

Hauraki Primary School

Policy Document

Child Protection

Rationale:

As part of its overall safe school policy, Hauraki School actively seeks to provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all students and staff.

The Hauraki School Board (the Board) is committed to child protection. We recognise that because of their day-to-day contact with children and young persons, all staff, contractors and volunteers, have an important role and responsibility in the protection of children by identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Purpose:

The safety, wellbeing and security of students is the first and paramount consideration of Hauraki school. To ensure that as a school and community we protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young persons in our care, we will:

- comply with all our legal requirements in identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect, including the Education and Training Act 2020, Children's Act 2014 and Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children's and Young People's Wellbeing Act 1989).
- appropriately vet staff, contractors and volunteers who have substantial and unsupervised access to children in accordance with relevant legislation
- 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
- encourage a strong culture of child protection by working together with parents, whanau, caregivers and communities to identify potential risk from abuse and neglect
- 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
- seek advice through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse

Definitions:

Child abuse

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

Child neglect

Child neglect means the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or educational needs, including a lack of supervision, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning/development. Neglect is the most common form of abuse.

Guidelines:

1. The Board practises safe recruitment by checking the suitability of staff and support staff working with children. We have procedures in place to vet teaching and non-teaching staff, as set out in the Appointment of Staff policy. The school will follow those procedures with all teaching and non-teaching staff appointments. These checks 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 the employment process, it is the role of the Principal to ensure all staff employed, including temporary staff, non-teaching staff and contractors, are fully aware of this and other associated child protection policies.
2. Hauraki school is a safe environment where children can learn without fear of neglect or abuse (both physical and emotional) and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We raise awareness of child abuse and neglect issues by including opportunities through the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise potential risk and stay safe. We equip 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.
3. We 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.

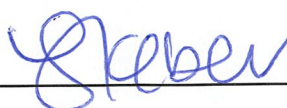
Some signs of potential abuse and or neglect include:

- 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.
4. The Board has procedures in place to identify and respond to signs of child abuse and neglect, as set out in the Child Abuse policy. The school will follow those procedures to identify and respond to any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse or neglect. However, if the immediate safety or wellbeing of a child is in doubt, parents, staff and whanau can by-pass management to report issues of abuse or neglect directly to the police on 111, or Oranga Tamariki.
 5. Staff have a professional responsibility to report any concerns about student safety and welfare, particularly regarding abuse, neglect or professional misconduct. We will ensure staff are trained at identifying the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns. We will make professional development, resources and advice available to ensure they can carry out their role in terms of this policy.

6. Child abuse concerns involving staff members may come about through observation or disclosure. These may reflect conduct within the school environment, but we also respond to allegations regarding staff behaviour outside of school. Any allegations against staff should be reported to the principal, or the Presiding Member of the Board if they concern the principal. All allegations are taken seriously and will be dealt with as a matter of urgency by reporting them to the Police and Oranga Tamariki. However, if the immediate safety or wellbeing of a child is in doubt, parents, staff, and whanau can by-pass management to report issues of abuse or neglect directly to the police on 111, or Oranga Tamariki.
7. While the school does not directly investigate any allegations of abuse against staff members, if someone has been accused of abuse, the school may take steps to prevent contact between that person and students at the school. The Board has procedures in place to respond to suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect against any employee or worker, as set out in the Staff Discipline policy. The school will follow those procedures to respond to any suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect against a staff member.
8. Accuracy and confidentiality is paramount in the reporting of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate government agencies – Oranga Tamariki and/or Police. 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.
9. We will inform parents, whanau and the wider community about our school's duties and responsibilities to protect our children and young persons by publishing this policy on our website and ensuring 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.
10. 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

11. 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.
12. Where possible, students being assisted by parent helpers, will remain in close vicinity and within the line of sight of classroom teachers.
13. Parent volunteers on school trips may be “buddied up” so that students have two parents in charge of small groups.

Signed: 

Date: 3 April 2023

Presiding Member of the Board

Review Date: Term 1 2026

Related Policies:

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