



School

**Dunedin Rudolf Steiner**

Learning with head, heart and hands

## **Child Protection Procedures:**

### **The Reporting of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour (ref the Children's Act 2014)**

1. Allegations, disclosures and suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
2. All relevant observations and communications clearly documented and checked and signed by the person who has expressed the concern.
3. Refer to Appendix A: *Safe Handling*, from *Let's Stop Child Abuse Together – (Oranga Tamariki)* and to the Protocol for reporting of suspected or actual child abuse agreed between the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Oranga Tamariki (as attached).
4. Any person, in good faith, may directly report suspected abuse to an outside agency.
5. Suspected abuse should usually be reported by the Principal to the appropriate outside agency.
6. Where a teacher suspects abuse or inappropriate behaviour (including neglect) they will discuss their concerns in the first instance with the Principal.
7. In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action will be to direct that party to a helping agency without becoming involved. The school may however, become involved subsequently.
8. In the case of a child disclosing abuse or inappropriate behaviour, the information will be passed promptly to the Principal who will refer the issue directly to the most appropriate agency and act on the advice of that agency. No promise of confidentiality can be made to the child.
9. If an allegation is made against an employee of the school, the Board's Presiding member will be informed promptly and involved in any follow-up action in consultation with the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki. The Principal and Presiding Member have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the employee in such an instance. They will ensure the child is not exposed to unnecessary risk as well as uphold the Board's role as employer through actions that are consistent with relevant employment contracts.
10. Parents will be informed of the incident and the referral except where the child's welfare is likely to be threatened by this action. The agency contacted may take responsibility for informing parents. The

decision of when and who contacts the child's parents will be made in consultation with the outside agency.

11. All personnel involved with an instance of child abuse will refer to the Protocol of the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Oranga Tamariki as attached.

### **Child Protection**

1. To protect children from abuse or inappropriate behaviour, and to protect staff members from false allegations, a staff member or other adult should not be with a child alone while not in the sight of others
2. When an adult touches a child it has to be in manner that is appropriate and that respects human dignity
3. Safety checking of staff and others who may be alone with children is carried out in line with the Children's Act 2014.

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_      Review Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A**

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY LET'S STOP CHILD ABUSE TOGETHER

### ***Rules of safe handling***

- Don't panic.
- Listen to the child.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Write down what the child says.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing.
- Tell them that they will get help.
- Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person.

### ***Guiding principles***

- *Always give priority to the safety and well-being of the child or young person*
- *Report early*
- *Do not interview*
- *Call Child, Youth and Family or the Police*

Abuse and neglect are signals that intervention is necessary. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene will usually result in ongoing or further harm to the child or young person. Some children and young people die from physical abuse and neglect. Some are permanently disabled or disfigured. Children and young people may suffer long-lasting emotional and/or psychological harm as a result of any form of abuse and neglect.

**The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse.** Severe, potentially fatal injuries are not always visible. Severe emotional and/or psychological impacts of abuse may appear only in the longer term. It is essential to see and, if age-appropriate, talk to the child or young person. Be aware of explanations that do not match the signs. Those you speak to will not necessarily be truthful with you.

**It is essential to seek competent specialist advice, either medical, psychological or cultural.** If a situation appears to justify removing a child or young person to safety, it also justifies urgent specialist assessment. Collective discussion about emergency action is preferable to individual response.

**Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse.** It may also be a precursor to, or go along with, other forms of abuse. It must be treated seriously.

**Child abuse and neglect are not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.** Keep an open mind. All signs must be considered in the wider situational context of the child or young person and their family or whanau. Be sure you seek sound cultural advice. Culture is no excuse for abuse and neglect. The best people to challenge culturally unsound excuses for abuse are respected and authoritative members of that particular culture who have knowledge and skills in child protection.

**A child's or young person's behaviour is no excuse for abuse and neglect.** Children or young people may be described as difficult or hyperactive. However, abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the adult perpetrator regardless of the behaviour of the child or young person.

**A parent or caregiver's stress or deprivation is no excuse for abuse and neglect.** Such explanations may help to explain the context in which abuse and neglect occurred. However, abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the adult perpetrator. Beware of blaming, justification and rationalisation as excuses for abuse and neglect. Minimising is also a common dynamic.

**The aim of child protective services is to promote positive and enduring change in the lives of children, young people and their families.** All action taken with respect to children and young people must reflect the principles and objectives of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (CYP&F Act). Priority must be given to the safety and well-being of the child or young person.

## Reporting process for suspected or disclosed child abuse

