

# **PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

In regard to student safety the National Education Guidelines (NAG 5) require a school board of trustees and principals of each state and integrated school in New Zealand to:

- Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students; and
- Comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of students and employees.
- The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount considerations;
- Suspected and actual abuse of a child is responded to and recorded appropriately; and
- Effective child protection requires a full, accurate and prompt sharing of information (as permitted within the law).

## **GUIDELINES**

The child's safety should always be the paramount consideration in the notification process.

- No decisions or actions in respect of suspected or actual child abuse are to be made by any staff member in isolation unless there are concerns for the immediate safety of the child.
- A consultative approach is essential to ensure the safety of the child and the staff member. Staff must discuss their concerns with the principal or nominated person/advocate. Where applicable follow the board's complaint policy.
- Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation between the school and CYF.

## **CONTACTS:**

**CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY - 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)**

**POLICE 111**

**MOE - 0800 TI TEAM (0800 848326)**

**NZSTA - 0800 STAHELP (0800 782435)**

**ED ASSIST – 0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774)**

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**Child abuse is either suspected or disclosed.  
Ensure the child or young person is safe from immediate harm.**

- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present).
- Consult immediately with the principal or nominated person in charge, or other staff member if the allegation concerns the principal.
- The principal or their nominated person in charge that received the information should contact CYF (0508 326 459) or local Police.
- If advised to do so, complete a referral form to CYF/Police.
- The board chair should be advised.
- If there is disruption to the school or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, media interest or a public profile, seek support from Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator (0800 84 8326).

**Alleged abuse by Board employee, including the principal.**

**Alleged abuse by non-staff.  
The principal or nominated person should follow the advice of CYF/Police.**

**(1) The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person:**

- Follow the advice of CYF/Police
- Avoid further risks to the child(ren), or young person(s). Ensure there is no contact between the child and the person whom the allegation is against.

**(2) Process for employee investigation.**

- Initiate an initial employment investigation.
- Maintain close liaison with the police and avoid any action that may compromise their investigation.
- Immediately seek advice from NZSTA or another approved employment advisor and advise your insurer.
- It is important that no one person has responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and employment issues as there is potential for there to be tension between the two.
- Notify the employee of the allegation and advise of the potential consequences.
- Consider whether it is appropriate for the employee to remain in the school (follow advice).
- Advise the employee of the right to seek support from union or other representatives.
- The board needs to determine whether they will defer their process while the police do the preliminary investigation, or whether they will proceed. Criminal investigations are separate from any employment investigation that the employer will follow.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and/or allegations, and follow-up action is taken.

**Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver will be determined by CYF and Police in consultation with the school.**

- If the child or young person is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.
- Listen to the child or young person and reassure them they did the right thing in disclosing.
- Write down what the child says, check that comments and events surrounding the concern are also recorded.
- Do not formally interview the child or young person. Obtain only necessary relevant facts for when clarification is needed.
- If the child or young person is not in immediate danger and is not upset reinvolve the student in usual school activities.
- If the child or young person is visibly upset provide appropriate activity for them under supervision with someone familiar (i.e. teacher) until they are able to re-join classroom activities.
- Hold immediate discussion with guidance counsellor, school social worker or student support personnel.
- Inform the principal, nominated person, or other staff member if the allegation concerns the principal.
- Notify CYF Contact Centre or the Police.
- Obtain during the notification an indication of likely action and their time frames. Seek advice from CYF on what to tell the child or young person (decisions concerning after school arrangements and notifying the parents will be made by police and social workers in consultation with the school).
- Get support for yourself from appropriate people if needed.

Notifications should be made to the Police or the Child, Youth and Family National Contact Centre. The Contact Centre telephone number is 0508 FAMILY (0508 326)

When a notification is made to Child, Youth and Family the school needs to provide the following information in the attached notification:

- Name of child/children (also known as/nicknames).
- Date of birth (if known).
- Ethnicity (if known).
- Name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation.
- Current legal custodians.
- Reasons why it is believed that the child or young person is at risk.
- Other significant background information.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A NOTIFICATION IS MADE**

Step	Action
1	CYF Contact Centre will generate a letter to the person named as 'notifier' acknowledging the reporting, and advising which CYF site the matter was referred to recommending either further action or no further action.

2	<p>CYF site will make the final decision as to whether or not further action will be taken and by whom.</p> <p>Depending on the assessed level of needs for the child/young person and their family a referral may be made to a non-government organization (NGO) social service for their support.</p>
3	<p>If further action is to be taken the social worker allocated to the case will develop an investigation plan. This may require input from the notifier.</p>
4	<p>Once the reporting has been investigated CYF will contact the notifier to advise if any further action has been taken or will be taken or whether a referral will be made to an NGO for provision of family support.</p>
5	<p>If reporting is urgent the above actions will take place immediately. Decisions concerning after school arrangements and notifying the parents will be made by Police and social workers in consultation with the school.</p>
6	<p>The notifier may contact the CYF Contact Centre at any stage to obtain information on the status of the notification.</p>