



GOVERNORS BAY SCHOOL

Prevention of Abuse Procedure

RATIONALE:

This policy is based on the school's philosophy that:

All children are treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment

PURPOSES:

1. To ensure the safety of the child is paramount.
2. To provide staff with guidelines so that they can identify signs of abuse or neglect.
3. To provide guidelines for everybody working with children from this school.
4. To provide procedures for dealing with cases of abuse or neglect.
5. To provide guidelines for referral to help agencies will be used, pre-interview procedures and how parents or caregivers will be informed. Interviews will be with the child abuse team or CYFS (not school).

GUIDELINES:

1. Adults will be receptive and sensitive to children so that the children feel listened to and believed.
2. The school will use the most appropriate agency for sexual abuse and the most appropriate agency for physical abuse and/or neglect. (See Appendix 1 and 2 attached).
3. In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action will be the school will direct the third party to a helping agency without becoming involved. The school may be involved at a later date. (Defined in Appendix 1 attached).
4. Someone suspecting child abuse may choose to directly report it to an appropriate agency should they deem this action necessary.

5. Keeping ourselves safe and self-esteem units will be taught as part of the Health Syllabus to increase children's assertive skills in dealing with uncomfortable situations and to help raise teachers' consciousness of the issues.
6. Parents will be informed except where the student's welfare is likely to be threatened. Whichever agency is involved in the cases will be responsible for informing parents as they have the skills to handle the situation in the most appropriate way to support the child.
7. A health team consisting of the Health Co-ordinator and the senior staff will be the resource people in this area. Teachers who have concerns may discuss them with any one of these resource people. No outside agency will be involved without the prior knowledge of the Principal and Chairperson of the Governors Bay Board of Trustees, when Cholmondeley Home School is involved, the Head Teacher, Chairpersons of the Governors Bay School Board of Trustees and Cholmondeley Home School Management Committee to be involved. (See Appendix 2 attached).

PROCEDURES:

1. Teachers will use the checklists attached to help identify children possibly at risk.
2. Individual profiles are already kept on children. These will include observations on social development.
3. The children's welfare is paramount. Keeping this in mind, parents may be consulted about changes in behaviour to try to identify a reason. It may be caused by a change in the family's home circumstances.
4. All information/discussion will be treated with confidence. Data will be stored at the discretion of the Principal with the pupil's record card. This data will be kept for the duration of the child's stay at school, then forwarded with the pupil's record card to the next school. Recorded data will only include problems addressed and followed up by the school. The parent / caregiver is entitled to see these records on request.
5. Where a teacher is concerned about a child they may discuss it with a member of the Health Team and senior staff. Alternatively, they may approach the appropriate agency directly, if they deem this action appropriate. If further investigation or action is felt necessary, the Chairperson will be informed. (Health team in Appendix 2 attached).
6. Where the Health Team/Senior Staff/Chairperson is involved, and further action is necessary the Health Team/Senior Staff/Chairperson must contact the appropriate agency without identifying the child and seek advice on the appropriate action.
7. Once an agency has been involved that agency and, where appropriate, the Police will investigate and the school will act on the advice from those agencies.
8. Teachers will not be conducting interviews, but will contact the appropriate agency and stay with the child until the child feels comfortable with that agency.

9. Support for staff and the child concerned will be sought from the appropriate agency.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST STAFF INVOLVING SEXUAL ABUSE:

Once a helping agency is involved ie. step 6, 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 Health Team/Senior Staff will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. In the case of the principal, the matter will be referred directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
2. The Chairperson and senior staff member will then inform the staff member who will be advised to seek legal and/or union representation.
3. The school will inform the union.
4. The staff member will be suspended on full pay once an investigation has begun, in line with Section 2.21g of the “TEACHERS COLLECTIVE CONTRACT”. At this stage the rest of the staff will be informed* (*Councillors can be made available to any staff).

Staff will be familiar with the code of conduct as set down by the N.Z.E.I. (1993) and The Teachers Council (2005) which is available from the school office for parents, caregivers inspection.

TIME FRAME:

This policy was reviewed in April 2008 and should next be reviewed in April 2011.

REVIEW STATUS:

<i>Signed (BOT Chairperson)</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>REASON</i>	<i>REVIEW DATE</i>
	____ / ____ / ____	<i>BOT REVIEW</i>	<i>April 2010</i>
		<i>NEXT REVIEW</i>	<i>April 2013</i>

APPENDIX 2

Indicators of child abuse are:

Physical Neglect

- The child is not given proper food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that there is serious risk to health and/or safety of that child

Emotional Neglect

- *(This is very hard to define and detect).*
- It is often the case that the child is only ever criticised, always told that it is stupid, naughty or the cause of all the family's problems.

Physical Abuse

- Where injuries are not caused by accident

Sexual Abuse

- This includes all situations where a parent, caregiver or other person involves a child in sexual activity. This can range from touching through to penetration or even the death of the victim.

Indicators of sexual abuse in a child are:-

- Physical injury
- Signs of physical illness, possibly related to genital or urinary functions, headaches or upset stomach
- Becomes unusually fussy
- Washes frequently
- Refuses her/his favourite food; or an older child may suddenly refuse food
- An unusual fear of strangers
- Sudden extreme shyness
- Lack of enjoyment of favoured pastimes, TV programmes and activities
- Clinging to parents or extreme fear of being left alone
- Difficulty going to sleep
- Sudden fear of the dark
- Nightmares
- Bedwetting
- Return to earlier forms of behaviour or skills
- Changes in school behaviour
- Loss of child's sense of security
- Unable to adjust to the normal schedule
- Showing loss of memory, sometimes appearing preoccupied or troubled
- Depression
- Advanced sexual behaviour
- Acting out the sexual abuse with playmates
- Suicidal tendencies
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Running away
- Increased irritability and angry outbursts
- Pseudo-maturity, taking over parental responsibilities *(usually associated with incest).*
- Prostitution

