

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

To be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Procedures,  
Safe School Documents and Staff Selection and Appointment Procedures  
and the Police Vet Checking Procedures



**LYNFIELD  
COLLEGE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The School Board has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care, so they thrive, belong, and achieve. 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. The safety and wellbeing of our students is our top priority.

## SCOPE

This policy provides the framework for the expectations of our staff, in responding to actual or suspected child abuse, violence and neglect. The policy applies to all staff, including support staff, teacher aides, part-time and temporary roles, and to those whom the college has contracted. It is intended to protect all students staff may encounter (including their siblings who may or may not attend the College).

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy and its associated procedures.

The College works cooperatively with all education and child protection agencies to ensure best outcomes for the students in our community. We are also committed to continual improvement in child protection practice through these relationships, and through any specialist training or professional development available.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The Principal has nominated that the official reporting of suspected or actual abuse, violence and/or neglect to Oranga Tamariki and/or New Zealand Police, will be done by the Deputy Principal, Student Services, or Guidance Counsellor, or in the absence of either of these people, the Principal will nominate an appropriate person. The Principal's nominees will seek guidance from Oranga Tamariki and/or New Zealand Police before any identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone.

### **All staff should be aware that:**

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki and/or New Zealand Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- When collecting personal information about individuals it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles:
  - *The need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned*
  - *The need to be transparent about:*
    - *The purpose for collecting the information*
    - *How it will be used*
    - *Who can see the information*
    - *Where it is held*
    - *What is compulsory and voluntary information*
    - *A person's right to request access to their information*
    - *A person's right to correction of their information*

- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so, such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety, (refer to the Privacy Act 1993: Principle 11 / Code Rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a young person may also be made to Oranga Tamariki or the New Zealand Police under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
- When staff respond to suspected child abuse, violence or neglect, or any concerning behaviour, our observations, impressions and communications will be confidential. They will be separate from other school records and can only be accessed by the Principal, Deputy Principal Student Services, or Guidance Counsellor.

*Please Note: Staff involved in the reporting of suspected child abuse, violence and/or neglect cases are entitled to support. Contact details of individuals, organisations or agencies who provide such support are available.*

## **TRAINING**

It is essential to maintain and increase staff awareness of how to recognise and respond to abuse. Information on identifying abuse, violence and/or neglect is included in the procedures that support this policy. As part of their induction, new staff are made aware of this policy. Staff refreshers are held annually as part of the Professional Learning and Development Plan.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Progress in implementing this policy and its associated procedures will be monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, with input from the Deans and Guidance Team (DGT) annually and reported by the Principal to the Board regularly.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION**

- Ministry of Education website: <http://www.education.govt.nz/>
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM5501618.html>
- Child Matters: <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/225/child-protection-policy>
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM147088.html>
- Further information and sample child protection templates are available in the Children's Action Plan guideline Safer Organisations, Safer Children: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-teams/>

# CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

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## SCOPE

To create and sustain a safe environment for the students within the College community. Creating a safe learning environment requires an understanding of the many ways in which students can be at risk of abuse, violence or neglect, and having clear and decisive procedures that we can take to minimise the potential risk and, where necessary, respond appropriately.

These procedures support staff to respond appropriately to potential, suspected or reported child protection concerns, including abuse, violence or neglect. These concerns may also be disclosed by the student themselves or by another party.

The interests of the student will be the utmost consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse, violence and or neglect. Lynfield College supports the statutory agencies Oranga Tamariki, and the New Zealand Police to investigate violence, and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as part of this policy.

The Deputy Principal Student Services at Lynfield College is the designated person for child protection. They have responsibility for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual student or want advice about the child protection policy.

Reports will be made by either the Deputy Principal Student Services, or the Guidance Counsellors. In the absence of either of these people, the Principal will nominate an appropriate person.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE AND VIOLENCE?

Violence is subjecting a person to abuse, threatening, intimidating or humiliating behaviour, as well as assault. It involves deliberate physical, verbal or psychological behaviour that makes the person feel embarrassed, offended, upset, devalued, degraded, afraid, humiliated, insulted or ridiculed and is unwelcome and uninvited, including:

- a) **WRITTEN ABUSE:** Including text messages or websites
- b) **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE:** Threats of violence, aggressive body language, postures or gesture, and any act(s) which may result in physical harm to a young person
- c) **SEXUAL VIOLENCE:** Any act(s) which involve forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
- d) **EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE:** Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES NEGLECT?

