

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

School Vision: Developing the Character of God - Academic Excellence

*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." **Mark 10:11***

### **Purposes**

1. Making the safety and wellbeing of children the primary concern, with the child at the centre of all decision making.
2. A commitment to work together to produce the best possible outcomes for the children and to work towards continuous improvement in child protection practices

### **Scope of this Policy**

1. We recognise that all staff and trustees have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm
2. Overall responsibility, implementation and review of this policy rests with the principal
3. This policy applies to:
  - all children who are enrolled at Rotorua Seventh-Day Adventist School
  - all staff employed by Rotorua Seventh-Day Adventist School
  - all parents and caregivers who come into contact with students within the school grounds and attending school events
  - all volunteers who come into contact with students in the course of their work
  - all contractors who come into contact with students in the course of their work

### **Guidelines**

This policy includes guidelines and procedures for the following:

- safety checking of adult employees and volunteers
- harmful behaviour
- bullying
- disclosure of abuse by an adult (including staff members)
- referrals to external agencies
- safe working practices (including restraint and seclusion)
- protected disclosures

Other policies related to this policy are:

- Education Outside the Classroom
- Internet Safety - Cybersafety Policy

- Privacy Act - Protected Disclosure of Information Policy

### **Guidelines: Safety Checking of Adult Employees and Volunteers**

1. All adults who work or volunteer in an unsupervised capacity with children must undergo a safety check, as outlined in the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014
2. The safety check will be carried out by the principal
3. The safety check will include:
  - sighting two forms of official identification (Drivers' Licence, Passport, Birth Certificate)
  - a verbal referee's check with a focus on child protection (e.g. Are you aware of any reason that this person is not safe to work with children?)
  - a police vet every two years

### **HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR**

#### **Guidelines: Child-on-Child Harmful Behaviour**

1. Child-on-child harmful behaviour is any behaviour through which one child is seriously harmed or injured by another child. This does not cover minor incidents that are handled within the schools behaviour management policy
2. Types of harmful behaviour could be sexualised behaviour or violence.
3. When child-on-child harmful behaviour is disclosed or witnessed, the Harmful Behaviour Process (next page) should be followed.

