



Yendarra Primary School

POLICY

SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

RATIONALE

The safety and well-being of all the taura is of a prime concern to all the staff at Yendarra School.

PURPOSE

To assist staff to act promptly when confronted with a situation where there is cause to believe that a taura is the subject of abuse.

To provide ethical and professional responsibilities and guidelines to seek help.

To take responsible action in a caring way to protect the well-being of the child.

GUIDELINES

1. Staff are to be sufficiently knowledgeable of all the issues and to be confident in reporting reasonable suspicions of abuse.
2. At all times persons working within the school must present 'good role models' in their dealings with taura
3. The professional conduct of the staff must be supportive and non-abusive towards the management of their taura
4. The police health prevention programme 'Keeping Ourselves Safe', may be taught as this aims to help students to develop necessary skills and understandings to keep themselves safe in their contacts and with other people.

REPORTING PROCEDURES WHEN A DISCLOSURE IS MADE

1. Write down what was said as close to verbatim as possible in a notebook provided, ensuring you only ask open ended questions
2. Note the full date and what was said by both parties
3. Any further concerns will still need to be noted
4. Even if a disclosure is not made, you may wish to note down any suspicions/gut feelings you have. Collect any unusual drawings/writing and date these items.
5. The Principal (or Deputy Principal if the Principal is absent) must be notified immediately if a member of staff suspects abuse.
6. Please note that time is of the essence in reporting such matters to the above authority, so as to avoid any likelihood of harm to the student concerned.
7. The students, parents, or legal caregivers should be informed in accordance with Section 13, P.4 of Circular 1989/5.

If the outside agency requests an interview with the student at school, and the Principal agrees believing that such an interview is in the best interests of the student concerned – procedure will be:

- Parents/whānau should be informed of the interview unless the taurira welfare is likely to be threatened
- To support the taurira, the Principal or an appropriate staff member should be present at the interview
- A school should attempt to ensure that interviews are not prolonged unnecessarily and are conducted in a manner appropriate to the school setting and age of the taurira.
- If a police officer is involved, the officer should be in civilian clothes and arrive at and leave the school in a discreet manner
- If, out of concern for the taurira welfare, the parents or caregivers are not present at the interview, the Principal must come to a clear understanding with the interviewer of the means by which the parents or caregivers will be informed.

Acting in consultation with the agency to whom the alleged abuse has been reported, the Principal should ensure that staff members involved with the taurira are kept informed so that they know how they can best support the taurira or each other during any action being taken.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST STAFF INVOLVING ABUSE

A school's procedures should be capable of handling the situation where a staff member is implicated in an allegation of the abuse of a student.

In a case where a staff member is implicated, in addition to instituting the procedures already referred to, the Principal should ensure that:

- The Board is informed
- The staff member is advised to seek professional support (e.g. from an N.Z.E.I counsellor)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN ABUSED NEED

1. Support and care from those around them
2. To talk about what happened
3. Someone who will listen and try to understand their circumstances and feelings without offering judgement, criticism and blame
4. To be reassured that it was not their fault
5. To grieve and feel angry for a variety of reasons
6. To rebuild a positive image of themselves, to feel comfortable with others and to build relationships

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

- Lack of normal growth/development
- Lack of energy/listlessness
- Poor hygiene /recurring infections
- Skin pallor
- Quiet, inhibited
- Seeking food/hungry
- Showing caution, watchfulness
- Attention/approval seeking
- Dishonesty
- Bruising, welts, burns, hand marks etc
- Aggressive behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Regressive behaviour
- Impaired/sudden change in school performance
- Sudden change in school behaviour
- Displays anxiety
- Self-mutilation
- Over-achievement
- Frequent toileting
- Soiling or urinating
- Reluctance to go home
- Running away
- Heightened sexual awareness/promiscuity
- Use of explicit sexual or abusive language/gestures/movements
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Unusual, offensive odours
- Torn or bloodied underclothing
- Recoiling from touching
- Obsessive behaviours – washing etc
- Recurring throat infections
- Deterioration in peer relationships
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Art work, use of colours etc
- Overly compliant behaviour

WHEN A DISCLOSURE IS BEING MADE

1. Stay calm
2. Believe what they say
3. Tell them you are pleased that they told you. Express empathy. This might include affirming them for their courage in disclosing the abuse e.g. "I'm really glad that you told me about this, it's usually a very hard thing to tell anyone, and I'll do my best to help you"
4. Validate their feelings
5. Tell them that it was not their fault. The responsibility lies with the offender
6. Ensure that they are safe
 - Never promise confidentiality
 - Explain what will happen next
 - Explain why it is necessary to seek help from other people e.g. "I can see you need some help, but I think I need some help so that we can be sure we are doing the right thing"
7. Never ever question children, as this can prejudice investigation outcomes
8. Ensure they get the appropriate help they need
 - Discuss and refer to the 'Child Abuse Contact Person'
9. Remember to get support and supervision for yourself in the way in which you managed the situation