



HUKANUI SCHOOL

SCHOOL PROCEDURE: DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Rationale

Child abuse is the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. This procedure provides mechanisms for dealing with cases of suspected abuse, should they arise in our school.

Purposes

1. To meet the requirements of the "Children, Young Person's and their Families Act 1989"
2. To provide a plan of action for teachers to follow when suspected child abuse occurs.
3. To use a system of referral which allows professional agencies to make the diagnosis / decision.
4. To protect the child from continued abuse, through immediate referral, to ensure that the safety of the child is not compromised.

Guidelines

1. Action must be taken immediately if a child expresses a concern. The child *must* be believed.
2. The child *must* be reassured if they are distressed.
3. Every thing the child says will be documented on the appropriate form, by the contacted teacher, *but no interview with the child*, including the use of leading questions, must take place.
4. A teacher must immediately inform the principal if observations or information indicate any possible abuse.
5. The case *must* be discussed by key staff, (with the principal), on the day of concern, so that further and appropriate action can be taken.
6. The principal will ensure the appropriate referral has been made or action taken. All such proceedings will be documented, and remain confidential.
7. Referrals will be made to the New Zealand Child Youth and Family Service, asking for a Duty Social Worker. A record of the contacted person's name will be entered on file.
8. No further action will be taken until the New Zealand Children's and Child Youth and Family Service have re-contacted the school; if this has not occurred within three days, the principal will initiate another contact phone call to the New Zealand Children's and Child Youth and Family Service.
9. These procedures are consistent with the "Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act", "Section 4 and 5, 1989; and subsequent amendments to the Act.

Complaints Against Staff Involving Abuse (Sexual or Other)

Once a helping agency is involved the following procedures will be followed and will be in line with those set out in the Teachers Collective Contract re Complaints Against Teachers.

1. The principal will inform the chairperson of the board of trustees.
2. Both will then inform the staff member concerned, who will be advised to seek legal and/or union representation.
3. The school will inform the NZEI and School Trustees Association. The board will seek advice and guidance from NZSTA, and will also immediately inform the school's professional indemnity insurer.
4. The staff member allegedly concerned will be suspended on full pay once an investigation has begun, refer to relevant Collective Agreement; at this stage the rest of the staff will be informed.

Note: Councillors from the Ministry of Education, Education Services and/or the New Zealand Education Institute, can be made available to any staff.

L Spaans
PRINCIPAL

A Baucke
BOT Chair

Dated: July 2020