



**SAMUEL
MARSDEN**
COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION

Policy Category: Health & Safety

Reviewed: 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Marsden staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of all students in our care and are committed to providing a safe environment and comply with the requirements and responsibilities under the relevant child protection legislation: Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, Education Act 1989, Human Rights Act 1993, Bill of Rights Act 1990 and Children's Act 2014.

Marsden School staff are committed to work with other agencies where necessary to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and their families/whanau.

SCOPE

This policy covers the Principal, Management Board and all Staff in their responsibilities in the safety and wellbeing of children.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this Policy 'staff' means all those employed by Marsden whether paid or voluntary, full time or part time. Marsden School is referred to as the 'School'.

CHILD ABUSE is defined in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act as "the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person".

NEGLECT “is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs”.

Neglect may be:

- Physical – failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth
- Medical – failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child
- Physical/sexual – the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or that violates the Law.
- Psychological abuse – attitudes and behaviours on the part of other people which severely impact on the child’s emotional and physical development.

PROCEDURES

Who Can Investigate

PRINCIPAL

The Principal (or Directors of School or Deans where delegated by the Principal) will investigate allegations of harm or abuse. The Principal may refer allegations to outside agencies for investigation. Should an allegation be brought against a staff member, the Principal would deal with the investigation and notify the Chair of the Management Board.

CHAIR OF MANAGEMENT BOARD

Should an allegation be brought against the Principal, the Chair of the Management Board, or if the Chair was unavailable another Board member, would deal with the investigation. The Chair will exercise the responsibilities of the Principal as outlined.

REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

The School may take action under this policy when there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of harm or have been advised of any situation that may cause a risk of harm. Staff must report this matter to the Principal or Director of School immediately when any of the following reasonable grounds for concern exist:

- a) a child talks about being physically or sexually abused;
- b) a person (another student, friend, acquaintance, sibling, neighbour) tells of the suspected harm or risk of harm of a child or young person;
- c) harm is suspected because of a child’s behaviour or physical appearance or condition.

After reporting any concern that they have (or that has been reported to them), to the Principal the reporting staff member should make a note of the reporting. This report is confidential to the staff member and the Principal. The Principal will investigate the matter promptly and advise the person who raised the concern of the action taken. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves.

MANAGING AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN OR YOUNG PERSONS

Interagency Protocols

All complaints of alleged abuse will be taken seriously and treated with utmost confidentiality. The School will act immediately to ensure the safety of all students and to prevent any situation from escalating. The School will follow the policies and procedures for the voluntary reporting of child abuse as recommended in the interagency protocols. (Breaking the Cycle: Interagency Protocols for Child Abuse Management (1996), (CYP&FS), Let's stop child abuse together – An Interagency guide to Breaking the Cycle (2001). (CYP&FS).

All records of such cases shall be kept in confidential files by the Principal.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The School endeavours to ensure:

- The interest and protection of all children are paramount in all actions.
- All children are treated with respect and dignity and that they have their rights and needs met in a safe environment.
- We have a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action.
- We are committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and high quality.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to cover a range of situations including abuse involving other students, staff, the Principal or someone beyond the school environment.

We will encourage our staff, students and parents/caregivers to talk to someone experienced and have contacts readily displayed on our noticeboards and in newsletters.

The School endeavours to give all students the skills to help them with their personal safety. Education of the children is seen to be paramount in the prevention of child abuse. To this end, the School will provide programmes on personal safety (**see Bullying and Harassment Policy**).

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

We conduct safety checks of all staff in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Children's Act requirements. Safety checks are to be updated every three years and must include:

- Confirmation of identity.
- Confirmation of address by the provision of personally addressed official documents.
- Confirmation of qualifications and professional registration checks. Certified copies are acceptable.
- New Zealand Police vetting.
- Good character assessment: interviews, information from referees, information from relevant professional organisations or registration bodies.

Marsden have a commitment to on-going training of staff in the awareness of child protection. Guidelines and support are readily available to staff. See **Appendix 1 and Appendix 11**.

PROCEDURES

The Principal (or Directors of School where delegated by the Principal and in consultation with the Health Team) will investigate allegations of harm or abuse. The Principal may refer allegations to outside agencies for investigation.

