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Policy on Child Protection and Child Disclosure 2020

Rationale

Kaiti School is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all students with reference to The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

Purpose

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.

The board of trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are 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.

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.

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

Guidelines

Procedures to be followed in cases suspecting child abuse, will differ in cases where there is –

- a) an urgent safety need to such an extent that the child cannot return home that day; or
- b) the need for a thorough planned investigation when the child is not at immediate risk of further abuse.

1. Staff are to bring all cases of suspected abuse of pupils to the attention of the principal, or if not applicable, to the BOT. This includes cases of suspected physical (including neglect) emotional or sexual abuse.
2. Teachers who have a disclosure made to them in class will accept the disclosure with little or no comment but follow the matter up with the principal without delay.
3. The principal, after careful discussion with the reporting teacher, will gather all information the school has about the child.

If urgent, as in (a) above, the Principal will make a referral to the Social Worker in Schools and Police. The child's caregivers will be advised of any action taken by the statutory agencies involved.

4. If a staff member is implicated as being responsible for the abuse, contact with the Board of Trustees Chairperson shall be made immediately. The board shall ensure that the interests of the staff member (refer to NZEI guidelines) and those of the child are met.

Specific Actions when reporting child abuse/neglect

1. If a child or young person is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.
2. Listen to the child or young person and reassure them they did the right thing disclosing
3. Write down what the child says, check that comments and events surrounding the concern are also recorded.
4. Do not formally interview the child or young person. Obtain only necessary relevant facts.
5. Reinvolve the child in school activities if they are not in immediate danger and not upset.
6. Hold immediate discussion with social worker in schools.
7. Inform the principal, nominated person, or Board Chairperson if the allegation concerns the principal.
8. Principal or BOT chairperson to notify Oranga Tamariki or Police
9. Obtain an indication of likely action.
10. Seek support for people if required.

Signed: Date