

## Martinborough School Child Protection Policy under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

This policy outlines the Martinborough School Board of Trustees' commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the Board's expectations when child abuse is suspected or reported by us.

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

The Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so that they thrive, belong and achieve at Martinborough School. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the children is our top priority. Advice will be sought from appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, any person in our school who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or to the Police.

Although the Board is ultimately accountable, the Board delegates responsibility to the Principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents/caregivers.

Therefore the Principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to Martinborough School.
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make this policy available on the Martinborough School website.
4. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the safety of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in decision making about their children.
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response.
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, and to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, regarding any concerns about an individual child, with the Board Chair and any other relevant agencies.
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA and other relevant agencies on employment matters and other child safety issues as they arise.
12. Make available professional development, resources and/ or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in relation to this policy.
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

Reviewed – October 2016

Review date – October 2019

## Procedures under the Child Protection Policy

### Reporting suspected neglect or abuse.

Martinborough School is responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students.

- The safety of the child is the paramount consideration in the notification process.
- No decisions or actions in respect of suspected or actual child abuse are to be made by a staff member in isolation unless there are concerns for the immediate safety of the child.
- Where neglect or abuse is suspected, this should be reported to the Principal. This is the responsibility of all staff.
- Confidentiality is to be strictly maintained at all stages. Consult Privacy Act guideline in School policy document.
- Decisions about informing parents/caregivers should be made after consultation between the school and CYF.
- Where a child's welfare is not threatened by revealing details of the alleged neglect or abuse to that child's parents or caregivers, then they will be informed by the Principal.
- The Principal will give priority to investigating any suspected or reported abuse or neglect.
- Records of actions taken, including date and time, will be kept by the Principal, and will remain confidential.
- Decisions to report further will be taken by the Principal, after seeking advice from agencies with responsibility to act.
- Sensitivity will be maintained to any cultural requirements or practices.

### Interviews of students at school

When the Principal agrees to a request of CYFS or the Police to interview a child, then the following procedures apply:

- Parents or caregivers will be informed of the request, unless the student's welfare is threatened by this.
- The Principal will seek assurance as to the identification of the person and agency requesting the interview and make further enquiries as to the particulars of the request if necessary.
- If a parent or caregiver is not present, then the Principal or an appropriate staff member will be present at the interview.
- If, out of interest for the student's welfare, the parent or caregiver of the student is not present at the interview, the Principal will come to a clear understanding with the interviewer of the means by which the parent or caregiver of the student will be informed.
- Attempts will be made to ensure that interviews are not prolonged and are conducted in a manner appropriate to the school setting and the age of the student.
- Acting in consultation with the agency to which the alleged abuse has been reported the Principal will ensure that relevant staff members involved with the student are kept informed in order to best support the student and each other.

### Where a staff member is implicated

Where a staff member is implicated in any allegation of abuse then the Principal, in addition to instituting the procedures above, will ensure that:

- The Chair of the Board is immediately advised so that any action or decision is undertaken in line with the Employment Act and any relevant employment contract.
- The staff member is advised to seek professional support from a relevant agency.
- If the staff member implicated is the Principal, the Chair of the Board will ensure the application of the above procedures.

### Court Orders

From time to time, the school has instruction that a parent or caregiver is not to have contact with their child or children. This is usually advised by Court Order where the access to the child is clearly set out. The School has no power to enforce a Court Order.

When the school is provided with a Court Order relating to a child or children the following procedure is to be followed:

- The School, on receiving the information, will inform key staff of the content and effect of the court order.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will speak to the child or children concerned whereby, if the parent or caregiver breaches the Court Order on the school grounds the child should tell a staff member.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the custodial parent/caregiver if a Court Order has been breached.