

# TOKOMARU SCHOOL



## POLICY 5.1.5 (NAG 5)

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY *(previously Child Abuse & Neglect Procedure 5.1.5)*

#### RATIONALE:

Students at our school thrive, belong and achieve to the best of their ability. Our school is 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.

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

In line with section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, and Part 2 of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, any person in our school/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.

#### PROCEDURES & EXPECTATIONS:

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 the school's internet site or 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
14. Provide preventative education in our delivery of the Health and Physical Education programme; students should have access to information about child abuse and appropriate responses to it through the relevant parts of this curriculum.

*NOTE: Decisions about informing parents or caregivers will be made after consultation between the school and the statutory child protection service called in by them. See over for supporting flow diagram.*

**KEY CONTACTS:**

Oranga Tamariki – 0508Family (0508 326459)  
MOE Traumatic Incident Team – 0800T1Team (0800 848326)  
NZSTA – 0800STAhelP (0800 782435)  
Local Police (Linton) – Constable Robyn Moore 021 191 4590

REVIEWED: February 2019

REVIEWER: S. Mudgway

APPROVED: **May 2019**

NEXT REVIEW DATE: May 2022

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ BOT Chairperson Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.

- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present).
- Consult immediately with the Principal or nominated person in charge, or other staff member if the allegation concerns the Principal.
- The Principal or their nominated person in charge that received the information should contact Oranga Tamariki (0508 326459) or local Police.
- The board Chair should be advised.
- If there is disruption to the school or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, media interest or a public profile, seek support from MOE Traumatic Incident Team (0800 848326).

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

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

### The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person:

- Follow the advice of OT/Police
- Avoid further risks to the child(ren) or young person(s). Ensure there is no contact between the child and the person whom the allegation is against

Follow the advice of OT/Police

### Process for employee investigation

- Initiate an initial employment investigation
- Maintain close liaison with the Police and avoid any action that may compromise their 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
- Consider whether it is appropriate for the employee to remain in the school (follow advice)
- 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 any employment investigation that the employer will follow)
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and/or allegations, and follow-up action is taken