

# EDMONTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Key Principles

#### Principles of Child Protection

While many of the principles listed below are considered values we encompass in everything we do as a Ministry, it is important to capture and reinforce these alongside our more child protection specific principles. These principles apply to every staff member.

Our child protection principles are:

- i. Making the safety and wellbeing of children our primary concern, with the child at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse or neglect
- ii. Promoting a culture where staff feel confident to constructively challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern
- iii. Recognition of the culture of the family/whānau, its importance and the rights of family/whānau to participate in decision-making about their children unless this would result in an escalation of risk to the child
- iv. All staff know they can report suspected child abuse and neglect to Child, Youth and Family (CYF) or the Police.

Our commitments are:

- i. A commitment to work together to produce the best possible outcomes for the child and to work towards continuous improvement in child protection practices, and all policies and initiatives are designed to promote (be inclusive of) a child protection culture
- ii. A commitment to develop and maintain links with iwi, Pasifika and other cultural and community groups and to ensure that important cultural concepts (e.g. whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice
- iii. A commitment to open and transparent relationships with clients/service users, including being willing to share concerns about child safety issues with the family/whānau unless this would result in an escalation of risk
- iv. An organisational commitment to support all staff to work in accordance with the policy, to work with partner agencies and community organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and of high quality and to always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities
- v. A commitment to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues, the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection
- vi. A commitment to meet all existing statutory and contractual obligations, including matters relating to employment

## Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

**Abuse** – the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child

**Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development

**Child** – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union

**Child protection** – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect

**Designated person for child protection** – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about the child protection policy

**Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect

**Child, Youth and Family** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection

**New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred

**Children's services** – any organisation that provides services to children or to adults where contact with children may be part of the service. These organisations should have child protection policies. Organisations that provide services to adults who may be caring for or parenting children should also consider developing a policy, e.g., adult mental health and addiction services

**Safer recruitment** – following good practice processes for pre-employment checking which help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children's workforce

**Standard safety checking** – the process of safer recruitment that will be mandatory for organisations covered by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

**Workforce restriction** – a restriction on the employment or engagement of people with certain specified convictions under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

**Children's workforce/children's workers** – people who work with children, or who have regular contact with children, as part of their roles

**Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

**Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution

- Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

**Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:

- Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
- Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.

**Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

## Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect

### Potential indicators

Indicators are signs or symptoms that, when found either on their own or in various combinations, point to possible abuse, family violence or neglect. In many cases, indicators are found in combinations or clusters.

Indicators do not necessarily prove or mean that a child has been harmed. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. Sometimes indicators can result from life events which do not involve abuse, e.g. accidental injury.

### Additional Resources

References to resources on identifying possible abuse or neglect are given below.

- **Child, Youth and Family** has developed the Working Together guide on inter-agency working to identify and respond to potential abuse and neglect. <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/27713-working-together-3-0-45ppi.pdf>
- **Child Matters** is a registered charitable trust that provides guidance, advice, education and support to protect children. <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/24/learn-about-child-abuse>
- The **Ministry of Health** has also made guidance available in the health sector. <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence/family-violenceguidelines> and <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/child-abuse-neglect-policy.pdf>
- Murphy, C. et al (2013) *Understanding connections and relationships: Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and parenting*. NZ Family Violence Clearing House. Issues Paper 3. April.

## Reporting and responding to suspected abuse or neglect

If a staff member has a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing they will, in all instances, report this to their line manager. This will be done at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child.

The severity of the suspected abuse or neglect is not up to the staff member or line manager/supervisor to determine. The line manager/supervisor has the ultimate responsibility to ensure appropriate authorities are notified.

In consultation with their line manager, staff should always respond if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child, regardless of who may be involved, as follows:

- i. **Contact the Police** immediately if a child is in immediate danger. The primary response must be to ensure the safety of the child.
- ii. **Contact Child, Youth and Family National Contact Centre** to discuss appropriate steps where:
  - a) A child has disclosed abuse or neglect (see table below)
  - b) Abuse or neglect of a child has been disclosed by the person responsible
  - c) A staff member has observed abuse or neglect, or suspects abuse or neglect on the basis of their own observations
  - d) A third party has told a staff member of known child abuse or neglect, or of their suspicions of possible child abuse or neglect
- iii. **Contact local family/whānau social service providers** (such as Whānau Ora or Strengthening Families) where the concern is more of a general, wellbeing related concern and not specifically about abuse or neglect. The services available in each community will vary and may include a range of government and non-government providers who will be able to help the child and their family/whānau. Each Ministry of Education office will have a readily accessible and up to date list of contact details of local social service providers.