#### **Harassment/Bullying.**

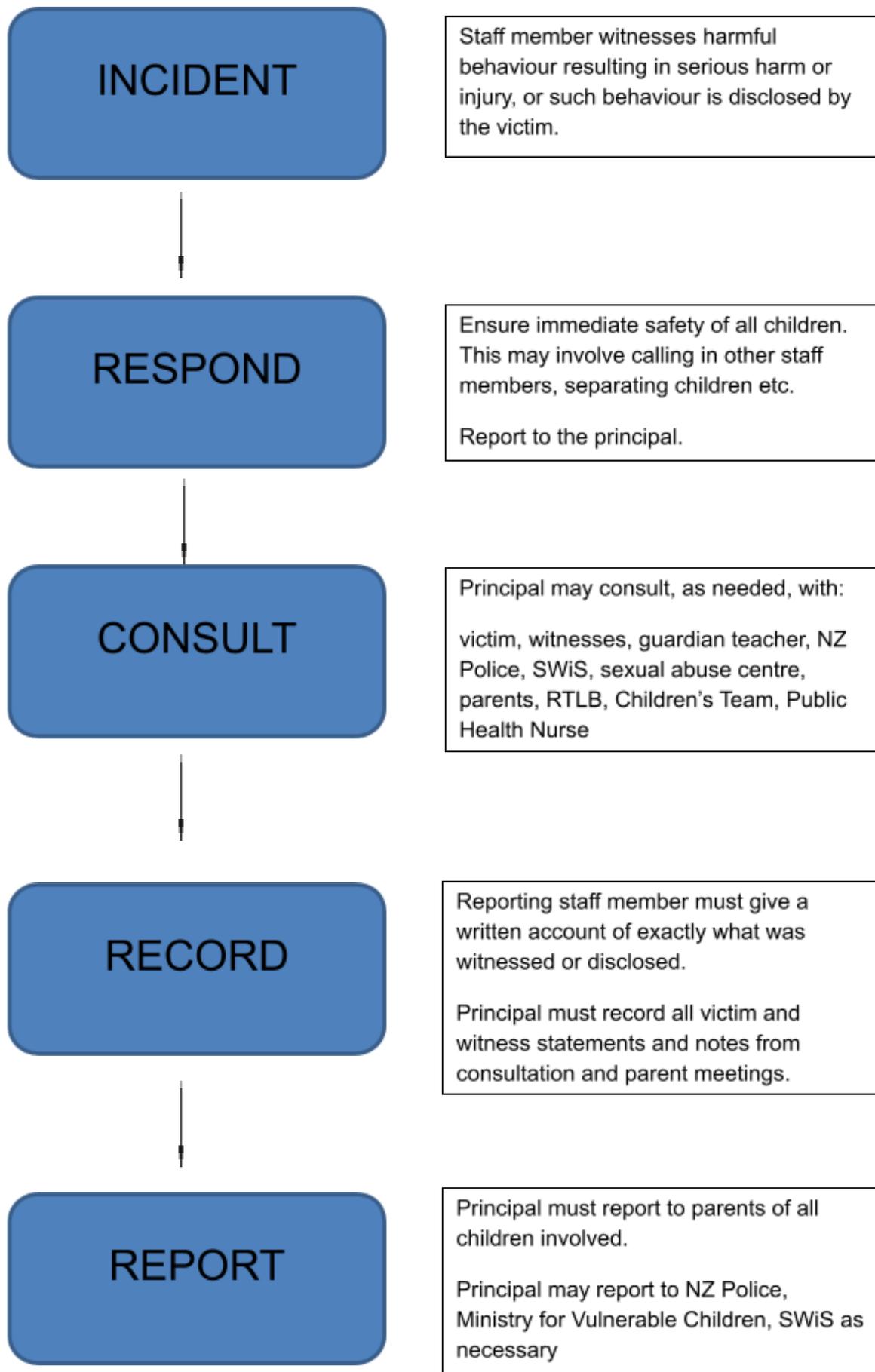
1. Bullying is defined by the Ministry of Education (Circular 160301) in the following statement:

*Whether bullying is physical, verbal, emotional or online (cyberbullying), there are four factors that can be used to identify bullying.*

- *Bullying is deliberate – intentionally causing physical and / or psychological harm to another person.*
- *Bullying involves a power imbalance – an actual (or perceived) unequal relationship between those being bullied and those who bully. For example due to physical size, age, gender, social status or digital capability and access.*
- *Bullying is usually not a one-off – it is repeated over time, with the threat of further incidents leading to fear and anxiety. People may bully one person many times, or different people each time.*
- *Bullying is harmful – there is short or long-term physical or psychological harm to the target (eg, as a result of coercion or intimidation).*

2. Staff will endeavour to create a bully-free environment, placing emphasis on respectful behaviour and our school values, and the Fruits of the Spirit.
3. Harmful or aggressive behaviour that does not meet the criteria for bullying will be covered by the Playground and Classroom Behaviour Management Plan and worked through using the school's collaborative problem solving process.
4. When an incident of bullying is disclosed or witnessed, the Harmful Behaviour Process (next page) should be followed.

## Harmful Behaviour Process



## **ADULT ABUSE OF CHILDREN**

### **General Guidelines**

1. Adults will be receptive and sensitive to children so that they feel listened to and believed.
2. Abuse is defined as causing physical, sexual or psychological harm, or neglecting to provide the necessities for a child's safety and health.
3. Any suspected abuse or offending against children must be reported to the NZ Police and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children. This should be done by following school procedures outlined in the guidelines below.
4. Where a disclosure of abuse is made or suspected, all information must be kept confidential within the parties involved.
5. Parents will be made aware of procedures the school will take to protect children from abuse.
6. Staff will be reminded of the guidelines to follow for any cases of suspected abuse at least once annually
7. The NZ Police unit, 'Keeping Ourselves Safe' will be taught as part of the Health Curriculum biannually to increase children's assertive skills in dealing with uncomfortable situations, and to help raise teachers' consciousness of the issues

