

# WAITAKERE COLLEGE

## Section E (NAG 5) SAFE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

**Policy:** Sexual and Physical Abuse

**Date of Review:** August 2019

**Reviewers:** Olivia Fugmann (Deputy Principal), Isa Tausa (Assistant Principal), Michelle Chrustowski (School Nurse), Sandra van Eden (HOD Counselling), Staff Health & Safety Committee.

### Goal

To ensure disclosures of sexual or physical abuse are appropriately dealt with.

### Objectives

- 1 To ensure all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect and have their needs met in a safe environment.
- 2 To provide interventions that adequately supports students when physical or sexual abuse is disclosed.
- 3 When physical or sexual abuse is reported we need to act appropriately.
- 4 Boards of Trustees and school management have a responsibility to ensure that schools provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students. (NAG 5.1).

### Guidelines

- 1 Student and staff safety is paramount. Adults will be receptive and sensitive to students in order that they feel listened to, believed and support given
- 2 Confidentiality must be maintained except when safety issues are raised.
- 3 Accurate records of initial disclosure and action must be kept, by the counsellor and or the nurse.
- 4 If a teacher suspects sexual or physical abuse of a student he/she must consult with a HOD counselling before any action is taken.
- 5 Wherever possible the student should be offered the opportunity to speak with a counsellor of their choice
- 6 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 and also notify the appropriate agency.
- 7 In the case of a third party disclosure all efforts to maintain confidentiality of that person's identity will be made.
- 8 Parents will be informed by the agency and/or counsellor and/or Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- 9 When police interview a student at school a member of the SLT or counsellor must be present.

## **Current Abuse**

- 1 The counsellor will first check the student is safe from further abuse and will take all steps necessary to ensure the students safety
- 2 In the case of student disclosure to staff the staff member must immediately inform a member of SLT and/or school counsellor
- 3 The counsellor will, after consultation with their HOD and the student involved, refer to the appropriate agency with statutory responsibilities e.g Oranga Tamariki, Te Puaruruhau or the police. they will also inform the Principal.
- 4 If the student is unwilling for the statutory agency or family to be informed, the HOD counselling and SLT will make a joint decision regarding appropriate action.
- 5 Communication with other agencies regarding students should be through the counsellor. It is the counsellor's responsibility to inform other staff if necessary in order to support the student.
- 6 If a staff member is implicated in the abuse, the counsellor is obligated to inform the Principal immediately.

## **Historical Abuse**

- 1 The counsellor, through counselling, will endeavour to empower the student to tell the family.
- 2 If the student wishes, he/she may be referred to a specialist agency or continue with the school counsellor.
- 3 If a staff member is implicated in the abuse, the counsellor is obligated to inform the Principal immediately.

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Chairperson

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Principal

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Date