

Section E (NAG 5) SAFE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy: **Care and Protection**

Date of Review: **November 2022**

Next Review: **November 2025**

Reviewers: **Olivia Fugmann (Deputy Principal), Michelle Chrustowski (School Nurse), Staff Health & Safety Committee**

GOAL

To ensure disclosures and/or suspect Care and Protection situations 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 support staff in the protection of children/young people by identifying and appropriately responding to suspected child abuse and neglect.
- 3 To provide a safe environment free from, physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse
- 4 To comply with legislation: The Privacy Act, Ministry of Children Oranga Tamariki Act (Children & Young People's Well-being Act) and The Children's Act (Vulnerable Children Act)

GUIDELINES

- 1 The Child Protection Policy applies to all staff employed, contracted to, or people volunteering with Waitakere College.
- 2 Promoting a culture where staff feel confident to constructively challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern. Staff are trained on school processes.
- 3 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. Do NOT take any detailed history.
- 4 Confidentiality must be maintained except when safety issues are raised.
- 5 Accurate records of initial disclosure and action must be kept, by the counsellor and or the nurse.
- 6 If a teacher suspects care and protection issues of a student he/she/they/them must consult with a HOD counselling before any action is taken. If this is not possible then he/she/they/them must report this to a member of SLT (pastoral).
- 7 Wherever possible the student should be offered the opportunity to speak with a counsellor of their choice

- 8 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.
- 9 In the case of a third party disclosure all efforts to maintain confidentiality of that person's identity will be made.
- 10 Parents will be informed by the agency and/or counsellor and/or Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- 11 When police interview a student at school a member of the SLT or counsellor must be present.
- 12 Our recruitment practices reflect a commitment to child protection by including comprehensive screening procedures. Safety checks will be carried out, as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- 13 Annual Professional Development (PD) on Care and Protection Definitions and Protocols.

Current Abuse and/or Neglect (refer Appendix A: Care & Protection Definitions)

- 1 The counsellor will first check the student is safe from further abuse and/or Neglect 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 and/or Principal's Delegated Senior Leader.
- 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 (refer Appendix A: Care & Protection Definitions)

- 1 The counsellor, through counselling, will endeavour to empower the student to tell the family.
- 2 If the student wishes, he/she/they/them 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.

Chairperson

Principal

Date

APPENDIX A

CARE AND PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

Definitions - The following definitions apply to this policy (*please note that these are explicit definitions*):

Abuse - the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development

Child - any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.

Child protection - activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect.

Disclosure - information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

Ministry of Children Oranga Tamariki - the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection.

Standard safety checking - the process of safer recruitment that will be mandatory for organisations covered by the [Children Act 2014](#) (revised 2022)

Physical abuse - any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

Sexual abuse - any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- Contact abuse - touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
- Non-contact abuse - exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

Emotional abuse - any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:

- Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
- Exposure to family/whanau or intimate partner violence.

Neglect - neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect

Potential indicators

- Indicators are signs or symptoms that, when found either on their own or in various combinations, point to possible abuse, family violence or neglect. In many cases, indicators are found in combinations or clusters.
- Indicators do not necessarily prove or mean that a child has been harmed. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. Sometimes indicators can result from life events which do not involve abuse, e.g. accidental injury.

Reporting and responding to suspected abuse or neglect

1. If a staff member has a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing they will, in all instances, report this to a Deputy Principal. This will be done at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child.
2. The severity of the suspected abuse or neglect is not up to the staff member to determine. The Deputy Principal has the ultimate responsibility to ensure appropriate authorities are notified including consultation with HoD Guidance for next steps.
3. In consultation with the Deputy Principal, staff should always respond if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child, regardless of who may be involved, as follows:
 - 3.1. Contact the Police immediately if a child is in immediate danger. The primary response must be to ensure the safety of the child.
 - 3.2. Contact the Ministry of Children Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre to discuss appropriate steps where:
 - a) A child has disclosed abuse or neglect (see table below)
 - b) Abuse or neglect of a child has been disclosed by the person responsible
 - c) A staff member has observed abuse or neglect, or suspects abuse or neglect on the basis of their own observations

Additional Resources

References to resources on identifying possible abuse or neglect are given below.

- **Ministry of Children Oranga Tamariki** has developed the Working Together guide on inter-agency working to identify and respond to potential abuse and neglect. <https://orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Support-for-families/Support-programmes/Working-together-guide-2020.pdf>
- **Child Matters** is a registered charitable trust that provides guidance, advice, education and support to protect children. <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/24/learn-about-child-abuse>
- The **Ministry of Health** has also made guidance available in the health sector. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence/family-violence-guidelines>
- Murphy, C. et al (2013) Understanding connections and relationships: Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and parenting. NZ Family Violence Clearing House. Issues Paper 3. April.