

Hauraki Primary School  
Policy Document

## Child Protection

*A child protection policy contains provisions on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect in accordance with Section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children and Young Person's Well Being Act)*

### **Rationale:**

This policy outlines the Board's commitment to Child Protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. We recognise that because of their day-to-day contact with children and young persons, staff, support staff and workers are vetted thoroughly, in accordance with any and all legislation, for the safety and well being of all students and employees.

This policy encourages a strong culture of child protection by working together with parents, whanau and communities to identify potential risk from abuse and neglect. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

### **Definitions:**

- **Child abuse:** Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.
- **Child neglect:** Failure or omission to care for a child. This can be physical, emotional, educational and a lack of supervision.

### **Purpose:**

- To ensure as a school and community we protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young persons in our care. The welfare of the child is paramount.
- To acknowledge that we have a particular responsibility under government legislation, and according to social expectations, to provide a safe environment that caters for the physical and emotional wellbeing of all children whether physically, emotionally, or sexually ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived.
- To ensure as part of the schools recruitment and vetting process, all safety checks are sought for staff and workers that have substantial and unsupervised access to children. This policy applies to all staff.
- To provide provisions and guidelines on the identification and reporting of cases, or suspected cases, of child abuse and neglect, and comply with all relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities. Ensure all cases reported are acted upon under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. The school will follow procedures in accordance with the *child abuse policy*.
- To provide staff and others working in the school training and guidelines so that they can identify signs of abuse or neglect and act upon them.

### **Guidelines:**

1. The Board and Principal will ensure there are procedures in place to identify and respond to suspicion of or disclosure of abuse or neglect against any employee or worker. However, if the immediate safety or wellbeing of a child is in doubt call 111. Ensure parents, staff and Whanau know that they can bypass management to report issues of abuse or neglect directly to NZ Police or Child, Youth and Family if **immediate danger** is present.
2. Establish a safe environment in which children can learn without fear of neglect, abuse (both physical and emotional) and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
3. Ensure we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and support staff working with children. This should be done in accordance with the guidelines in our school *Appointment of Staff policy* and include no less than an: ID check, formal interview, and reference check, police vet and conclude with a risk assessment based on all the information gathered. As part of staff employment, they are taken through the policy on Child Abuse.

4. Raise awareness of child abuse and neglect issues. Include opportunities through the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise potential risk and stay safe. Equipping children with skills through core learning activities, including, but not limited to: identifying danger signals, asserting rights to be safe, identifying and respecting private anatomical parts, development problem solving and social skills and gaining confidence to seek help.
5. Ensure staff are trained at identifying the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns. Making available professional development, resources and advice to ensure they can carry out their role in terms of this policy. It is the role of the Principal and Board to ensure all staff employed, including temporary staff, non teaching staff and contractors, are fully aware of the school's child protection policy and procedures and all associated policies.
6. Recognise that children who are abused may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness and in some cases a sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviours may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

**Some signs of potential abuse and or neglect include:**


- Physical signs of abuse: unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, and sexually transmitted diseases.
  - Neglect: looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight.
  - Medical neglect: persistent rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues.
  - Developmental delays: small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills.
  - Emotional abuse/neglect: sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm.
  - Behavioural concerns: age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression.
  - Allegation or disclosure: the child talking about things that indicate abuse.
  - Neglectful supervision: out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to.
7. Accuracy and confidentiality is paramount in the reporting of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate government agencies – Child youth and Family and/or NZ Police Child Protection Team. Staff may disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety.
  8. Inform parents, Whanau and the wider community about our school's duties and responsibilities to protect our children and young persons. We will ensure family and Whanau understand complaints/reporting procedures. We will ensure the policy and procedures in relation to safeguarding our children and young persons have been included in all staff and parent induction papers and that this policy is accessible on the school website.
  9. Where the school is used by outside agencies, we will seek assurance that the people concerned have appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children.

**Parent Volunteers**

Teaching staff will apply a risk assessment when utilising the assistance of parent volunteers and will take steps to eliminate if possible, or minimise, any risk. Parents who volunteer to assist with students may be requested to complete a police vetting form. Police vetting will be undertaken in respect of all parents staying overnight on school trips or camps and may be sought in other circumstances where parents have sole charge of school children (other than their own) during school hours.

Where possible, students being assisted by parent helpers, will remain in close vicinity and within the line of sight of classroom teachers.

Parent volunteers on school trips may be "buddied up" so that students have two parents in charge of small groups.

Signed: 

Date: 25/10/2019.

Chairperson Board of Trustees

Review Date: Term 1, 2023.

**Related Policies:**

This policy should be read alongside the following other school policies:

- Child Abuse policy
- Appointment of staff policy
- Staff Discipline policy
- Discipline Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Physical Restraint Policy
- EOTC Policy
- Complaints Policy

**References:**

- NZSTA website [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz)
- Ministry of Education website [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)
- Childrens Act 2014
- [www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf](http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf)