

Policy on Child Protection

For the Board of Proprietors and Board of Trustees

As of December 2018, the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 was renamed the Children's Act 2014. All guidance and resources on this page should be read as Children's Act still and provides current information.

RATIONALE

It is the responsibility of Woodford House to ensure the safe, emotional, physical and spiritual health of students in its care as required and in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

Students at this school thrive, belong and achieve to the best of their ability. The school is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children.

The School is committed to creating an environment where all children are nurtured, protected, supported and encouraged as they grow and learn.

The School recognises the important role and responsibility that all staff have in identifying and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect and in responding appropriately to concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

The School is committed to working with other children related agencies to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals associated with the School and should be used wherever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.

AIM

1. To safeguard the emotional, physical and spiritual safety of students within the school environment or when under its care.
2. To provide assistance if the students are not experiencing an emotional, physical or spiritually safe environment.
3. To deal with suspected abuse appropriately and alert the relevant agencies in accordance with legislation.

GUIDELINES

- 1 All employees and contractors (including sport coaches, itinerant music teachers and any person who may have unsupervised access to students) will be subject to a police vet test before commencing work at Woodford House.

- 2 The Principal is required to ensure that leaders within the School work together with other children's agencies (such as the Police, Oranga Tamariki, Social Workers, etc.) to improve the well-being of vulnerable children by:
 - protecting them from abuse and neglect
 - improving their physical and mental health and their cultural and emotional well-being
 - improving their educational outcomes and their participation in cultural and extra-curricular activities
 - strengthening their connection to their families, whānau, hapu and iwi, or other culturally recognised family groups
 - increasing their participation in self-decision making and their contribution to society
- 3 The Principal will ensure that there are procedures in place to identify and respond to allegations regarding abuse.
- 4 The Principal will ensure that there are procedures in place to deal with the possibility of an allegation involving a staff member.
- 5 The Principal will appoint a Child Protection Coordinator and ensure that the role is adequately resourced.

Definitions:

Child abuse:

Child abuse is a broad term which includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential to cause or effect serious harm to a child.

Child neglect:

Child neglect is the failure or omission to care for a child. This failure or omission to care can be physical, emotional, medical or educational or involve a lack of supervision. The legislation distinguishes between two types of children's worker.

Core worker:

Core children's workers work alone with children, or have primary responsibility for, or control over, them. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are doctors, teachers, nurses, paediatricians, youth counsellors and social workers.

Non-core worker:

Non-core children's workers are workers who have regular or overnight contact with children, without a parent or guardian being present. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are: non-teaching school workers, general hospital workers and many social and health workers.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Privacy Act 1993 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 allows information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

Recruitment and Employment

- 1 The Principal will also ensure that safe recruitment practices in line with the Children's Act of 2014 and Section 78C and 78CA of the Education Act are in place. In accordance with these Acts, the School is required to police vet all core and non-core workers, including contractors and their employees, who work at the school if they are likely to have unsupervised access to students at the School during normal hours. The Principal will also ensure that every contract or funding arrangement that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
- 2 In addition to a police vet, core and non-core workers will also be subject to identity verification, references and an interview. A work history may be sought and previous employers will be contacted. If there is any risk that an applicant might pose a risk to a child that applicant will not be employed. A checklist is to be used for all appointments.
- 3 Notwithstanding 1 & 2 above, if core children's workers e.g. Public Health Nurses, Family Planning Nurses, Youth Workers, who have been safety checked by their own employer have unsupervised access to students, the School will not proceed with a police vet but can seek an assurance from their employer by letter that this has been done.
4. Where criminality is suspected the advice of the police will be sought in the first instance. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

Implementation

5. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection procedures are understood and implemented
6. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal
7. Support the development of appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
8. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
9. Make this policy available on the school's internet site or available on request
10. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances
11. Recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision making about their children

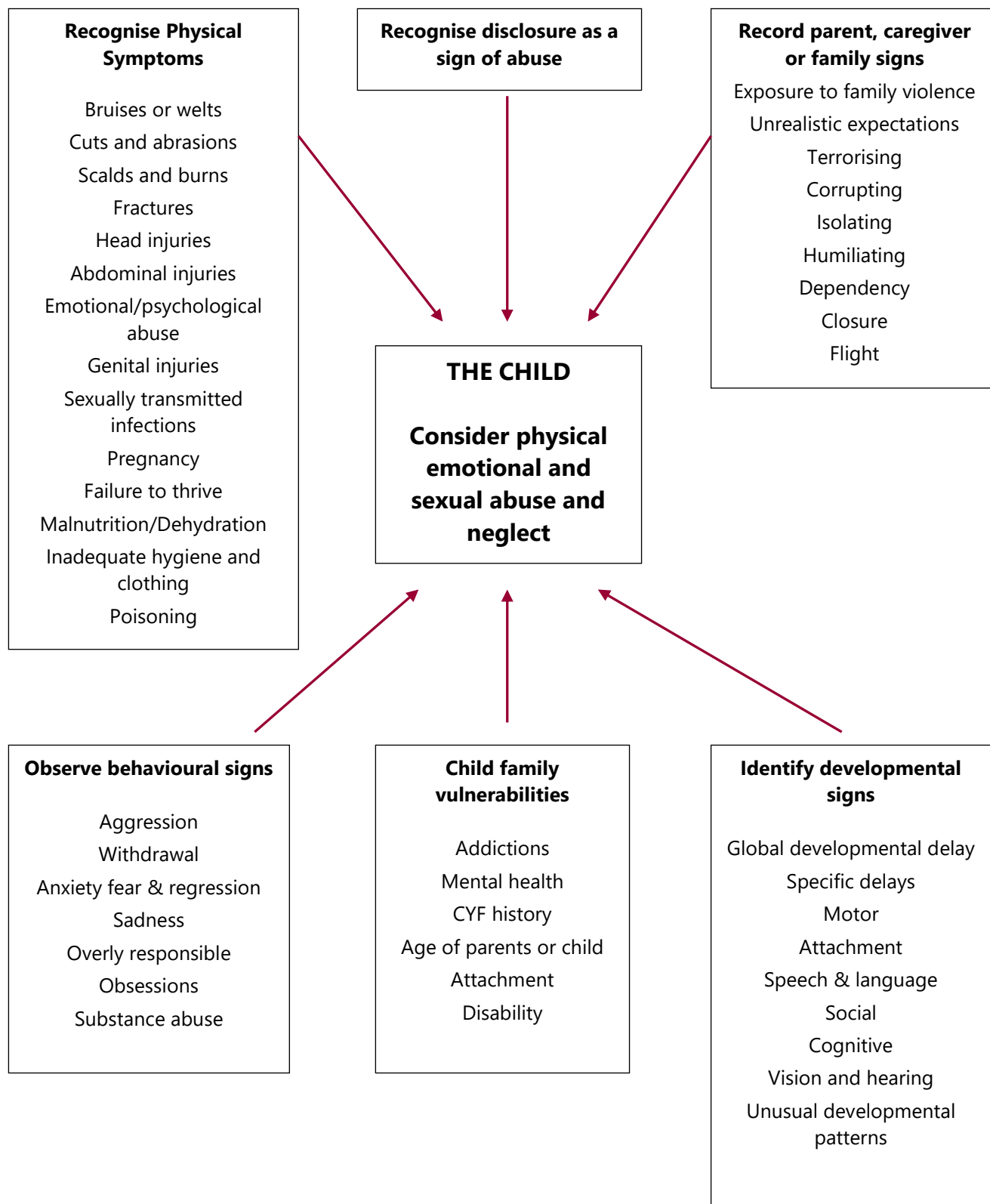
Appointment of Child Protection Coordinator

The Principal has appointed the Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing as the Child Protection Coordinator whose responsibilities will include:

- 1 Coordinating the review of the Child Protection Policy and development of appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
- 2 Co-ordinating the School's response to child abuse and neglect
- 3 Developing a training plan relating to the identification and prevention of child abuse or neglect. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member
- 4 Ensure training of staff is available cyclically to enable staff 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.
- 5 Ensuring documentation tools are in place and accessible to staff for the recording of care and protection concerns
- 6 Ensuring regular audits of child protection practice occur.
- 7 Applying for and accessing the professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
- 8 Providing support and advice to staff regarding child abuse.