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development. It includes:

- a) **PHYSICAL:** Not providing the necessities of life such as a warm place, food and clothing
- b) **EMOTIONAL:** Not providing comfort, attention and love
- c) **NEGLECTFUL SUPERVISION:** Leaving young people without someone safe looking after them

- d) MEDICAL: Not taking care of health needs
- e) EDUCATIONAL: Allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF ABUSE, VIOLENCE OR NEGLECT IS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES**

- Each situation is different, and it is essential to gather data and information about the young person and their situation before reaching conclusions. Feedback from Form Teacher, Dean and Guidance Counsellors are essential
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is that staff should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if they notice a pattern forming or several signs make them concerned. All staff should be familiar with the identifiers, and always err on the side of caution
- ***Staff must not act alone. If staff are concerned that a young person is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect, or has disclosed such, they must report their concerns to the year level Dean, Guidance Counsellors or Deputy Principal of Student Services***

[Referral pathway for disclosure of child abuse](#) (Appendix 1)

### **PASTORAL CARE AND GUIDANCE TEAM PRACTICES**

The Dean's and Guidance Team (DGT) manages and implements the Child Protection Policy. This team may include the student's year Dean, member/s of the Senior Leadership Team, Counsellors, School Nurse, and other staff as determined by the team on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the student at risk.

#### ***Interview Procedures for the Dean's and Guidance Team when abuse has been disclosed***

For accuracy, later consultation and collegial support, it may be preferable to have two members of the DGT involved in the interview

1. Provide a support person for the student if they would like one
2. Listen to the student in a location as private and comfortable as possible
3. Accept the student's story as it is given and affirm them for sharing the disclosure
4. Ask only open-ended questions, e.g. 'Tell me about what happened'? Do not press for details as this may compromise any future or ongoing investigations
5. Ask if the student feels safe to return home, or to wherever the reported abuse occurred (if there is any immediate risk, inform the Principal and/or Oranga Tamariki)
6. Tell the student that for abuse to stop, other adults need to be involved and be as clear as possible as to who they might be
7. After the interview, record this discussion in the student's language as soon as possible. Sign, date and retain this confidential information
8. DGT to support the staff member involved in the disclosure.

#### ***Follow Up***

1. In cases of serious abuse, the DGT will report immediately to the Police and Oranga Tamariki
2. The DGT may consult with an appropriate outside agency if necessary, before reporting to Oranga Tamariki or the Police
3. If it appears to be unsafe for the student to return home, the designated staff member should consult with at least one other member of the DGT, before contacting Oranga Tamariki or the Police. Whenever possible this should be done before school finishes for the day
4. The Principal should be kept informed of what is happening
5. Oranga Tamariki will make the necessary arrangements for any further investigation

6. The DGT will liaise with Oranga Tamariki to find out how best to support the student at school
7. Advice can be sought from Oranga Tamariki before proceeding to a formal notification of concern.

## **SAFE PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

*The following guidelines should be followed by all staff:*

- Staff should avoid circumstances that might result in a staff member being alone with a student
- Wherever possible, an open-door policy for all spaces should be used, excluding toilets
- Staff should be aware of where students are at all time
- Where students require one-to-one support or assistance this is done with the full support and knowledge of the family/whanau
- Where a student (disables), requires assistance, if possible, involve the family/whanau and outside agencies such as the Ministry of Education Special Education group to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that staff are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance
- Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a student, unless in an emergency. Family/whanau approval must be given prior to transporting except in an absolute emergency
- Students are not collected from the school grounds or school organised activities by anyone other than those nominated by family/whanau. Nominees are recorded in KAMAR
- Family/whanau (or those nominated), must collect students from Student Services when collecting during school hours
- Visitors to Lynfield College must sign in and out at Administration Reception. Their visits must be monitored by our staff.

*Please Note: Lynfield College Counsellors work according to the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC), ethics and protocols.*

## **SHARING OF INFORMATION**

Information to ensure the ongoing safety of the student will be shared as appropriate, with the student's teacher, and, if necessary other staff and outside agencies. In all cases of a notification resulting in a care and protection investigation, including where there are shared care arrangements, it is the overriding responsibility of the statutory agency to liaise with the student's guardian/s.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION**

- Ministry of Education website: <http://www.education.govt.nz/>
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014:  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM5501618.html>
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## APPENDIX 1

# Referral Pathways for Disclosure of Abuse, Violence or Neglect

