

POLICY 10 - CHILD PROTECTION

Definition

This policy acknowledges legislation (Vulnerable Children's Act 2014) that the school/board of trustees has a responsibility to ensure the ongoing physical and emotional safety of the young people attending Cromwell College. Such an environment should aim to ensure that all students are treated with dignity and respect, and free from any abuse.

Purpose

1. To develop procedures for dealing with current or historical abuse.
2. To establish what external agencies should be contacted, referral procedures, and what liaison is required.
3. To provide guidelines and training for teachers/staff around recognising abuse.
4. To ensure that all students are provided with preventative education to enhance their safety and awareness around abuse.

General Guidelines

1. Incidents of suspected, alleged, or actual abuse should be dealt with sensitively and with staff aware of the need to maintain confidentiality and the privacy of those involved.
2. Decisions about informing parents/caregivers should only be made after consultation with child protection services called in by the school.
3. Staff are advised through the staff handbook and training as necessary how to identify, respond, and report any disclosure or concern of abuse.
4. All staff employed or otherwise, will need to adhere to the Cromwell College Police Vetting guideline.
5. If the safety of a student is at risk, the Guidance Counsellor, Head of Pastoral Care, or SLT member must ensure their immediate safety. In addition to this the Principal should liaise with Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police. Further support may be gained from those mentioned above and any outside agency that may be required.
6. The school will provide preventative education to all students under the Health and Physical Education curriculum with support of visiting agencies (such as 'Loves me Not', 'Sexwise', 'Attitude' etc.).
7. Where there has been a disclosure, the teacher/staff member should listen, write or record (with permission) detail without prompting, make no promises, and thank the student for their bravery and report all information to the Guidance Counsellor, Head of Pastoral Care, SLT member, or Principal who will then report to the Police.
8. In cases where the student is under the age of 16 the Guidance Counsellor or a nominated member of the SLT will be nominated as a safety advocate. In other cases the student may nominate a staff member they trust, providing the staff member is agreeable to the arrangement.
9. Incidents of suspected abuse must be reported to the Guidance Counsellor, Head of Pastoral Care, SLT member, or the Principal.
10. Where there is a disclosure or concerns around any incident involving a teacher/staff member and abuse, the principal must follow conduct procedures as outlined in attachments to this Policy. If the allegations involve the principal, the Board of Trustees must be informed and follow the same procedure.
11. Policy review 3 yearly.

Guidelines for Recognising Abuse (Child Matters)

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (eg. Headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones
- Dressed differently from other children in the family
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Severe symptoms of self destructive behaviour – self harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child
- Continually threatens the child with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child
- Involves the child in "adult issues", such as separation or access issues
- Keeps the child at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent

Indicators of Neglect

There may be physical indicators that a child is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather
- Extremely dirty or unbathed
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time
- Malnourished
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance or school performance
- Poor social skills
- May steal food
- Is very demanding of affection or attention

- Has no understanding of basic hygiene

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care
- Fails to enrol a child in school or permits truancy
- Leaves the child home alone
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child's needs

Indicators of Physical Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being abused. Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
- Is violent to animals or other children
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child
- Shakes an infant
- Threats or attempts to injure a child
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or faeces
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this in young children are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Comments such as "I've got a secret", or "I don't like Uncle"

- In appropriate fire lighting
- Fear of certain places e.g. bedroom or bathroom

Some examples of this in older children are:

- Eating disorders
- Promiscuity or prostitution
- Uses younger children in sexual acts
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible

