

Child Abuse & Neglect Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This protection, safety and welfare of all children who attend the Cathedral Grammar School is the individual and collective responsibility of everyone.
- 1.2 As a general rule, any member of the School community – be they a parent or employee of the School – should report any instance of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible. Generally this report should be made to Oranga Tamariki (the Ministry for Children) or the Police. Parents may also speak with a member of the School staff, who will assist them in reporting their concerns to the proper authorities.
- 1.3 The Policy below outlines the specific responsibilities that Employees of The Cathedral Grammar School and Pre-School must comply with in respect to any instance of actual or suspected child abuse and neglect.

2 Background

- 2.1 This policy and the guidelines contained herein is designed to protect pupils and to assist school staff in a situation where the possibility of child abuse and neglect arises. The action taken by staff should ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount and that any future action by appropriate agencies is not compromised by the action of staff.
- 2.2 The principal Legislation applying to the protection of children is the Children's Act 2014, which requires the School to have a child protection policy (s.14). This policy must be in written form and available on-line to the school community. The Act further requires (s.19) that the child protection policy must contain provisions on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect in accordance with s.15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989). This policy outlines the considerations that Staff should apply at an operational, day-to-day, level.

3 Objective

- 3.1 To ensure that pupils at the Cathedral Grammar School are free from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.
- 3.2 To prevent school staff being placed in a situation whereby they may be accused of abuse of pupils.

4 Policy

- 4.1 Any staff member has the legislative right to report suspicion of abuse directly to the Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- 4.2 In all circumstances a staff member will report abuse to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Oranga Tamariki or the Police will be contacted by the Principal or Deputy Principal following any report from staff.
- 4.3 If evidence or suspicion of abuse is observed in a pupil (i.e. bruising or changes in behaviour) or an allegation is made of abuse or neglect of a pupil, questioning by all school staff will be open and non-specific, except that in the specific case of a Pre-School child, NO questioning will take place.
- 4.4 Accurate records of observations and conversations will be kept, signed and dated.
- 4.5 If it seems possible that abuse may have taken place, all questioning will cease and the following actions will be taken:
 - 4.5.1 The Principal will be informed before any other action is taken and will ensure the pupil's safety in the immediate future.

- 4.5.2 The Principal will ensure that the suspect or actual abuse is immediately reported to either Oranga Tamariki or the Police. (This should be done by either the Informant or the Principal.)
- 4.5.3 The Principal and the informant will await further contact from Oranga Tamariki or the Police before taking further action. (NB: Only Oranga Tamariki or the Police have the statutory ability to investigate a complaint.)
- 4.5.4 Parents/caregivers, whether or not they are the suspected abusers, will be notified by Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- 4.6 The School will ensure that, within its legal powers, no person will be permitted to come into contact with pupils of the school if the school management has reasonable grounds to believe that the person has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children, or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter or protection.
- 4.7 Where a staff member is suspected of the abuse of a pupil, the Principal, in consultation with the school's lawyer will:
- 4.7.1 Temporarily remove that person from all duties that involve contact with pupils. Procedures will be instituted that are consistent with the Employment Relations Act 2000 and the welfare and interests of pupils.
- 4.7.2 Inform the staff member of his/her rights and refer them to appropriate support services.
- 4.8 Where a third party approaches the school with concerns regarding the abuse of a pupil, he or she will be directed to Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- 4.9 Immunity from Prosecution. Section 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 protects any person who reports abuse in good faith from civil and criminal or disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.10 Access by Oranga Tamariki or Police to Pupil.
- 4.10.1 Consent of the Principal is required before a pupil can be interviewed at the school.
- 4.10.2 While the school has the right to deny access if parental consent has not been obtained, the principle applies that the welfare of the pupil is paramount. (Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, Section 6).
- 4.10.3 If a parental request for consent to interview is not given, then a warrant may be sought by the Family Court by the Police or Oranga Tamariki. The School has no role in this process.
- 4.10.4 A staff member, selected by the pupil, may be present for the interview and may receive a briefing from Oranga Tamariki or the Police prior to the interview.
- 4.10.5 Once Oranga Tamariki is involved with the pupil, the responsibility for that pupil in regard to this matter will be with Oranga Tamariki.

4.11 Staff

- 4.11.1 The School will provide annual staff training, and training as part of the staff induction process to ensure that staff members are aware of the indicators of abuse and the procedures for reporting abuse. Principal will report annually to the Board that this has been completed.
- 4.11.2 All members of staff will have access to the relevant legislation designed to protect young people from abuse.
- 4.11.3 Members of staff in the course of their duties will avoid situations in which:
- they are alone with a child in confined spaces or vehicles,
 - they make physical contact with a child which may reasonably be deemed inappropriate or which may be open to misinterpretation, or
 - they exert any form of coercive action on a child.
- (See also Supervision of Pupils Policy; Behaviour Modification Policy)
- 4.12 Employment. The Principal or delegate will investigate the work history, contact past employers and contact referees before employing an applicant to a position of employment at the school. Personal and/or character attributes will be of prime consideration. All employees of the school, and other adults involved with supervision of pupils, are required to be vetted by the Police. (See Police Vetting Policy).
- 4.13 Complaints. This policy will be made known to parents through inclusion in the Enrolment Agreement and being available, along with all other Policies, on the School Management System.
- 4.14 Pupil Education. Through the Pastoral Care programme, the School will develop skills in pupils that may assist them in identifying and protecting themselves from abusive situations.
- 4.15 International Students. Staff are to take particular care when it is possible that an International Student may be involved in an incidence of child abuse. Language and cultural differences may mean that it is difficult to ascertain facts or confirm suspicions and this may inadvertently lead to misunderstandings or cause distress.
- 4.16 Staff Endorsement. All staff of the school will sign the Policy Register to acknowledge that they have been shown and have read a copy of this policy.