



# Liberton Christian School

## 5.B. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### RATIONALE:

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.

### GUIDELINES:

#### Scoping

All staff members (including contractors, subcontractors 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 [Oranga Tamariki 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. **At any stage of the process an individual may also report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the local police.**

We recognise the role of families and whānau in protecting their children however our commitment to implementing a culture of child protection may mean in most cases that our first action is to contact the appropriate agency. We will then follow their advice regarding informing or working with the family/whānau.

#### Delegations

Although ultimate accountability for this policy sits with the board, the Principal has responsibility for implementing this policy in the workplace. This includes ensuring that child protection procedures are in place and being implemented and they are available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents.

#### Expectations and limitations

The principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to Liberton Christian School and review these annually or sooner if circumstance dictates the need.
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make this policy available on the school's internet site and 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 that safety checks, according to the guidelines of the Children's Act 2014, are performed on all new staff members. Police vetting checks are to be carried out on all contractors, volunteers, and subcontractors who are working around children, including parent volunteers for camps.
6. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
7. Recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children. This does not mean go to the family/whānau in the first instance.
8. 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.
9. 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
10. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

11. 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.
12. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
13. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
14. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.
15. Ensure that a report is provided for the school's annual report re progress on implementation and compliance with any funding/contracting requirements around our child protection needs. The cost of training staff could be included in this

### ***Definition of Child Abuse:***

Child abuse includes:

- Physical abuse – any behaviour which results in physical harm to a child.
- Emotional abuse – a pattern of behaviour where the child is rejected or put down. They may be isolated, constantly degraded and criticised, or negatively compared to others.
- Sexual abuse – any act where a child is used for a sexual purpose, consensual or not.
- Neglect, which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.

These categories of abuse are provided as guidance only. It is important that all staff are able to identify indicators that a child may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse. It is not a requirement to determine which category this may refer to as indicators often overlap and inter-relate.

### ***Identifying signs of child abuse:***

It is most important to simply recognise that a child is or maybe at risk.

It is normal to feel uncertain when trying to work out if something is wrong. The important thing is to listen to "gut instinct" and actually recognise a feeling of concern, particularly if you notice a pattern, or are picking up on related worrying signs.

Some indicators that a child is suffering abuse are:

- Physical signs such as: unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.
- Developmental delays such as: small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech, poor social skills.
- Emotional abuse or neglect such as: sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness or loneliness, evidence of self-harm.
- Behavioural concerns such as: age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders, substance abuse, disengagement or neediness, aggression.
- The child or young person talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).

Some indicators that a child is suffering from neglect may include but are not limited to:

- Physical signs such as: looking uncared for, unwashed, not being clothed in appropriate clothing, underweight.
- Development delays such as: small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech, lacking in social skills.
- Emotional abuse or neglect such as: extremely tired from lack of sleep.
- Neglectful supervision such as: left alone at home, no safe home to return to, out and about unsupervised.
- Medical neglect such as persistent skin rashes.
- Educational neglect such as: chronic truancy, failure to enrol in a school, showing a lack of care around educational needs.

More detailed information around our child protection procedures can be found at our [Child abuse procedures](#).

These procedures include:

- What to do when a student makes a disclosure.
- How to respond when having recognised child abuse.
- What happens when an allegation is made about a staff member.
- What to do when you have a concern about the Principal.
- More detailed indicators of abuse.
- Information on the school-wide safety education programme.

Policy Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

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Signed: (Presiding Member, Board of Trustees)

### **Support Agencies:**

Public Health Nurse: 03 474 0999

Oranga Tamariki: 0508 326 459

Local Police: 03 471 4800

NZSTA 0800 782 435

### **Related documentation and information**

Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website

[www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz)

Ministry of Education website [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)

[Children's Act 2014](#)

[Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children](#)

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNROC\)](#)

Child Matters website [Home | Child Matters - Educating to Prevent Child Abuse](#)

[Vulnerable Children's 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>

### **Legislative compliance**

[The Privacy Act 1993](#) and [the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 \(CYPF Act\)](#) allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

The [Protected Disclosures Act 2000](#) facilitates the disclosure and investigation of serious wrongdoing in or by an organisation by protecting those employees who make such a disclosure.