



## Policy: Child Protection

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### Policy Statement

Students at Jireh Christian School (“the School”) are acknowledged as being made in the image and likeness of God, therefore they have innate dignity. The School is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The interests of the child will be the chief consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect.

Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

In line with Section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person in our school 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.

Staff will not assume responsibility beyond their level of experience and training. All staff and volunteers who deal directly with students in an unsupervised manner will be police vetted as part of normal practice. The principle of natural justice shall be applied to all allegations.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols, and to abide by them.

### Procedural Guidelines

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.

#### The Principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the School.
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make this policy available on the School’s internet site as well as on request.
4. Ensure that every contract or funding arrangement that the School enters into adopts child protection policies where required.
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
6. Recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision making about their children. Guardians/permanent caregivers will be fully informed by the Principal, in consultation with the statutory agency, of alleged abuse, except when it is believed that the child could be put at risk.
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response. Staff who suspect that a child is being abused must report their concerns to their leader of learning or Deputy Principal who will inform the Principal. Periodic training will be offered to all teachers on identifying and reporting abuse.
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy and to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection procedures are understood and implemented.
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.



10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information with the Board or designated person in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information-sharing protocols in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child.
11. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
12. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.
13. Meet with the student about whom a concern has been raised to provide support and ascertain the best next step.
14. Ensure that factual written records are kept, detailing all relevant information with dates and times. These records are to remain confidential.
15. Make a report to the relevant agency with statutory powers to act, in accordance with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
16. Ensure that support is made available to the child involved, the home, and the class teacher, using the most appropriate personnel (e.g. staff, Special Education Service, Health Nurse).
17. Where a report is received by the School from someone outside the School, direct that person to contact a helping agency. If necessary, the School may become involved.
18. Inform the Presiding Member of any alleged abuse of a child by a staff member. The staff member will be informed and, if it is felt appropriate, released from class. If necessary, action will be taken in line with the relevant employment contract and guidelines issued in the School's Trustees' Handbook. The Principal will seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisers on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
19. The Teaching Council will also be notified if any of the mandatory reporting requirements are triggered, including if:
  - 19.1. The School dismisses a teacher;
  - 19.2. Within the 12 months before the resignation of a teacher, the School had advised the teacher that it was dissatisfied with or intended to investigate, any aspect of the teacher's conduct;
  - 19.3. The School has reason to believe that the teacher has engaged in serious misconduct; or
  - 19.4. A teacher is convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for 3 months or more.
20. NZ Police vetting will be required for all non-teaching staff and unsupervised volunteers at the School (in the case of volunteers this is only required if they have unsupervised contact with children for longer than 30 minutes). Helpers on camps need to be police vetted. Please submit all names to the designated administration staff member for police vetting.

#### **Definition of child abuse:**

**Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

**Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- Contact abuse - touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
- Non-contact abuse - exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

**Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:



- Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
- Exposure to family or intimate partner violence.

**Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love)
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in school or inattention to education needs).

### **Reporting:**

- Report of abuse by anyone (except the Principal): Staff who suspect that a child is being abused must report their concerns to their leader of learning or Deputy Principal who will inform the Principal.
- Report of abuse by the Principal: Staff who suspect that a child is being abused by the Principal must report their concerns to the Presiding Member.

A written record should be prepared explaining:

- Date, time and place of observation or disclosure of abuse
- Names of anyone present
- What the child says – exactly using their words
- Any physical or behaviour signs of abuse

This record should be provided when reporting the abuse.

## **Legislative Compliance**

Children's Act 2014

Education and Training Act 2020

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

## **Review schedule: Triennially**

**ADOPTED BY BOARD**

Date 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017      Chairperson **R Thornton (Acting)**

Reviewed Date	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Chairperson <b>R Thornton</b>
Reviewed Date	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020	Chairperson <b>M Causley</b>
Reviewed Date	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Presiding Member <b>A Coombridge</b>