

RATIONALE:

Sir Keith Park School is committed to the prevention of abuse and to promoting the wellbeing of children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families. We believe that all students should experience dignity and respect. All services provided by Sir Keith Park School adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This policy recognises the importance of the role and responsibility of our staff in the protection of the children and young people.

SCOPE:

The definition of a 'child' is anyone under the age of 14 years. 'Young Person' is a boy or girl of or above the age of 14 years but under 17 years. Students attending Sir Keith Park School, who are 17 years and above, are considered to be 'vulnerable adults' and are therefore also covered by this policy.

DEFINITIONS:

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person". Sir Keith Park School identifies the following categories of abuse.

- ❖ Physical Abuse: is the 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 includes constant yelling, threatening, belittling, playing games with their emotions, the seeing or hearing of ill treatment of others. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations imposed on children.
- ❖ 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. It does not include normal sexual play between children of approximately the same age.
- ❖ 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. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs. Neglected children may not get enough love and affection, they may not have enough to eat, their injuries may be left untreated, their clothes may not be warm enough, they may be dirty and at risk of infection, or they may be left without adequate supervision.
- ❖ 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 – 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 it is affecting young children.

LEGISLATION: The following legislation is implicit in this policy:

Education Act, 1989	State Sector Act 1988
Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989	Care of Children Act. 2004
Crimes Act, 1961	Vulnerable Children's Act, 2014
Domestic Violence Act, 1995	Employment Relations Act, 2000
Privacy Act, 1993	Human Rights Act, 1993
Health & Safety At Work Act, 2016	National Administration Guidelines 5

PURPOSES:

1. To comply with any legislation currently in force or be developed, to ensure safety of students and employees.
2. To provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students
3. To provide clear guidelines that enable staff to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect.
4. To promote staff understanding of their role in keeping children safe.

GUIDELINES:

1. Whilst 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.
2. Sir Keith Park School's designated person for Child Protection is the Principal. In the unavailability of the Principal, the person deputising for the Principal will assume the role.
3. All staff – employed and regular volunteers - will have a copy, and are expected to behave in manners consistent with the Sir Keith Park School Code of Conduct.
4. All staff are expected to behave in manners that maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and to avoid behaviour which may be misinterpreted by others.
5. It is expected that school staff will be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse; and will report any concerns or allegations of suspected abuse immediately to the Principal – or designated person deputising for the principal.
6. Decision to refer or seek advice from Ministry of Vulnerable Children: Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT) will be made by the Principal (after consultation with others as required or if necessary) or whether to call Police for students who are aged 18 years and over.
7. If a student makes a verbal disclosure to a staff member it should be taken seriously and accurately recorded, dated and signed by the staff member.
8. Under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concern regarding child abuse alone.
9. All decisions taken, (including if the concern does not require notifying MVCOT), must be recorded in writing and kept securely on file with reasons clearly identified and explained.
10. The person making a referral does so on behalf of the school. The school will support the referrer if that person is required to attend court as a result of their notification. The school will support the referrer should that person become distressed or be threatened in any way due to the actions they have taken on the school's behalf.
11. If a student is interviewed on school grounds by MVCOT workers, a member of the Leadership Team will sit in on the interview to support the student. This will be in a non-speaking capacity unless the support person is invited to comment or if they feel the student is being harassed, victimised, or showing signs of distress.
12. Staff working with the student concerned will receive support from the school and / or a counselling agency (for example) if they suffer distress as a result of any concerns / notifications to the appropriate agency(s).
13. The student will receive ongoing support from the school as required
14. Giving information to protect children better is not a breach of confidentiality. Wherever possible the family/whanau should be kept informed on what information has been shared, and with which agency, and for what purpose. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 1993 states "*disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat*".
15. Adverse publicity must be repressed in the interests of the student. Nothing should be passed on to the media, and every effort should be made to keep specific and identifying information as private as possible.
16. Agencies will be requested to uplift children from their homes if required – not from school.
17. The school will provide preventative education within their delivery of the New Zealand Curriculum. Programmes will be developed to increase the students' understanding of their right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Related Policy & Procedures: Protected Disclosures; Health & Safety; Behaviour Management; Physical Contact between Staff and Students; Staff Appointments; Police Vetting; Complaints

BOARD STATEMENT:

This school is committed to the holistic care, welfare, safety, and security for all students. The Board of Trustees and all staff have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so that they may 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 students is our top priority.

Ratified by the Board: May 2013

..... Signed for B.o.T.

Reviewed: June, 2015
Reviewed: September, 2017