

Thornton School - Child Protection Policy

The Thornton School's Board of Trustees is committed to the safety and wellbeing of students in our care so they thrive, belong, and achieve through educational programmes, modelling of school values by staff, promotion of a safe and positive environment and policies and procedures designed to safeguard children from harm. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

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. It includes the board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us. All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act, 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 the local police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the board, 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. Therefore, the principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
3. Make this policy available on the school's internet site or available on request
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 child are paramount in all circumstances
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the 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, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident, they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern in relation to the child safety without fear of reprisal

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

Related documentation and information

- Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website www.nzsta.org.nz
- Ministry of Education website www.education.govt.nz
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Further information and sample child protection templates are available in the Children's Action Plan guideline Safer Organisations, Safer Children: <http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

Background

This child protection policy adheres to the following Acts: • Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 • Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 • Privacy Act 1993 • Human Rights Act 1993 • Education Act 1989/1998 • Domestic Violence Act 1995 • Care of Children Act 2004 • Employment Relations Act 2000 • Child Young Person and their Families Act 1989 • Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights • Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

The child safety team (CST) will consist of: • The principal • A staff member with relevant training and experience • Another member of staff