of suspected child abuse.
- d. Where a teacher is concerned about a child, they may discuss it with a member of the senior staff. If further investigation or action is necessary, the Principal will be informed.
- e. Any staff member may notify abuse to Oranga Tamariki, or the Police. The Principal and Chairperson of the Board must also be informed accordingly.
- f. The school will use the most appropriate agency for sexual abuse and the most appropriate agency for physical abuse and/or neglect.
- g. In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action will be that the school will direct the third party to a helping

agency without becoming involved. The school may be involved at a later date.

- h. Parents will be informed, except where the student's welfare is likely to be threatened. Whichever agency is involved in the case will be responsible for informing parents as they have the skills to handle the situation in the most appropriate way to support the child.
- i. The Principal will inform the Board of Trustees Chairperson if action has been taken under this policy.
- j. All information/discussions will be confidential to the staff involved. Data will be stored in the Principal's Office in a file known to senior staff. This data will be kept for the duration of the child's stay at the school. It will be forwarded at the discretion of the senior staff.
- k. Where further action is necessary the appropriate agency will be contacted without identifying the child to seek advice on the appropriate action.
- l. Once an agency has been involved, that agency and where appropriate the Police, will investigate and the school will act on the advice from those agencies.
- m. Whenever an interview is held with a child on school property, a staff member whom the child has confidence in 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 interviews would need to have the ability to make this judgement. The ability to attend the interview will be made in conjunction with the principal.
- n. Support for staff and the child concerned will be sought from the agency involved.

## **Referral to Child Protection Agency**

To ensure appropriate procedures are followed when making a referral to a child protection agency when a child tells you that they have been abused:

- a. Don't investigate the matter at school.
- b. Listen
  - believe what they say
  - say you are glad they told you
  - say you are sorry it happened
  - let them know it is not their fault
  - let them know you'll help
  - offer no judgement to the child
- c. Do not ask questions. Questions may contaminate future evidence (child can not be forced to go to court)
- d. Do not interview the child.
- e. Write down what you were told.
- f. Do not over-react, panic, criticise.
- g. Remember its what is important for the child that counts.
- h. Make sure child is safe and not able to leave school premises or panic.
- i. Inform the principal or the next most senior member of staff

**When you suspect a child has been abused.**

- a. Do not **interview** (*ask questions of*) the child - THIS IS A SPECIALIST TASK
  - b. Report matter immediately to the Principal if available, or one of the syndicate leaders.
  - c. Don't delay in contacting the relevant authorities, Oranga Tamariki or the Police (even if merely suspicious). IT IS THEIR ROLE TO INVESTIGATE
  - d. Keep objective word-for-word accounts of what the child reports. These are to be given to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and a request made for their early attention at the school.
1. Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation between the school and the statutory child protection service called in by the school.
  2. The school is to maintain confidential records. The records are to contain the following information which can be given to Oranga Tamariki or Police.
    - Name of child/children (also known as/nicknames)
    - Date of Birth (if known)
    - Address
    - Ethnicity (if known)
    - Name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation

- Current legal custodians
  - Reasons why it is believed that the child or young person is at risk
  - Other significant background information
  - The name of the contact person for Child, Youth & Family
  - Phone number/s
3. Remember assaults at school can be taken to the Police by the school or parent.

## **Appendix**

### **Indicators of Child Abuse**

#### **Types of child abuse are:**

##### **Physical Neglect**

The child is not given proper food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that there is serious risk to health and/or safety of that child

##### **Emotional Neglect**

(This is very hard to define and detect).

It is often the case that the child is only ever criticised, always told that it is stupid, naughty or the cause of all the family's problems.

##### **Physical Abuse**

Where injuries are not caused by accident

##### **Sexual Abuse**

This includes all situations where a parent, caregiver or other person involves a child in sexual activity. This can range from touching through to penetration or even the death of the victim.

#### **Indicators of sexual abuse in a child:**

Physical injury

Signs of physical illness, possibly related to genital or urinary functions, headaches or upset stomach

Becomes unusually fussy

Washes frequently

Refuses her/his favourite food; or an older child may suddenly refuse food

An unusual fear of strangers

Sudden extreme shyness

Lack of enjoyment of favoured pastimes, TV programmes and activities

Clinging to parents or extreme fear of being left alone

Difficulty going to sleep

Sudden fear of the dark

Nightmares

Bedwetting

Return to earlier forms of behaviour or skills  
Changes in school behaviour  
Loss of child's sense of security  
Unable to adjust to the normal schedule  
Showing loss of memory, sometimes appearing preoccupied or troubled  
Depression  
Advanced sexual behaviour  
Acting out the sexual abuse with playmates  
Suicidal tendencies  
Alcohol and drug abuse  
Running away  
Increased irritability and angry outbursts  
Pseudo-maturity, taking over parental responsibilities (*usually associated with incest*).  
Prostitution

**LINKS:**