Before contacting Child, Youth and Family in relation to i above, or other organisations in relation to ii above:

**All staff** have a responsibility to discuss any child protection or wellbeing concerns with their manager.

**Managers** have a responsibility to ensure that the appropriate authority is notified when a staff member informs them that a child has been, or is likely to be, or is suspected of being, abused or neglected. This extends to ensuring that all known information about the child, young person, and their siblings and family/whānau, is shared in full with the appropriate authority, to determine the most appropriate response (see section below on confidentiality and information sharing). Local Directors of Education must also be informed. It is therefore essential that managers/supervisors delegate this responsibility during times of absence and that their staff are aware of the delegation.

Where a **third party** has advised of the abuse, that person should be encouraged to report the information to CYF. In the spirit of full ownership and collective responsibility for child protection, where a third party has been advised of the abuse, that person should be encouraged to report the information to CYF. The staff member should ensure that this is done by following up with CYF..

## Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse

<b>Listen to the child</b>	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
<b>Reassure the child</b>	Let the child know that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing. While reassuring the child it is important that you do not agree 'not to tell anyone'.
<b>Ask open ended prompts, e.g. "What happened next?"</b>	Do not interview the child (do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue).
<b>If the child is visibly distressed</b>	Provide appropriate reassurance and engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
<b>If the child is not in immediate danger</b>	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
<b>As soon as possible formally record the disclosure</b>	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word for word, what the child said.</li> <li>• The date, time and who was present.</li> </ul>

## Recording and notifying Child, Youth and Family of suspected child abuse or neglect:

<b>What process to follow</b>	<b>For example</b>	<b>Key considerations</b>
<b>Recording</b>	Formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything said by the child.</li> <li>• The date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant.</li> <li>• The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (e.g., any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns).</li> <li>• The action taken by your organisation.</li> <li>• Any other information that may be relevant</li> </ul>	Relevant information can inform any future actions.
<b>Decision-making</b>	Discuss any concern with the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection	No decisions should be made in isolation
<b>Notifying authorities</b>	Notify Child, Youth and Family promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected. A phone call to the National Contact Centre is the preferred initial contact with Child, Youth and Family (see below) as this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options.  Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459)	Child, Youth and Family will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers, in consultation with our organisation.</li> <li>II. Advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate,</li> </ol>

	Email: <a href="mailto:cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz">cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz</a>	including referring the concern to the Police
<b>Following the advice of Child, Youth and Family</b>	Child, Youth and Family advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police	Child, Youth and Family is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether our organisation needs to work with the family/whānau or put them in touch with people in their community who can help
<b>Storing relevant information</b>	Securely store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The record of the concern.</li> <li>• A record of any related discussions (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate).</li> <li>• A record of any advice received</li> <li>• The action your organisation took, including any rationale.</li> <li>• This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident).</li> </ul>	Records assist in identifying patterns

### Allegations or concerns about Ministry of Education staff specifically

Schedule 1 to the Memorandum of Understanding between Child, Youth and Family, the Police, the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education (2012) is concerned with managing abuse allegations involving an adult working in or associated with an education setting.

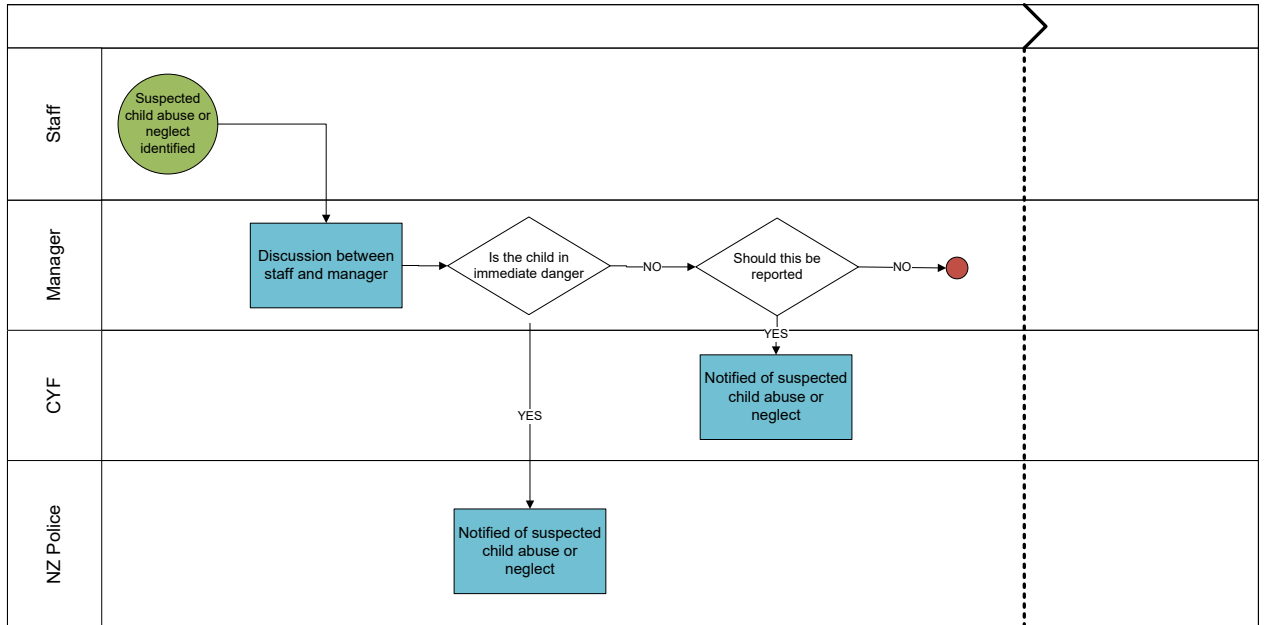
Schedule 1 requires that any allegation of abuse involving an adult working in or associated with an education setting requires an interagency approach from the time that the allegation is first received. A collaborative interagency approach will ensure that the right national and local people are involved, that the right actions are taken by the appropriate agency within agreed timeframes, and that a joint communications strategy will be developed.