Identifying the signs of abuse or neglect:

The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below may indicate abuse or neglect. However, they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child or young person's situation.



Reference:
Oranga Tamariki

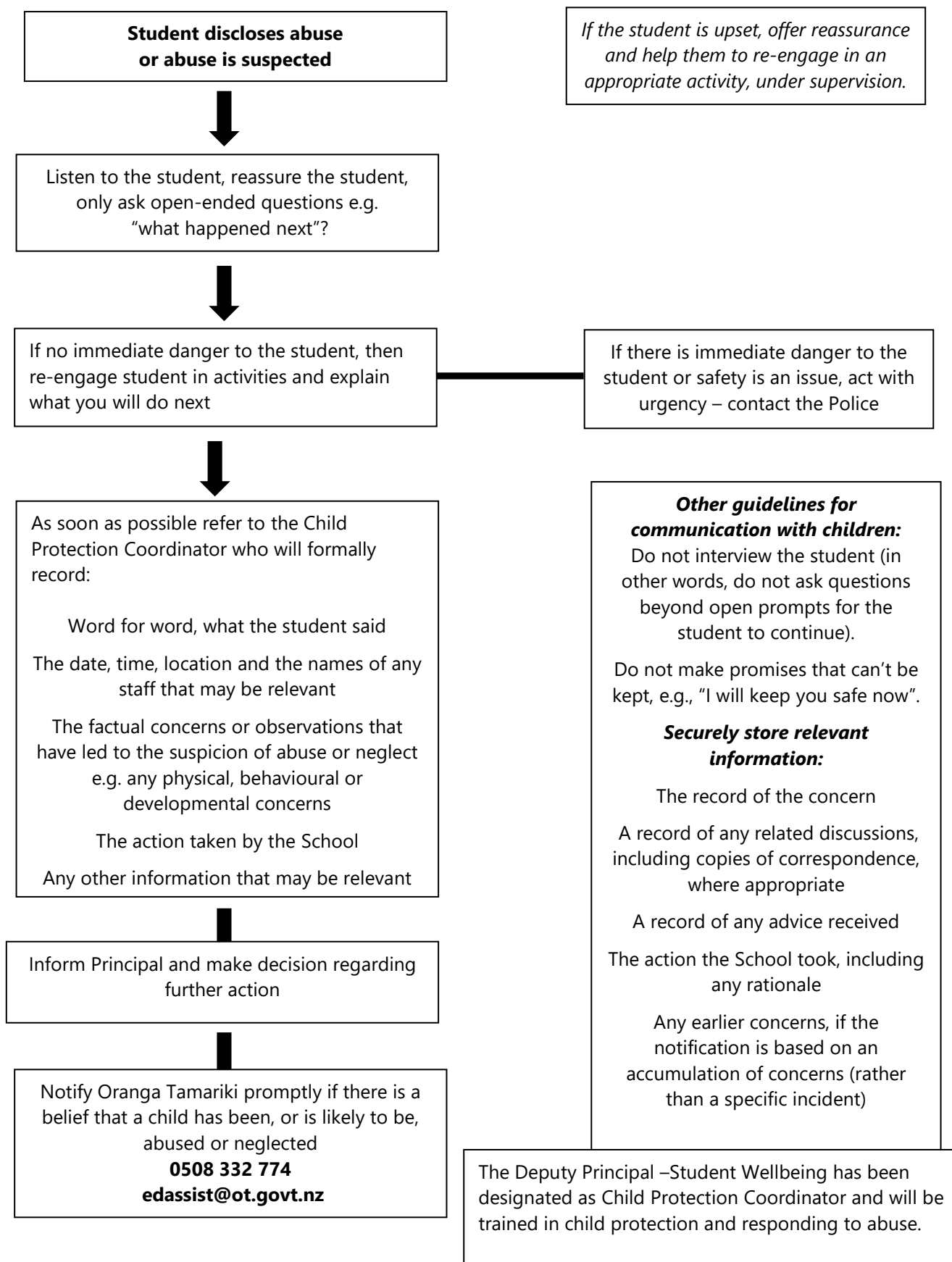
Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