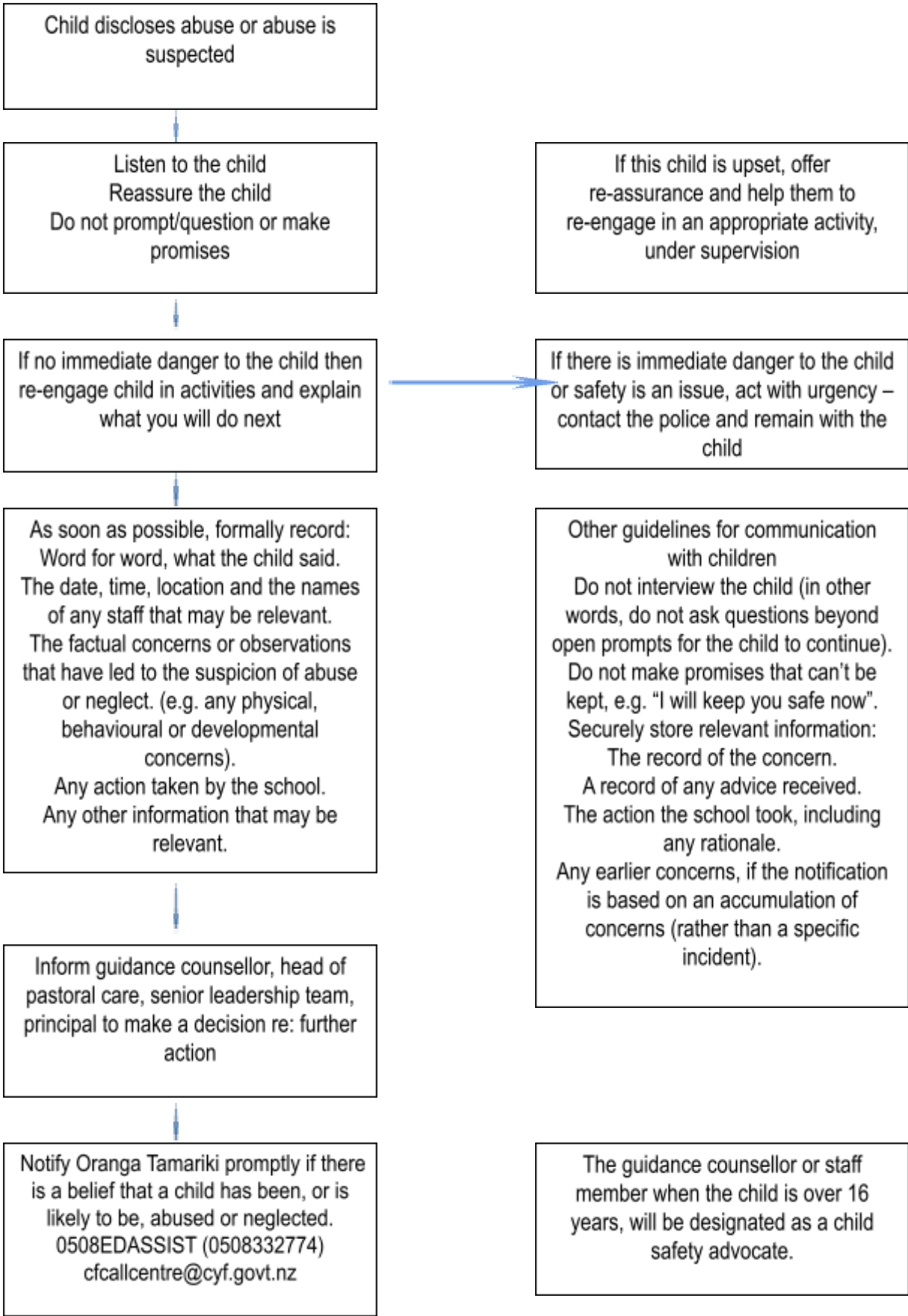
There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child
- Is jealous of a child's relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child
- May favour the victim over other children
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones

Appropriate Staff Conduct

As per The code of Professional Responsibility from the New Zealand Teachers Council
[Code of Professional Responsibility](#)

Responding to a Disclosure/Concern of Abuse



Child discloses abuse or abuse is suspected

Listen to the child
Reassure the child
Do not prompt/question or make promises

If this child is upset, offer re-assurance and help them to re-engage in an appropriate activity, under supervision

If no immediate danger to the child then re-engage child in activities and explain what you will do next

If there is immediate danger to the child or safety is an issue, act with urgency – contact the police and remain with the child

As soon as possible, formally record:
Word for word, what the child said.
The date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant.
The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect. (e.g. any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns).
Any action taken by the school.
Any other information that may be relevant.

Other guidelines for communication with children
Do not interview the child (in other words, do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue).
Do not make promises that can't be kept, e.g. "I will keep you safe now".
Securely store relevant information:
The record of the concern.
A record of any advice received.
The action the school took, including any rationale.
Any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident).