### **Guidelines for Cases of Suspected Abuse**

1. Teachers will be trained to help identify students who are possibly "at risk" and will then monitor these students and keep detailed written records of concerns. This information should be kept in a file which will only be accessed by those who have a right to view this information (e.g. Principal, NZ Police, Ministry for Vulnerable Children)
2. Once abuse is strongly suspected, staff should follow the Disclosure of Abuse Process (next page)

### **Guidelines for Cases of Disclosed Abuse**

1. Disclosure of abuse can be direct, indirect, conditional or third party. Staff should refer to the Disclosure of Abuse Process (next page) for appropriate responses to each of these
2. If a child is in immediate danger, act immediately to secure their safety
3. Do not alert the alleged abuser
4. Follow the Disclosure of Abuse Process (next page)

### **Guidelines for Cases of Abuse by a Staff Member**

1. If any staff member is accused of abusing a child the principal and Board Chair must be informed immediately. If it is the principal who is suspected, the Board Chair or nominated Board member must be contacted.
2. The principal (or Board Chair or nominated Board member in the case of the principal being accused) must inform the NZ Police, the Education Council of NZ and NZEI.
3. The principal and Board Chair will inform the staff member, who will then be advised to seek legal and / or union representation
4. Once an investigation has started, the staff member will be suspended according to the regulations set out in the Primary Teachers Collective Contract Agreement, Sections 10.4 and 10.5

## Disclosure of Abuse Process

### Direct Disclosure

Child directly tells you of abuse by an adult.

e.g. "My dad hit me." "My mum locked me in a cupboard last night." "My uncle came into my room last night and touched my private parts."

### Respond

Give a reassuring response

e.g. "Thank you for telling me." "You've done the right thing." "It's not OK what happened to you." "I'm going to get you some help."

### Indirect Disclosure (including third party or conditional disclosure)

e.g. "My dad does things I don't like." "Me and Mum have a secret." "I don't like it when my uncle comes to stay." "I don't want to go home today." "My friend has told me that her cousin touches her." "Can I tell you a secret?"

### Clarifying Question

"Tell me about it?"

"Tell me a bit more?"

Child discloses abuse

Abuse is not disclosed but is still strongly suspected

### CONSULT

Tell the principal as soon as you have finished talking to the child.

The principal may consult with the following: the child's classroom teacher, the school's Social Worker, Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police, Public Health Nurse, Sexual Abuse Centre, the Board Chairperson or nominated Board Member

### RECORD

- the date and time
- what was said, verbatim
- your name

Give this to the principal within 24 hours of the disclosure. The principal will file this in a confidential file.

### REPORT

The principal must report all cases of disclosed or strongly suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki, the NZ Police and the Board Chairperson.

For cases of abuse by a teacher, the Education Council must also be informed.

## **SHARING INFORMATION WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

There are times when, in the interests of child protection and safety, information will need to be shared with outside agencies. This could happen in the consultation or the reporting stage of the processes outlined in this policy.

### **Guidelines**

1. The Privacy Act (1993) must be adhered to at all times
2. If agencies such as the NZ Police or Oranga Tamariki request information from the school their inquiry should be forwarded to the principal
3. The principal should not give out any information to the NZ Police or Oranga Tamariki without first verifying the identification and role of the person requesting the information
4. All written information regarding suspected or disclosed abuse must be kept in a confidential file available only to the principal.
5. When a staff member has a student disclose abuse to them they should not talk about this with other staff members who were not present. If the staff member needs support this will be made available to them.

## **PROTECTED DISCLOSURES**

When a child discloses harmful behaviour or bullying by another child, the perpetrator and their whanau do not have an automatic right to know who their accuser is. This information will be given at the discretion of the principal and with both children's safety as a considering factor.

## **SAFE WORKING PRACTICES**

Below are listed situations which could be considered as "high risk" for child vulnerability and the procedures which must be followed in these cases.