- 1 There is a process to follow when an incident or suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported. See the '*Child Abuse Reporting Process*' flowchart below.
- 2 All suspicions or reports of incidents will be reported to and discussed with Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible.
- 3 The Child Protection Coordinator will make a written report of the incident.
- 4 In line with Section 15 of the [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#), if there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the Child Protection Coordinator will follow school procedures and take steps to protect the child. S/He may also report the matter to a social worker, Oranga Tamariki or the local Police.
- 5 Sometimes the involvement of statutory agencies will be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families. In these situations, the School will refer the family to an appropriate non-statutory agency which can provide supportive services to the family and respond to the needs of the vulnerable children in their care in a manner proportionate to the level of need and risk.

Allegations or concerns about staff

- 1 There is a process to follow when an allegation of child abuse is made in relation to a staff member. See "When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member" below.
- 2 If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, the Principal or delegated person will consult with Oranga Tamariki or the Police before advising the person concerned and informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice. The Principal will provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond.
- 3 The staff member should be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.
- 4 The School commits to not using *settlement agreements* where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some *settlement agreements* allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerns the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

Child Abuse Reporting Process Flowcharts



When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid, unpaid or in any school-related role), the matter must be reported promptly to the Principal.

Under no circumstances should the student making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the School to consider removing the staff member from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract. All actions will be undertaken with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality.

Prevention of possible abuse or neglect

The School is committed to ensuring that all staff can identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and know how to respond.

The School will provide training, resources and/or advice to enable all staff to carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

Core and non-core workers will attend training, refresher training and regular updates which will ensure that they have the competence to identify and manage actual or potential abuse or neglect and empower them to keep our students safe.

This training will ensure that staff:

- 1 Are conversant with the School's Child Protection Policy
- 2 Understand child abuse and neglect and the indicators of child abuse and neglect
- 3 Understand the standard of adult behaviour expected of adults in relation to children
- 4 Understand how to minimise the risk of child abuse
- 5 Understand their need to seek advice when child abuse or neglect is suspected.
- 6 Understand the School's process once child abuse or neglect is identified or suspected
- 7 Understand their legal obligations and responsibilities with regard to this process
- 8 Understand that the school supports the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki
- 9 In the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies
- 10 Understand the statutory referral processes and agency management of identified or suspected child abuse or neglect.

Process for security or storage of information

Records should be kept separate from the usual system of student records and access to the records should be restricted. They should be held for at least ten years.

Supporting Procedures

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Appointment (recruitment) process
- Online publication of student images and work

- All NAG 5 policies (Health and Safety)

Supporting Documents

- Safer Organisations Safer Children – Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/VCAPracticalGuide.pdf>
- Health and Safety Reform Bill
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Mokopuna-Disclosing-Abuse4.pdf>

The various indicators of different types of abuse that can be found here:

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/56/learn-about-childabuse/recognise-the-signs>

Legislative compliance

- <http://www.education.govt.nz/>
- [Vulnerable Children Act 2014](#)

This policy will be reviewed as required or triennially.

Ratified

26 July 2022 **Signed for the BOT**
Date

Signed for the BOP
3 August 2022

Next scheduled review: October 2025

Previous reviews

June 2016

October 2019