

## BLOMFIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL AND RESOURCE CENTRE

### DEALING WITH ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES POLICY

#### RATIONALE

This policy is made on the basis that all children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment. When allegations are made that threaten that safety, School Management will act on those allegations while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

#### PURPOSE:

To ensure and / or provide:

- the safety of the child or young person in the first consideration.
- that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
- that in the case of a complaint against an employee, action is guided by the applicable Employment Agreement and / or principles of natural justice.
- clear guidance for management and employee in respect of any allegations received concerning children or young persons within the school environment.

#### GUIDELINES:

##### Preventative Measures:

- The School's employment procedures will include police vetting and checking of applicants 'previous work history, or referees.
- The school will ensure that staff are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with students.
- Opportunities for staff to be alone with students will be kept to a minimum. The School has clear guidelines around the personal care of students. Staff will be made aware of these guidelines as part of their induction and must follow them.

##### Dealing with Allegations

Dealing with child abuse allegations against employees at our school requires immediate action to prioritize child safety. Blomfield School will follow Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy. Documentation: Maintain strict confidentiality and keep thorough records of the complaint, allegations, and actions taken. N.B. There are two reporting procedures to follow;

- a) The reporting procedure in respect of the child or young person.

Staff or other parties must report suspicions or observations to their manager or designated child protection person. This will be the Principal or the person deputising in this role. They will instigate the Child and Vulnerable Adults Policy process. If a child or young adult is in danger, call 111 immediately.

- b) The procedure for dealing with the employee.

Teaching Council Notification: If the employee is a registered teacher, the school board must report the allegation to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Principal or the Board Presiding Member should immediately notify the insurance company of the pending process.

1. Inform the Principal.
2. The presiding Member of the school Board of Trustees will be informed as soon as possible.
3. Under no circumstances should the child or young person raising the concern or the subject of the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the Board/Principal to contemplate removal of the employee from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employee contract.
4. The Principal will ensure records are kept of any comments by the student, complaints and/or allegations and follow up action taken.
5. The decision to follow up on allegations of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee of the school should be made in consultation with the following:
  - New Zealand Police
  - Presiding Member of Board of Trustees
  - Oranga Tamariki
6. The Principal and/or Presiding Member of the Board of Trustees will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the employee. The purpose of the above consultation is to enable the principal and the Presiding Member to discuss the concern or allegation and to:
  - Determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation.
  - Consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Board may take as an employer and possible Police action.
  - Consider the employer role of the Board in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee contracts.
7. When it has been determined the Board/Principal should pursue the matter as an employer, the Board/Principal should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. The Board will refer to the relevant employee contract in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.
8. The employee complained against will be advised of their right to seek support/advice from:
  - NZEI counsellor or Field Officer, or another appropriate union/representative.
  - Other relevant teacher's organizations if applicable.

9. All actions of the Board/Principal must be consistent and applicable with the collective employment contract or individual employment contract.
10. The Board/Principal should take care to ensure actions taken by the school do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by an external agency.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's:

- Police Vetting Policy.
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy