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# A Guide to Keeping our Children and Tamariki Safe

## Table of Contents:

|  | <b>Page:</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Keeping Children and Tamariki Safe ..... | 2            |
| Responding to Abuse .....                | 3            |
| Reporting Concerns .....                 | 3            |
| <br>Safe Working Practices .....         | <br>4        |
| <br>Child Protection Overview .....      | <br>6        |
| <br>Key Contacts .....                   | <br>7        |

## Keeping Children and Tamariki Safe: Overview for Staff/Contractors/Volunteers/Parent Helpers:

**Always refer to the Te Pahu School Child Protection Policy  
Always consult with a Te Pahu School Designated Person for Child Protection**

*Te Pahu School values children and is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children and recognises that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. This commitment means that the interests and the welfare of the child are the prime considerations when any decision is made about suspected child abuse.*

Te Pahu School staff, contractors, volunteers and parent helpers must always maintain a professional relationship when working with children and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. Clear boundaries are important in maintaining professional behaviour and those working for, at, or behalf of Te Pahu School must act in a way that is considered to be safe practice.

Te Pahu School staff, contractors, volunteers and parent helpers have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children. Te Pahu School staff, contractors, volunteers and parent helpers have a responsibility to maintain these appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others.

If you are unsure about what might constitute child abuse, or if you are unsure about whether you ought to report an incident, you should ask for advice and guidance from the Principal. If the Principal is unavailable for advice and guidance, then you should consult with the Deputy Principal.

At any time you may seek advice from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) regarding child protection concerns.

### **Responding to Abuse:**

When child abuse is suspected, disclosed or witnessed, everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child concerned, along with the ongoing safety of any other child who is in close connection to the alleged offender. In all cases, the child is the primary concern and all other concerns (including the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender) must be secondary. This does not mean that the alleged offender is to be considered guilty without due investigation, but that the child's safety comes first.

The Te Pahu School Principal and Deputy Principal, as Designated Persons for Child Protection, have undergone intensive child protection training and know what to do in the event that abuse is disclosed, witnessed or suspected. Te Pahu School staff, contractors, volunteers and parent helpers must not act alone about concerns of abuse but must consult with either the Principal or the Deputy Principal who will be committed to taking action as outlined in the Te Pahu School Child Protection Policy.

#### **Reporting Concerns:**

All Te Pahu School staff, contractors, volunteers and parent helpers must report concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Principal at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child. If the Principal is unavailable, then consultation should occur with the Deputy Principal. In the event of concerns being raised during a class trip, or any other occasion where neither the Principal or the Deputy Principal are available, a report must be made immediately to the supervising teacher. A decision will then be made as to whether to notify Oranga Tamariki. If an immediate response is required to ensure the child's safety, contact should be made to the NZ Police and Oranga Tamariki directly.

#### **Safe Working Practices:**

As a staff member, contractor, volunteer or parent helper of Te Pahu School I **WILL**:

- Ensure that I am fully aware of, and adhere to, Te Pahu School's Child Protection Policy.
- Treat all children with respect at all times, regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- Promote an environment where children feel safe and comfortable in my care and contact.
- Act professionally and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.
- Avoid circumstances where my behaviour (both verbal and physical) may be misinterpreted as hostile, suggestive, inappropriate, offensive, suggestive or neglectful.
- Always ensure that a minimum of two adults are present when with a child. If it is not possible to have another adult present, I will ensure that I always operate an "open door" policy and that I am visible to others.
- Act swiftly to ensure that any perceived risk to a child is immediately reported in consultation with the Te Pahu School Principal or Deputy Principal, or supervising teacher in their absence.
- Inform the Principal or Deputy Principal, or the supervising teacher in their absence, of breaches in safe working practices, regardless of whether this has resulted in the harm of a child.
- Not engage in any unwarranted or inappropriate touching of a child. I will only engage in touch if it can be done in a safe manner and while visible to other adults.
- Not transport children, other than my own, alone in my vehicle unless in an emergency situation.
- Ensure that all communications with children, by whatever methods, are transparent and open to scrutiny.

I certify that I have read, understood and will comply with the Te Pahu School Child Protection Policy and Safe Working Practices.:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Protection Overview:

***Child abuse is “... the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person”***

**Section 2, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989**

Child abuse can involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or it may arise from a single incident. Child abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- o Physical Abuse
- o Sexual Abuse
- o Emotional Abuse
- o Neglect

Child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- o Direct or indirect disclosure by the child or someone known to the child;
- o Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child;
- o Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child’s physical or emotional behaviour;
- o Direct witnessing of abuse.

When disclosures of abuse come directly from a child, it is important that you take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or your own opinion on what is being said. When a child tells you what has been happening to them, or when you witness or suspect child abuse, it is important that you, as the adult, remain calm and confident.

- RESPOND:** Respond to the person (adult or child) – Believe what they tell you and/or what you see.
- SAFETY:** Ensure the safety of the child. Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This will mean contacting the NZ Police (**111**) and Oranga Tamariki (**0508 326 459**) if you think there is an immediate risk to the child.
- RECORD:** Record immediately all initial statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date.
- CONSULT:** Do not make decisions alone. Consult with the Te Pahu School Child Protection Policy and the Principal. If the Principal is unavailable, consultation is to occur with the Deputy Principal. Oranga Tamariki is always available to give advice.
- REPORT:** Report concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Principal at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child. If the Principal is unavailable, consultation is to occur with the Deputy Principal. If neither Principal nor the Deputy Principal are available (for example, you are on a class camp), report to the supervising teacher. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.
- SUPPORT:** Seek support for yourself. Responding to a child protection issue can be stressful.

**Think “what if I’m right?” .... Not “what if I’m wrong?”**

Key Child Protection Contacts:

The Principal Of Te Pahu School Is Your Primary Designated Person For Child Protection:

**Meegan Dunn**

The Deputy Principal Of Te Pahu School Is Your Secondary Designated Person For Child Protection:

**Edward Walker**

The Chair Of The Te Pahu School Board Of Trustees Is:

**Elizabeth Overdyck**

**Te Pahu School**

**07 825 9849**

**Ministry for Children - Oranga Tamariki**

**0508 326 0459**

**New Zealand Police**

**111**