In situations where abuse is alleged or disclosed the School will ensure:

- The rights and needs of the child must always be paramount in any investigation by the school of suspected child abuse.
- Children are to be listened to in a supportive, caring and non-judgemental manner in disclosure or investigation situations. All information is to be received as given in trust and must be handled in a serious manner. Confidentiality is essential in such situations in order to protect the child.
- Children must be made to feel that they are in control of the disclosure process and they may be kept informed of consequence of any discovery or disclosure as appropriate.
- The immediate family of the child is to be informed as soon as possible by the school of the disclosure or suspicion of alleged child abuse, whenever this is deemed appropriate by the Principal. Sensitivity and confidentiality must be to the fore when dealing with a child's family in such situations.
- If an outside person alleges suspicion of child abuse to the school, the school will direct that outside person to a helping agency without being involved, if possible, although the school may be called to be involved at a later date.
- Confidentiality is maintained. Failure of staff to comply with this policy may be regarded as serious misconduct.
- The rights of those involved are respected during any investigation.
- Appropriate records are maintained.

The Protection of Staff

Staff will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Familiarise themselves with the School's policy and procedures on Child Protection.
- Immediately notify the Principal or Director of School if they observe signs of child abuse or anyone reports to them any suspicions of child abuse or a pattern of neglect or concern are identified.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy may be regarded as serious misconduct.

IMPACTS OF POLICY ON STAFF, PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Information, discussion, trusting relationships and clear procedures will strengthen the ability of staff, parents and children to work together to adequately protect all who attend Marsden. This policy is aligned with Marsden's philosophy.

IMPLEMENTATION

All staff, whether part-time, full-time, contractors or volunteers will be advised of and have access to the Child Protection Policy. Any review of the Child Protection Policy will be advised to staff who will have access to the online document to review.

All new employees to Marsden will be made aware of and have access to the Child Protection Policy during their Induction meeting.

REVIEW

We will build discussions into staff meetings and review the Child Protection Policy every three years or when there is significant change in the area of the policy topic.

AUTHORISED:

DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN: Principal, Directors of School, Management Board, Staff, parents and whanau.

LEGISLATION/REGULATION REFERENCES:

Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989

Education Act 1989

Health and Safety Act 2015

Human Rights Act 1993

Bill of Rights Act 1990

Children's Act 2014

APPENDIX 1

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF CONDUCTING STUDENT INTERVIEWS AND WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

From time to time, Teachers and Teacher Aides may be placed in a situation where they are required to spend time alone with a student. These may include one or all of the following:

- Individual tutoring or coaching.
- A counselling or guidance interview.
- Supervision of a student at school after school hours.
- Driving a student to an event.
- Supervision of a student at a function.

In all of the above situations it is essential for all staff to observe the following:

- Whenever possible, one teacher-one student situations should be avoided. Invite another teacher or another student to join you if at all possible. Male-female situations are especially sensitive.
- One on one tutoring is best taken place where you are readily observable, such as lunchtime in the library or classroom or in your workspace with the door open.
- Where a student arrives upset or in an emotional state, inform another teacher nearby if possible to avoid creating an emotionally dependent situation. Respond appropriately to any child who is upset. It is not appropriate to instigate or force any unwanted affection on a child or young person.
- Involve the Dean, School Nurse or Chaplain if the problem appears to be anything other than short term.
- Involve more than one student in any tutoring or coaching situation that you initiate where possible.
- As a Marsden employee, private tutoring in your home or in a student's home is not condoned.

APPENDIX II

ADVICE TO DEANS, CAREERS ADVICE STAFF AND OTHER SENIOR STAFF ON MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

- Where possible include another person whether that be a teacher or student.
- Let someone else know you are meeting a student. Notify the parent, form/tutor teacher or Dean.
- Keep the tone of the meeting professional avoiding comments or discussions about private life that are not relevant to the situation or discussion.
- Ensure you are sitting at a distance from each other to respect private space and keep the door open where possible. Consider meeting in the cafeteria or out in the open.
- If any situation arises which arouses your concern, leave the room immediately and ask a colleague to join you.
- After any meeting, make a written record of the meeting including time and place and inform the student that you will be doing so.
- Advise the parents of the meeting and if possible, advise another senior colleague.