

Child Protection Policy

Rationale

Vulnerable children are children who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now and into the future as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised, and, in some cases, due to their own complex needs. Environmental factors that influence child vulnerability include not having their base emotional, physical, social, developmental and/or cultural needs met at home or in their wider community. *The White Paper for Vulnerable Children Volume 1, October 2012*

This policy outlines our commitment to child protection. It is intended to encourage early identification and referral of suspected child abuse or neglect and provide related guidelines to support staff. It is intended to help build a strong culture of child protection across a workplace. This policy is aimed at supporting children, their whanau, children's agencies, core and non-core workers (including volunteers and contractors) to provide for the wellbeing of students who attend Victoria Avenue School.

Purpose

1. To demonstrate our commitment to protect children and provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.
2. To identify children at risk
3. To provide guidance to staff in the event of suspected abuse
4. To ensure public confidence in the safe practices of the organisation, and reassure parents and whanau
5. To provide consistency of actions
6. To avoid allegations of abuse, and to protect and support staff in the event that one is made
7. To provide accountability and meet government and other requirements under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014
8. To ensure that Part 2, Section 18 (a), (b), (c) & (d) of the Vulnerable Children Act of 2014 are met; namely that the Victoria Avenue School board of trustees will:
 - (a) adopt a child protection policy
 - (b) ensure that the policy is available on the school website and is available upon request from the school office
 - (c) ensure that all agencies, contracts or funding arrangements fulfil the requirements of this policy
 - (d) review the policy every three years to ensure consistency with Child, Youth and Family and current police guidelines

Definitions:

Child – any child or young person aged under 17

Child Abuse – is “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.” *Sect 2, Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989*

Physical Abuse – is a non accidental act on a child that results in physical harm

Emotional Abuse – is any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and / or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person

Neglect – is any act or omission that results in impaired physical functioning, injury, and / or development of a child or young person

Sexual Abuse – is any act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not

Designated Person for Child Protection – may be the principal or other person who has a deeper level of training and understanding of child abuse. Source of support, advice, and expertise when deciding what action to take. Keeps appropriate records of concern. Refers to the relevant investigating agencies. Regularly reviews and uptakes the child protection policy and procedures.

Guidelines

The Principal is required to ensure that leaders within the school work together with other children's agencies (such as the police, Child Youth and Family, social workers, etc.) to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

1. Identifying possible abuse or neglect: refer to *Indicators of Abuse* document
2. Responding to Concerns: refer to *Procedures for Dealing with Disclosure and Record of Concern* document
3. Safer Recruitment: refer to *Safety Checking Procedures* and *Appointment Procedures*
4. Allegations Against Staff: refer to *Student Abuse Prevention* policy
5. Safe Working practices and Allegations Against Staff: refer to *Staff as Role Models* policy and *Staff Code of Conduct*, *Staff / Student Physical Contact* policy, *Cyber Safety* policy
6. Training, Supervision and Support: training resources and support will be available to ensure all staff, including the principal, can carry out their roles in terms of this policy. Particularly, but not limited to:
 - Understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse
 - Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regard to child abuse
 - Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues
 - Planning of the environment and supervision to reduce risk
 - Dealing with child/parents/family/whanau

This policy will be part of initial staff induction programme.

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.

Staff should understand their obligations under the Privacy Act 1993.

Supporting Legislation and Resources

- Safer Organisations Safer Children – Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Health and Safety Reform Bill
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989

Effectiveness Self Review

- This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the board's triennial programme of self review.
- The review will be conducted by the policy sub committee, using the objectives listed above as the criteria for determining the effectiveness of the policy in action.
- The reviewed policy will be available to members of the school community after it has been ratified by the board.

2016 version adopted