



CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

PRINCIPLES

Winton School is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the wellbeing of children and their families.

Every child has the right to be protected from harm and grow up in a safe environment. The school has an active role to play in protecting children's rights.

PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures is to provide Winton School staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

These procedures will be reviewed annually, and updated regularly in the light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislation and associated policies.

Winton School recognises that all staff and board members have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm. Overall responsibility, implementation and review of these procedures rests with the Principal of Winton School.

SCOPE

These procedures cover all staff of Winton School who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by Winton School, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Winton School. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

These procedures also cover the Board and their responsibilities in the safety and wellbeing of children.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

The Children and Young People's Well-being Act, 1989 defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs. This could include physical, medical, supervisory, emotional, educational or abandonment.

Family Violence is physical, emotional, sexual and other abuse by someone (usually but not always a man) of a person (usually but not always a woman) with whom they have or have had some form of intimate relationship with, such as marriage or cohabitation, in order to maintain power and control over a person. It is important to be vigilant to any signs, particularly if children are being affected.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

It is the responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

The procedure for dealing with disclosure either from an adult, child or staff member are outlined in the section below.

Winton School has two appointed Designated Persons for Child Protection - the Learning Support Coordinator and Principal whose job it is to follow up any concerns or disclosures.

Winton School also has a Pastoral Care Team whose aim is to discuss and put in place appropriate support for identified vulnerable children within our learning community. The team's purpose is to protect and support those children identified, to minimise the risk of harm and strengthen their well-being and safety.

Refer to the Pastoral Care Team's Guidelines for further information.

DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES

If a child or adult makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff, the following actions will be followed.

Respond to the person (child or adult) calmly and listen to what they tell you without judgement.

Ensure the safety of the child. If the child is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety and inform the Principal, who may contact the Police or Oranga Tamariki.

Record all statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date. Do not formally interview the person. Obtain only necessary relevant facts for when clarification is needed.

Consult with one of the designated Persons for Child Protection immediately, who will in turn, consult with each other. They will decide what action to take, which may include notifying the Police or Oranga Tamariki with relevant information. The matter will be discussed with the Pastoral Care Team.

If a staff member has a concern about a child's safety or welfare, he or she is encouraged to disclose to one of the Designated Persons for Child Protection.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone.

All decisions taken, including if the concern does not require notifying the Police or Oranga Tamariki, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in a Child Protection file with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

Wherever possible, the family/whanau should be kept informed of what information has been shared and to which agency, and for what purpose. Guidance of sharing information with family/whanau is to be sought from either the Police or Oranga Tamariki. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 1993, states "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat".

Giving information to protect children better is not a breach in confidentiality.

Any reporter of suspected child abuse is protected from any criminal civil or disciplinary action by Section 16 of The Children and Young People's Well-being Act, 1989

Appropriate support for staff during and after referral on any disclosure will be provided if required.

SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All appointments (permanent, fixed term, casual or volunteer) to positions that have direct and / or frequent contact with children will be conditional on a Police Vet or Safety Check. In some cases, eg. camps, volunteers will be asked to sign a 'Volunteer Assistant Agreement' form.

Further information regarding safety checking procedures, can be found in the Staff Appointments and Recruitment Guidelines.

TRAINING OF STAFF

All staff will undertake child protection training as per Ministry of Education procedures. The designated persons for child protection will undertake more intensive training in child protection.

All staff will update their child protection training and discuss procedures at the beginning of the year teacher only days.

ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff, volunteers or representatives of other agencies must be taken seriously and reported to the Principal who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently.

If the Principal is implicated as being responsible for the alleged abuse, the Board Presiding Member is to be notified immediately.

It is NOT the responsibility of staff to investigate allegations of child abuse.

If the Police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, the member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.

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