



Child Protection Policy

Key Principal: Trustees shall ensure that the safety of all children and their learning needs shall be paramount.

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 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 report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the 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.

St Bernadette's School will:

1. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
2. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
3. 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 take appropriate action in response.
4. 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.
5. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement that the school enters into, requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.

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6. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
 7. 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.
 8. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
 9. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

St Bernadette's School will also:

- a) Ensure that through curriculum delivery the school provides programmes to develop skills in children that may assist them in identifying and protecting themselves from abusive situations.
 - b) Ensure that any staff member must report suspicion of abuse to Oranga Tamariki or the police (Section 15 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989). The principal should be informed of any such action.
 - c) Only Oranga Tamariki and/or the police have the statutory authority to investigate allegations of abuse.
 - d) Ensure that providing the report is made in good faith, Section 16 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 protects the person who reports from civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings regarding reporting suspected abuse. This only applies to reports made to Oranga Tamariki and the police.
 - e) Ensure access by social worker or police to a child in school:
While the law does not require a Oranga Tamariki social worker or the police to have consent from a parent or guardian to interview a child as part of an investigation into possible abuse or neglect, they generally try to obtain consent before a child is interviewed. On occasion it may not be possible or appropriate to obtain parental consent before a child is interviewed. This may be the case, for example where a parent is the alleged abuser. In such circumstances the best interests of the child will determine the most appropriate approach.
Consent of school management is required before a child can be interviewed at the school. Under normal circumstances the school management allows this access as the paramountcy principle applies. The school does, however, have the right to deny the social worker or police access to the child if parental consent has not first been obtained. In such an instance the social worker and/or police has the option of either obtaining parental consent or (if they believe this is not in the child's best interests) seeking a warrant from the Family Court. A warrant gives the social worker and/or police the authority to proceed with the interview and, if necessary, to take the child out of the school for the interview.
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- f) Ensure that where a child is interviewed at school the normal procedure is for a staff member the child has confidence in to be present. Ideally that staff member will be briefed by the social worker or police officer prior to the interview regarding the level of support to provide.
- g) Ensure that Section 66 of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1989 requires government departments and crown entities (including schools) to provide information, on request, to the police, Oranga Tamariki Social workers and care and protection coordinators, where the information is needed to determine whether a child or young person is in need of care or protection. Where the board or a staff member receives such a request they are required to supply it. They should require a reference to the authority under which the information is being requested (ie reference to section 66).
- h) Ensure that when parents or others involved in a complaint use the Privacy Act 1993 to request information provided by the child to the school, the school must give due consideration to the safety of the child if the information is disclosed. The request can be refused if the school believes that in providing that information the child may be put at risk (Privacy Act 1993 Section 29 (d)).
- i) Ensure that where a third party approaches the school with concerns about a child, they should be directed to Oranga Tamariki or the police.
- j) Ensure that once Oranga Tamariki is involved with a child the responsibility for the welfare of that child lies with Oranga Tamariki. While schools may from time to time disagree with the decisions made by Oranga Tamariki, the school's primary responsibility is for the child's education.

We will:

Seek assurance from Contractors and providers of services that they have undertaken safety checking in accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, for the staff that will be in contact with our children, i.e. the Bus company and Relief Agency.

Appendix a – Safety checking under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Appendix b – Who to check under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Appendix c – Relieving teachers.

Ratified by Board


 25/10/18

Chairperson

Date