

DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES IN SCHOOL POLICY

PURPOSE:

1. This policy is made on the basis that all children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment. When allegations are made that threaten that safety, school management will act on those allegations while taking care to treat the employee fairly.
2. When an allegation that threatens the safety of a student is made against an employee of our school, this complaint will be dealt with effectively.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. The child or young person must be adequately protected. Please note there are two procedures to be followed here:
 - the reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person
 - the procedure for dealing with the employee
2. The decision by the Principal to follow up on an allegation should be made in consultation with:
 - a member of the child abuse team.
 - the chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
 - New Zealand Children's and Young Person (NZCYP).
 - New Zealand Police.
3. The Principal and Board Chairperson will have a dual responsibility to the child and the employee. The purpose of this consultation is to:
 - determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation.
 - consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Board may take as an employer and possible Police intervention.
 - consider the employer role of the Board in conjunction with any procedures outlines in relevant employee contracts.
4. When it has been determined the Board should pursue the matter as an employer, the Board should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response.

It is vital that the employer should refer to the relevant employee contract in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.
5. The employee complained against should be advised of their rights to seek support/advice from:
 - NZEI, PPTA counsellor or field officer, or other appropriate union/representative.
 - other relevant teachers organisation if applicable.

6. Under no circumstances should the child or young person raising the concern or making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the Board to completely remove the employee from the school environment subject to the requirement of the applicable employee contract.
7. All actions of the Board must be consistent and applicable with the collective employment contract or individual employment contract.
8. The Board should take care to ensure actions taken by the school do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by any external agency. It is strongly recommended that the Board maintain a close liaison with NZCYFA and the Police to achieve this.

*Ref: Breaking the Cycle
Interagency Protocols for Child Abuse Management*

*Linked to: Protected Disclosure
Child Abuse Policy*