

Hauraki Primary School Policy Document

Child Abuse

Rationale:

All children are treated with dignity and respect, and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment .

Purpose:

- To ensure the safety of the child is paramount.
- To provide the staff with guidelines and procedures so they can identify signs of sexual, emotional or physical abuse and / or neglect.

Guidelines:

- 1) The harming (whether physical, emotional or sexual), ill treatment neglect or deprivation of any child or young person is considered to be child abuse.
- 2) The non accidental injury of a child or the use of a child for sexual purposes is abusive and a criminal act.
- 3) Early prevention and detection provide the key to reducing the destructive consequences of child abuse, hence, "The Keeping Ourselves Safe" programme to be taught bi-annually.
- 4) This will be used as part of the Health /PE programme to provide all children with strategies for coping with abuse, and parents will be informed of the general nature and specific objectives of the programme.
- 5) Staff will be receptive and sensitive to children so that they feel listened to and believed. Appendix 1 provides a useful checklist to assist with identifying children at risk.
- 6) The best interests of the child must be paramount. Parents may be consulted about changes in behaviour to try and identify a reason. At all stages confidentiality must be maintained. Communication should only be with people who NEED to know.
- 7) If a disclosure is made consider the following:
 - Do not overreact - A child's initial disclosure of abuse is a critical moment.
 - Do not panic. If the child judges you unable to handle the situation, he or she may not disclose any more of the story.
 - Do not criticise. Don't say " You should have told me sooner", or " Why did you let this happen ?"
 - Listen carefully to what he or she is saying and do not put words into a child's mouth. Allow them to tell only as much as they want.
- Five basic rules: -
 - Believe what they say.
 - Say you're glad they told you.
 - Say you're sorry it happened.
 - Let them know it's not their fault.
 - Let them know they're not the only one.
- 8) Appendix 2 provides procedures to be followed if there is possible / suspected abuse or clear evidence of abuse.
- 9) Data will be stored in a Principal's file and kept for the duration of the child's stay at the school. It will be forwarded at the discretion of the Principal.
- 10) In addition to the above, in the situation of alleged abuse by a member of staff, the procedures for Serious Misconduct as set out in the Teachers Collective Contract will be initiated.

Signed: 

BRENDON CLARK

Date: 28 Nov 18

Chairperson Board of Trustees

Review Date: TERM 4 2021

Appendix 1

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Regression to more babyish behaviour - wetting pants, thumb sucking, rocking
Obsessive masturbation
Poor concentration
Wearing too many layers of clothing
Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class
Poor hygiene
Drug / alcohol abuse
Significant change in school performance (attitudes and grades)
Withdrawal, depression, anxiety, hostility, aggression, unprovoked crying
Frequent absences from school
Fearful of going home
Self mutilation
Fire setting
Simulated sexual activity with other children
Suicide attempt and / or self destructive behaviour
Pregnancy
Lack of friends
Displaying sexual knowledge that should be outside a child's experience
Changed eating habits
Poor peer relationships
Unusually seductive with classmates, teachers and other adults
Prostitution /promiscuity

PHYSICAL INDICATORS:

Discomfort going to the toilet
Genital or rectal bleeding
Frequent urinary infections
Bloodied or torn underclothing
Inflamed, swollen, bruised, bleeding or torn vaginal or anal areas
Unusual or offensive body odours
Itching and / or rashes
Throat infection
Sexually transmitted diseases

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Speech disorders
Lags in physical development or failure to thrive
Habit disorders (rocking, smoking)
Behaviour extremes: compliant, aggressive, demanding, anti-social, destructive
Early adaptive behaviour - inappropriate adult, inappropriately infant
Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
Attempted suicide

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

Child fails to develop without medical reason (non organic failure to thrive)

Child has unexplained injuries

Bruise marks on finger or thumb indicating a child has been very firmly held or shaken

Grasp marks associated with other injuries suggesting child has been restrained while being assaulted

Caregiver have other abused / neglected children and / or were abused themselves

Unacceptable period away from school

Child is wary of adults contact

Child is apprehensive when other children cry

Child is afraid to go home

Behaviour extremes - aggressiveness or withdrawal

Child shows fear of caregivers, flinches, inappropriate 'startle reaction', rocks, shows signs of 'frozen watchfulness' - a sustained wide eyed look

Inconsistent account given of injuries

Unjustifiable delays by caregivers in seeking medical attention

PHYSICAL INDICATORS:

Unexplained bruises, and welts

- on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, thighs in various stages of healing
- appearing regularly or after absence, weekend or vacation

Unexplained burns

- cigars, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks
- immersion burns, patterned burns or rope burns

Unexplained fractures

- to skull, nose, facial structure in various stages of healing
- multiple or spiral fractures

Unexplained lacerations or abrasions

- to mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitals

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PHYSICAL NEGLECT

- Consistent hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Abandonment
- Begging, stealing food
- Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure)
- Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Delinquency (e.g. thieving)

Appendix 2

CHILD PROTECTION FLOW CHART

CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ABUSE

Disclosure/evidence of abuse

Consultation
Discuss with syndicate leader,
Senior teacher and Principal

Inform Principal

Document
Record date, and use as close to
verbatim as possible

Consult child protection team co-ordinator or Waitemata Health or Public Health nurse. Complete referral form held in school office.

Inform CYPS or Police.

Inform BOT

Ensure family has support ie: cultural.
Refer to appropriate agencies.

Document outcome

POSSIBLE/SUSPECTED ABUSE

Document concerns
(record date and description
of concern)

Discuss with syndicate leader,
Senior teacher or Principal

Inform Principal

Consult
Child protection teams
co-ordinator, Waitemata Health
or Public Health nurse

Refer to appropriate agency.
Complete referral form held
in school office.

Continue to document.