

KIMBOLTON SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

The well-being and safety of children is paramount at Kimbolton School and we are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. This includes the prevention of child abuse or maltreatment and the protocols when child abuse is reported to us or suspected by us. It also includes measures to be taken to prevent child abuse. All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and to abide by it.

Purpose

The interest and welfare of the child will be the primary consideration when any action is taken about suspected abuse. Kimbolton School supports the roles of the Police and Child, Youth and Family in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspected / alleged abuse to these agencies, following the process outlined below. Kimbolton School staff will not assume responsibility beyond their level of experience or training.

We support families/whānau to protect their children. We provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse

This policy guides the actions of Kimbolton School whenever there is a concern about the abuse or mistreatment of children. This includes recording concerns, if a child discloses abuse, suspected abuse by a staff member or suspected abuse between children at the school. This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers and professional development providers.

GUIDELINES

- Child abuse refers to the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or serious deprivation of any child
- Physical abuse - any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person.
Physical signs of abuse: unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching,
- 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.
- Emotional abuse - any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.
Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g. sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.
Neglect: looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight
- Family violence may be witnessed/experienced by children and involve physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
Behavioural concerns (e.g. age- inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression). The child talking about things that indicate abuse
Neglectful supervision (e.g. out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).

Supervision Guidelines

- All staff should be aware of situations that mean they would be alone with children.
- Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (i.e. door open, nothing covering windows in doors if door shut for student privacy)
- Staff should be aware of where children are in the playground and check to ensure what they are doing is appropriate.
- All volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff.
- Unless requested by children or parents there is usually no need to assist school aged children with toileting.
- If the situation arises, ensure that another staff member knows who is assisting the child, and that parents are informed.
- Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child unless an emergency requires it.

SAFETY CHECKING

Under Section 319 of the Education Act 1989, a police vet must be obtained for anyone appointed to work during normal opening hours.

A police vet must apply for no later than 2 weeks after a person begins work at the school and it must be obtained before the person has unsupervised access to children.

A police vet must also be obtained for every contractor, or employee of a contractor, who has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children during normal opening hours.

Under Part 3 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, all children's workers must be police vetted as part of a safety check. A children's worker is anyone whose work involves regular or overnight contact with children, takes place without parents or guardians being present, and is paid or undertaken as part of an educational or training course. A police vet must be obtained before the children's worker starts work.

Police vets must be renewed every three years.

Recruitment and employment

- Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- This will include: a police vet; identity verification; references and an interview.
- A work history will be sought and previous employers will be contacted.
- If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.
- A police vet will be carried out by the school every three years for office staff, bus drivers, teacher aides

Volunteers / Camp Parents

- A police vet will be carried out by the school every three years for parents/caregivers who wish to continue to help at school camps/volunteer in the school

Contractors

- Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 for any contractors on site
- This will include: police vet and identity verification. This should be initiated by their employer/themselves if self employed

There is no requirement to carry out a police vet for a teacher who has been issued a current practicing certificate or limited authority to teach by the Education Council, because the Council will only issue these once a satisfactory police vet has been obtained.

- The family/whānau has a right to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- All staff need to be able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and be able to take appropriate action in response.
- Information about identifying child abuse is available at www.childmatters.org.nz/56/learn-about-child-abuse/recognise-the-signs
- If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the principal shall notify Child, Youth and Family. In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect this child protection policy will also help staff to identify and respond to the needs of any vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern.
- Staff members will discuss suspicions with a senior staff member. Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.
- Kimbolton School will act on recommendations made by statutory agencies concerning the official reporting of suspected abuse. Staff will only consult with or inform families about any suspected or actual abuse, after consulting with the appropriate statutory agencies.
- Any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- Staff will respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour by writing down observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. This will be kept separate from planning folders, communication books and enrolment information etc.
- Information volunteered by a child should be fully and accurately recorded.
- No child should be interviewed or in any way questioned about the suspected abuse.
- No staff member will act alone about suspected child abuse.
- Where staff suspect child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe, programme management is committed to promptly reporting the matter to the Police or the Child, Youth and Family.
- Staff who are responding to cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support.

Allegations or concerns about staff

- When a staff member is suspected, the same processes apply.
- If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, we will consult with Child, Youth and Family or the Police before advising the person concerned, informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond.
- They will also 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.

Allegations or concerns about another student

- While the situation is being evaluated, the children concerned will be separated.
- It is essential to reduce further emotional trauma for the victims who may be fearful and distressed if they are in contact with possible abusers.
- In some cases where the abuse has occurred immediate stand down may be appropriate.
- Kimbolton School will make every effort to keep personal information as private as possible.
- Parents will also be asked to keep all information confidential to allow proper investigation and resolution.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Signed : _____ Date: _____