

## POLICY

# BLOMFIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL & RESOURCE CENTRE CHILD and VULNERABLE ADULTS' PROTECTION POLICY

### **RATIONALE:**

Blomfield School is committed to the wellbeing of our students. In accordance with the Children's Act 2014 we aim to help protect young people at risk of abuse and to ensure that staff are supported to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect.

### **PURPOSE:**

To provide clear guidelines to ensure staff can identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe. All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and abide by these guidelines.

### **GUIDELINES:**

#### Dealing with concerns

- All staff will be required to familiarise themselves fully with organisational policies about abuse and engage with training related to this. Refer to Definitions and indicators of abuse in this policy.
- The designated person for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection at Blomfield School is the Principal or the person deputising for the Principal, who will engage with regular training in this area.
- All concerns of potential, suspected or alleged abuse from staff or others must be brought to the attention of the Principal as soon as possible. This is most likely to be through your Senior Leader. If the Principal is unavailable the concern should be brought to the attention of the person deputising for the Principal at the time.
- If a student makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff it is important that the staff member takes what the student says seriously. Record a factual account of any concerns or disclosures. Ensure that this documentation is kept confidential.
- Under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to ask questions, conduct an investigation or deal with a concern regarding possible child or young person's abuse alone.
- If the incident is of an immediate and serious nature staff should intervene to protect the student and call the police 111. Inform the Principal or Deputy and record any action taken.
- When we suspect that child abuse has occurred, we will report the matter to the Police or to Oranga Tamariki (for ages 5-17years) or (for ages 18 plus) to DAPAR-Disability Abuse Prevention and Response team which is part of the Ministry of Social Development through referral to Whaikaha or via NASC refer@dapar.co.nz.
- If we have reason to believe that the suspected abuse has been perpetrated outside the family, we will tell the parents before we consult or report, unless there is risk to the student in doing so.

In no case will we regard ourselves as having to have their permission to consult or to report.

- Where we think the abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the family, we will not inform the family of our decision to report or consult initially but ensure they are informed by the most appropriate person at the appropriate time.
- If Oranga Tamariki ask to interview a student at school the student has the right to a support person if they wish. This support person (e.g., support staff, teacher, school leader) would focus on the safety and wellbeing of the student.
- Giving information to protect students better is not a breach of confidentiality. Wherever possible the family/whanau should be kept informed on what information has been shared and with which agency and for what purpose. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 2020 states  
*the disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to—*  
(i)  
*public health or public safety; or*  
(ii)  
*the life or health of the individual concerned or another individual.*

### Staff Contact at school with students

- All staff are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the Blomfield School Code of Conduct. All staff are expected to behave in a manner that maintains appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that may be misinterpreted by others.
- When staff are interacting with a student one-to-one, they ensure wherever possible that the space is not closed off from other people.
- Teachers take particular care with students who express themselves freely and seek close physical contact. When this is a concern, it is discussed with a Senior Leader who may discuss it with the parent or caregiver.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited and staff avoid physical contact with students that could be considered intimate, sexual, threatening, or violent.
- If a student becomes physically aggressive towards a staff member or students, staff will use preventative de-escalation techniques to reduce the risk of injury to all. Physical Restraint is a last resort and is only used when an authorised staff member reasonably believes that the safety of the student or others is at serious or imminent risk. Refer to Behaviour Management Policy

### Out-of-school contact between staff and students

- Staff are vigilant about safe and appropriate out-of-school contact with students, including through social media, texting, and emails.
- During education outside the classroom activities and camps, staff ensure safe interactions, sleeping, and travel arrangements for all students, and follow the procedures in our EOTC Management Plan and Policy

The School has specific protocols staff must follow to protect students in the following areas:

- Social/ Digital media - no social media relationships between students and staff-refer to Code of Conduct
- Overnight camps, noho marae refer to EOTC Management Plan
- Transportation refer to EOTC Management Plan

### The School's Educational Approach:

- The School Curriculum and culture will provide ongoing opportunities for staff to emphasise, to all of our students, their rights to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Sexuality Education occurs in the context of students' Personalised Plans which deal holistically with each student's wellbeing, in accordance with their development and their specific learning, social and emotional needs.
- Through the PLP/PPS process, parents and whanau are personally consulted about the students' wellbeing and health priorities, inclusive of sexuality education where appropriate, at least annually. For specific sexuality education programmes, for class or group delivery, parental permission is specifically sought.

**Definitions of abuse in New Zealand are generally classified into four main types:**  
(Source- Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre)

**Physical Abuse:** Any act resulting in physical harm, including hitting, shaking, burning, or excessive discipline.

**Sexual Abuse:** Forcing/ enticing a child (or adult) into sexual activities, including exploitation, forced nudity, taking photos, regardless of their awareness.

**Emotional Abuse:** Acts or omissions resulting in impaired psychological or social development, such as constant criticism, rejection, or exposure to family violence.

**Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet basic needs, including food, medical care, supervision, and education.

(Including Self Neglect for adults)

**Indicators are often found in clusters and may be physical, behavioural (Source MSD)**

| Type      | Physical Indicators  | Behavioural Indicators   |
|-----------|--|--|
| Physical  | Unexplained bruises, fractures, or burns; injuries in unusual places (face, trunk, buttocks), untreated conditions | Wary of adults; cringes or flinches; wears inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.<br><br>Withdrawal, isolation.                        |
| Sexual    | Pain or bleeding in genital/anal areas; stained underclothing; frequent STIs or UTIs.                              | Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge; fear of specific people or places; sudden mood changes.  |
| Emotional | Developmental delays; speech disorders; frequent psychosomatic complaints (headaches, nausea).                     | Low self-esteem; extreme aggression or passivity; self-harm or suicidal ideation, crying, anger.<br><br>Absence of engagement / interest |
| Neglect   | Constant dirtiness; malnourished or underweight; untreated medical/dental issues.                                  | Stealing/hoarding food; frequent school absences; demanding excessive affection.   |

**For Vulnerable Adults definitions and indicators of abuse may include the above and also the following:**

**Financial abuse:** Forging signatures, stealing money or valuables, tricking the person into transferring money, property or assets.

**Contacts for Vulnerable Adults**

Health and Disability Commissioner -0800496877  
 NZ Disability Support Network -04 4734678  
 1 2 3 Sexual Health Clinic- Whanagrei -0800286 826

**This policy is written in accordance with the Children’s Act (2014) and the Oranga Tamariki Act (1989). It Should Be Read In Conjunction With The Following Blomfield School Policies:**

- Behaviour Management, EOTC, Cybersafety, Dealing with Child Abuse Allegations against Employees, Police Vetting