

Introduction

1. This Policy outlines the Board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all of our staff in the protection of children. It includes the Board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.
2. All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

Purpose

3. The Board has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.
4. In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act, any person in our schools or kura who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local Police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the Board, the Board delegates responsibility to the Principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the Principal must:

5. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the School.
6. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
7. Make this Policy readily available to the school community. It will be on the school's internet site or available in hard copy on request.
8. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
9. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
10. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making regarding their children unless the interests and protection might be compromised by parental involvement.
11. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response.

12. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work collaboratively with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
13. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
14. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child with the board or designated person.
15. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
16. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
17. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

Approval

18. When the Board approved this Policy it agreed that no variations of this Policy or amendments to it can be made except with the unanimous approval of the Board.
19. As part of its approval the Board requires a copy to be included in the Mayfield Primary School Policy Manual, copies of which shall be available to all staff. The Mayfield Primary School Policy Manual shall also be made available to students and parents at their request.

Principal:

Chairperson:

Date:

Review schedule: within 3 years

Related documentation and information:

Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQs) is available on the NZSTA website www.nzsta.org.nz

Ministry of Education website www.education.govt.nz

Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Further information and sample child protection templates are available in the Children's Action Plan guideline Safer Organisations, Safer Children www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf

Reporting process for suspected or disclosed child abuse

**Child abuse is either suspected or disclosed.
Ensure the child or young person is safe from immediate harm.**

- Consult immediately with the Principal or nominated person in charge, or other staff member if the allegation concerns the Principal.
- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present).
- The Principal, nominated person in charge, or person that received the information should contact CYF (0508 326 459) or local Police.
- Follow the recommendations of CYF/Police.
- The Board Chair should be advised.

Alleged abuse by Board employee, including the Principal. *Note that there are two separate procedures to be followed, some of which may occur at the same time.*

Alleged abuse by non-staff.
The Principal or nominated person should:

(1) The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person:

- Follow the advice of CYF/Police
- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present).
- Follow the recommendations of CYF/Police.
- The Board Chair should be advised.
- Avoid further risks to the child(ren) or young person(s).
- If there is media or community interest seek support from Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator 0800 84 8326.

- Follow the advice of CYF/Police.
- Advise the Board of Trustees, through the Chairperson of the Board.
- If there is media or community interest seek support from Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator (0800 84 8326).

(2) Process for employee investigation:

- Initiate an initial employment investigation.
- Maintain close liaison with the Police and avoid any action that may compromise an investigation.
- Immediately seek advice from NZSTA or another approved employment advisor and advise your insurer.
- It is important that no one person has responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and employment issues as there is potential for there to be tension between the two.
- Notify the employee of the allegation and advise of the potential consequences.
- Advise the employee of the right to seek support from union or other representatives.
- The Board needs to determine whether they will defer their process while the Police do the preliminary investigation, or whether they will proceed. Criminal investigations are separate from this serious misconduct investigation that the employer will follow.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments by the student complaints and/or allegations and follow-up action taken.

Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver(s) will be determined by CYF and Police in consultation with the school.

Information required for reporting:

When a notification is made to Child, Youth and Family the school needs to provide the following information:

1. Name of child/children (also known as / nicknames)
2. Date of birth (if known)
3. Ethnicity (if known)
4. Name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation
5. Current legal custodians
6. Reasons why it is believed that the child or young person is at risk
7. Other significant background information
8. The name of the contact person for Child, Youth and Family.

What happens once reporting is made:

Step Action

1. CYF Contact Centre will generate a letter to the person named as 'notifier' acknowledging the reporting and advising which CYF site the matter was referred to, recommending either further action or no further action.
2. CYF site will make the final decision as to whether or not further action will be taken and by whom. Depending on the assessed level of needs for the child / young person and their family a referral may be made to a non-government organisation (NGO) social service for their support.
3. If further action is to be taken the social worker allocated to the case will develop an investigation plan. This may require input from the notifier.
4. Once the reporting has been investigated CYF will contact the notifier to advise if any further action has been taken or will be taken or whether a referral will be made to an NGO for either an assessment or for provision of family support.
5. **If reporting is urgent** the above actions will take place **immediately**. Decisions concerning after school arrangements and notifying the parents will be made by Police and social workers in consultation with the school.
6. **The notifier may contact the CYF Contact Centre at any stage to obtain information on the status of the notification.**