

Katikati Primary School

Child Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines our commitment to child protection. It includes our protocols when child abuse is reported to the Management Team- (Principal and/ or Deputy Principals) or is suspected by any staff member at Katikati Primary. *It also includes practice notes on measures to be taken to prevent child abuse.* All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and to abide by it.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

- We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care and are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority when investigating suspected or alleged abuse.
- We support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.
- We support families/whānau to protect their children.
- We provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

- We recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision making about their children however the interests and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- 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 in response.
- 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.
- We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- We are committed to sharing information in a timely way and to discussing any concerns about an individual child with *colleagues* and management.
- We are committed to promoting a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse: Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as 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.

Identifying possible abuse or neglect

Physical abuse

Any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

Sexual abuse

Any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

Emotional abuse

Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.

This can include:

Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.

Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.

Neglect can be:

Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).

Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).

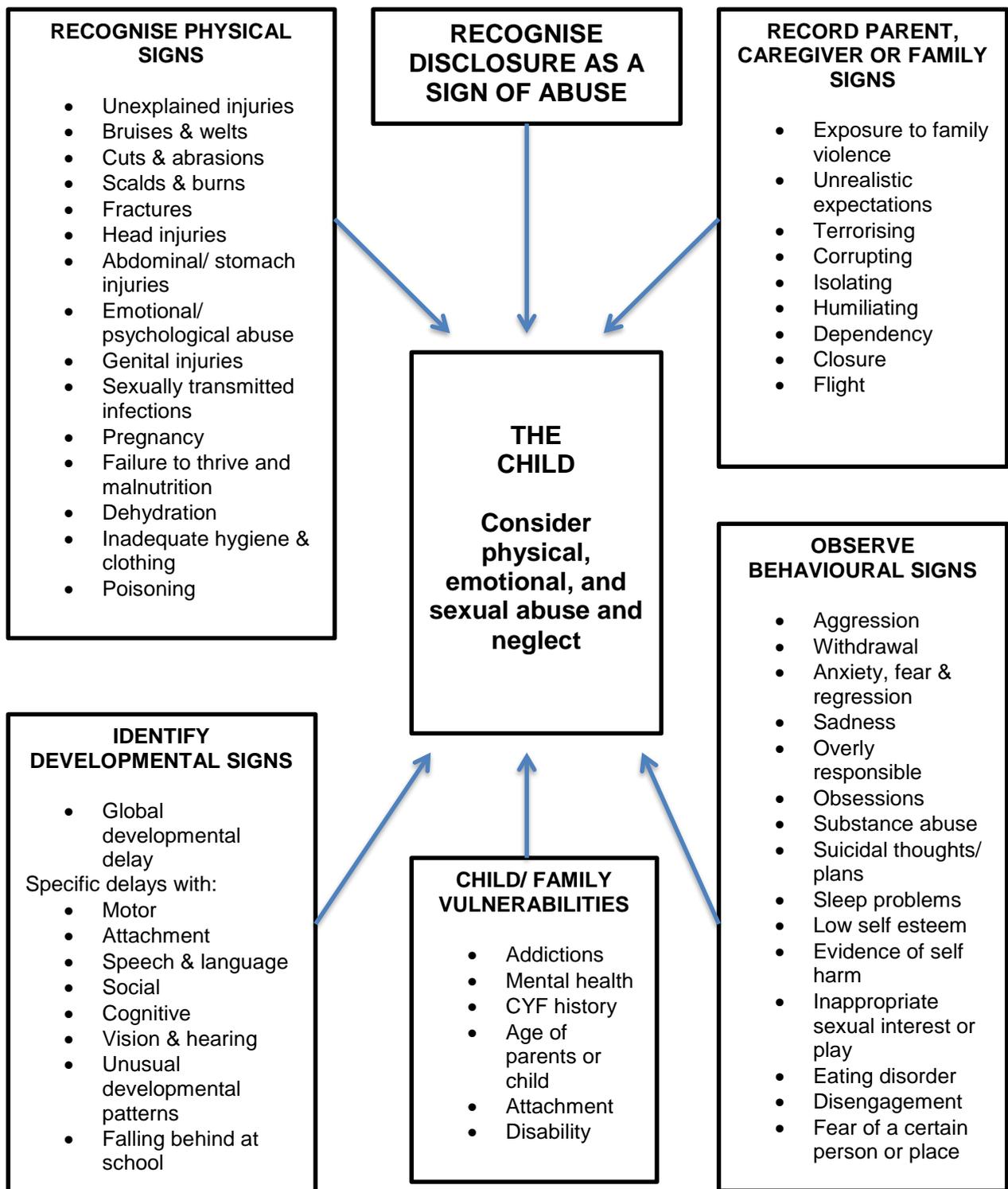
Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).

Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).

Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The signs, symptoms and history listed below may indicate abuse or neglect, however they are NOT specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child's situation.



STAFF RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents will be reported directly to management as soon as possible, who will take steps to protect and advocate for the child(ren).

Once the disclosure has been recorded a decision will be made by management to seek the appropriate support proportionate to the level of need and risk:

- Report the concern to police

- Report the concern to Oranga Tamariki.
- Report the concern to appropriate local support agencies eg: Public Health Nurse, Runanga, GSE, Attendance Officer

Staff are to follow the flow chart - Reporting processes for Child Abuse

STAFF RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED ABUSE BY A STAFF MEMBER

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be reported immediately to management team. If it is an allegation against the Principal, the BOT Chairperson must be contacted immediately.

When a staff member is suspected, the same processes apply.

If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, consult with Oranga Tamariki or the Police before advising the person concerned, informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. They should also be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.

We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

Staff are to follow the Flow Chart- When an allegation is made against a staff member

Confidentiality and information sharing The Privacy Act 1993 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

REPORTING PROCESS FOR CHILD ABUSE

Disclosure of abuse or neglect is made

- **Listen to the child.** Stay calm, be patient. Keep voice low and gentle
- **Reassure the child-** You are not in trouble, You have done the right thing
- **Ask open ended prompts-** eg What happened next? Do not ask questions beyond open prompts. Do not make promises that can't be kept eg: I will keep you safe, or offer confidentiality
- **Inform Senior Management**

If the child is visibly distressed

Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities

If child is not in immediate danger

If child is in immediate danger

Re involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next

CONTACT THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY

As soon as possible formally record the disclosure

Record:

- Word for word, what the child said
- The date, time and location of observation/ report of abuse
- Names of anyone present
- The factual concerns or observations that have led to suspicion of abuse or neglect
- The action the school has taken
- Any other information that may be relevant.

Decision making

Discuss any concern with management. No decisions should be made in isolation. You can ring Oranga Tamariki and discuss concerns without making a formal complaint. If your concerns have diminished continue to monitor situation closely, in consultation with others.

Notify authorities

- Oranga Tamariki
- Local Support Agencies

A decision in conjunction with agencies will be made jointly regarding informing parents and when this should happen and by who.

Notify Oranga Tamariki if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected

- 0508 Family (0508 326 459)
- Email contact@ot.govt.nz

WHEN AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER

As per disclosure process, up to “decision making”

Management team notified, or in the case of an allegation against the Principal, BOT Chairperson. At least two people should be designated to deal with the concern- including the reporting and employment aspects. In all instances the BOT will be informed.

Management/ BOT Chair consult with Trustees, Oranga Tamariki, Police.
Management/ BOT to refer to relevant employment contract using NZSTA for advice.

- Employee will be advised of their right to seek support/ advice from union or other appropriate representatives
- Management/ BOT to contemplate removal of employee from the school subject to the employment contract
- Management/ BOT to maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki or the Police
- Safety of child must be assured even if it means temporarily removing the staff member

Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

Refer to personnel policy

Training, supervision and support

Resources and advice will be available to ensure that all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:

- Understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse
- How to reduce the risk of child abuse
- Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regards to child abuse
- Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues
- Planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk
- Dealing with child/parents/family/whanau

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years.