Importantly, as an employer, the Ministry has a dual responsibility to the child and the employee. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee should be made in consultation with Child, Youth and Family, the Police, and if relevant the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, to ensure that any actions taken do not undermine any investigations being conducted, or to be conducted, by the external agencies.

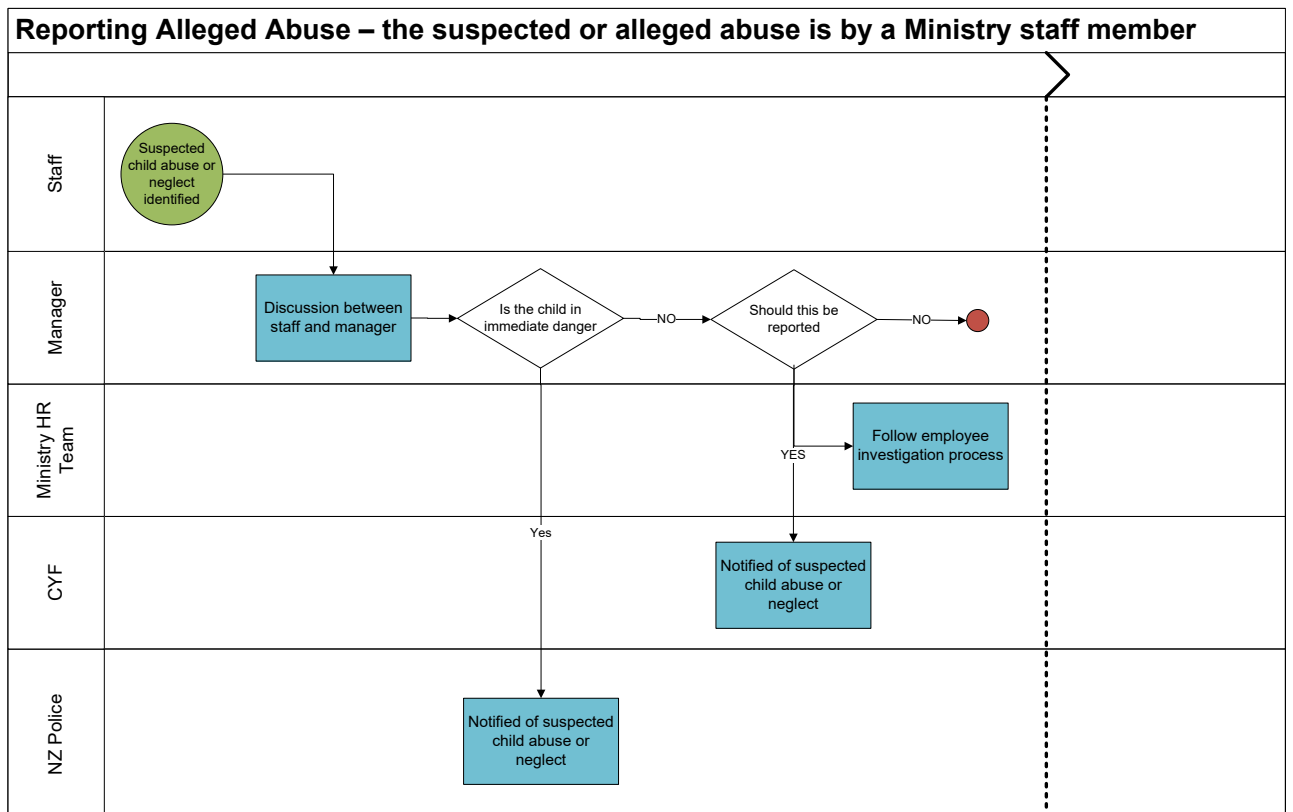
The same general approaches used for responding to allegations or concerns about non-staff member should be used where a staff member is concerned that another staff member's behaviour towards a child. Addressing the needs of the child and the child's immediate safety remains the first priority.

Notification process workflow

Reporting Alleged Abuse – the suspected or alleged abuse is not by a staff member



Reporting Alleged Abuse – the suspected or alleged abuse is by a Ministry staff member



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