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Otamatea Christian School

Vulnerable Children Policy

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) and Board members are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them. The board of governors has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to 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.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Person, and their families Act, any person in our school who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically or 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:

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 request.
4. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into, requires the adoption of 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/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
7. 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.
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies 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, 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.
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

Review Schedule: Within 3 years.

Last Reviewed April 2022

Next Review Due April 2025