### **Students who Become Violent**

- When students become violent towards themselves or others the first action must be to remove yourself and all others from the vicinity of that student. This may mean asking your class to leave the classroom, asking children to move inside away from the violent student or, in serious cases, asking the principal to place the school in lock-down.
- The principal must be informed as soon as a violent incident happens.
- At no time should a staff member seclude or lock a student in a room
- At no time should a staff member restrain a student unless he or she reasonably believes through their perceived cumulative assessment, that there is serious and imminent risk to the safety of the student or others. If physical restraint is to be used, the guidelines below must be followed.

### **Guidelines for Physical Restraint**

- At no time should a staff member restrain a student unless he or she reasonably believes through their perceived cumulative assessment that there is serious and imminent risk to the safety of the student or others.
- If physical restraint is used, it must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.
- Situations where it may be appropriate include: breaking up a fight, stopping a student from moving in with a weapon, stopping a student who is throwing furniture close to others who could be injured, preventing a student from running into the road.
- If a child is restrained at any time the principal must be informed immediately and she will complete an "Incident of Physical Restraint" form and email it to the Ministry of Education and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees or nominated Board member .

- To be clear, the use of physical restraint is a last resort. It is far better to prevent dangerous situations developing or using de-escalation techniques to calm things down.

### **Sick/injured Students**

- Staff members with current First Aid certificates are able to use their First Aid training to treat minor injuries but should not attempt to treat an injury that is hidden by underwear or that the student says they are uncomfortable about
- If treating an injured child alone, ensure that the door remains open and that other adults are in the office or staffroom. If feeling unsafe, ask another staff member to supervise

### **Changing Clothes**

There are times when children may need to change their clothes at school, e.g. after soiling themselves or falling over.

- The child should change their own clothing wherever possible
- If the child is unable to change their own clothing the child's parent should be contacted to either come to school and assist or to give permission for a staff member to assist their child
- If a staff member is changing a child's clothes, another staff member should be present

### **Toileting**

Children with additional needs will be unable to toilet independently and will need assistance with toileting. This should always happen in a staff or disabled toilet while other staff members are nearby. Toileting routines will differ for individual children and will be outlined in each child's IEP.

### **Physical Contact**

It is recognised that there are some times when physical contact with a student is necessary and helpful. Primary school students will sometimes need comforting and will often initiate physical contact such as a hug or holding hands. Such contact should always be:

- above the clothes
- in the presence of others
- initiated or requested by the student
- ceased immediately if the student appears uncomfortable

### **Travelling in Cars**

- On official school trips vehicles must have current WOF and REG. Drivers must be fully Licensed.
- A student should never travel alone with an adult in a car.
- When a staff member or adult volunteer is driving a group of students to an event, they should not deviate from the agreed route unless necessary by a road block or for safety.
- A staff member or adult volunteer should not make any stops that are unplanned.
- Students of the appropriately weight and height may travel in front seat.
- No students may use a lap belt seat.
- Students requiring booster seats must provide these on excursions.

### **Social Media**

Staff members should not have contact with current students on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or any other form of Social Media.

### **Coaching**

- Parent volunteer coaches must be police vetted

### **Camp and Overnight Trips**

- All adult volunteers attending overnight trips will be police-vetted every two years and no adults with police records for violence or offences against children will be permitted to attend

- Adult volunteers with other offences listed on their police record will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The final decision about whether an adult can attend an overnight trip will be made by the principal and Board Chair
- Thorough instructions and guidelines will be given to adult volunteers at overnight trips, including instructions not to be alone with a child
- All adult volunteers have the right to refuse a task or instruction if they feel it puts them at risk
- More guidelines around adult supervisors and volunteers can be found in the EOTC Policy

### **Witnessing Unsafe Practices**

- Staff members and parent volunteers should be confident to voice their concerns about an activity if they feel it is unsafe, even if this activity is being facilitated by an “expert”
- Adult volunteers should be made aware of this responsibility before attending a school trip and empowered to keep safety as a strong focus

### **Allegations**

If allegations are made to a staff member about a parent volunteer or a colleague, these allegations should be taken immediately to the principal who will then follow the Disclosure of Abuse Process.

FORMULATED BY: Rotorua Seventh-Day Adventist School Board of Trustees

APPROVED: Board Chair, Maraea Van Gent \_\_\_\_\_

BOT RATIFIED: 24 October 2018

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