Inform guidance counsellor, head of pastoral care, senior leadership team, principal to make a decision re: further action

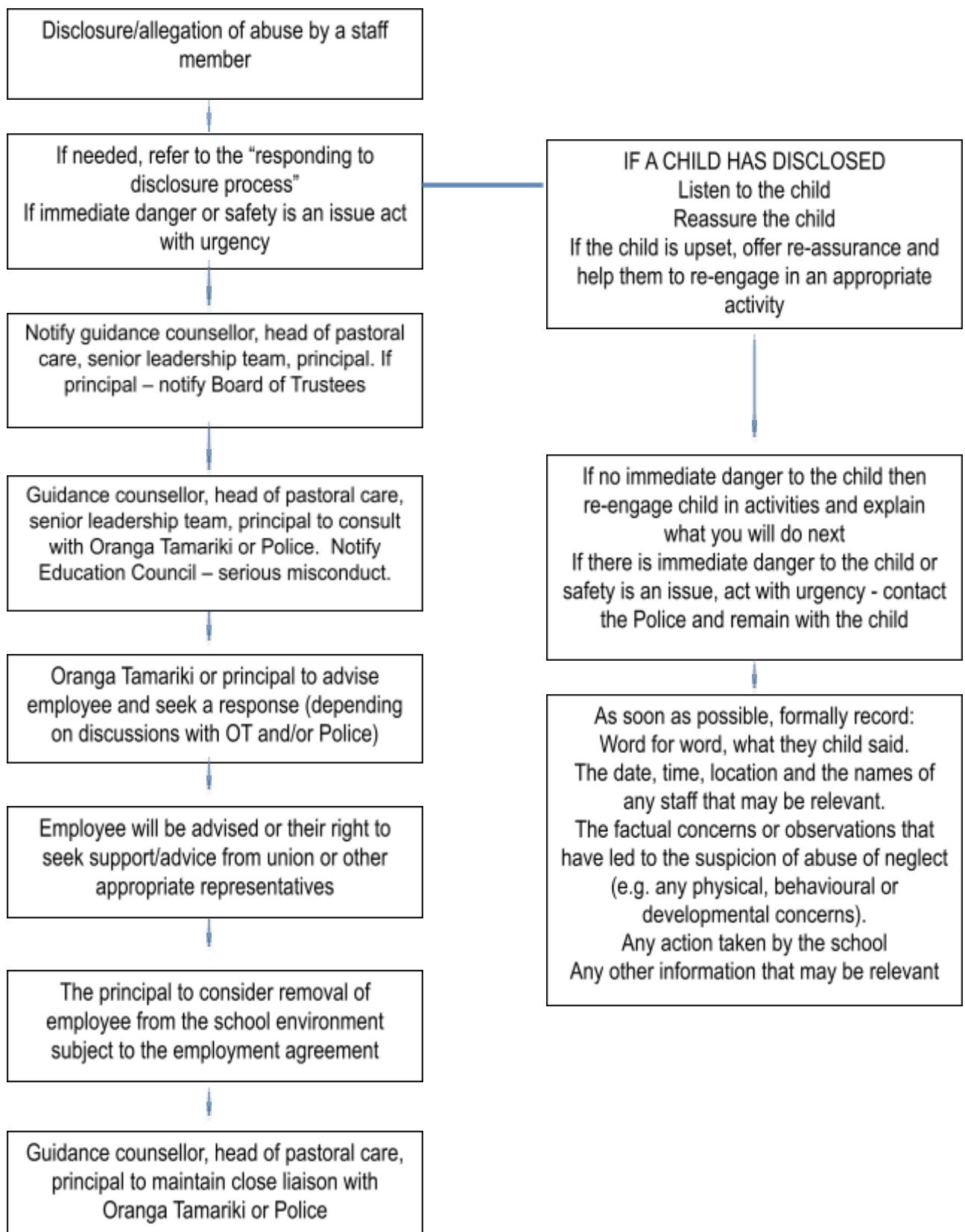
Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected.
0508EDASSIST (0508332774)
cfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz

The guidance counsellor or staff member when the child is over 16 years, will be designated as a child safety advocate.

Allegations Made Against Staff Member

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid, unpaid or in any programme role), the matter must be reported promptly to the guidance counsellor, head of pastoral care, senior leadership team and the principal.

Under no circumstances should the child making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the principal to consider removal of the staff member from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract. All actions will be undertaken with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality.



References

Responding to a Disclosure/Concern of Abuse

See attached from http://www.oscn.org.nz/uploads/86025/files/Child_Protection_Policy_2015.pdf

Allegations Made Against Staff Member

See attached from http://www.oscn.org.nz/uploads/86025/files/Child_Protection_Policy_2015.pdf

Guideline audited and reviewed by Self Review Committee
Date: Chairperson.....
Review Date.....