

SOUTHCITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Contact details for Child, Youth and Family
(now called Oranga Tamariki)**

0508 326 459

0800 024 255

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1. Statement of Commitment:

Southcity Christian School is committed to the prevention of abuse. We will ensure the well-being and safety of all children, staff and families connected to our school.

This policy provides guidelines to staff, by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect and to understand their own role in keeping children safe.

This policy was written in accordance with the following legislation:

- Education Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989
- Crimes Act 1961
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Health Act 1956
- Health and Disability Sector Standards Regulations 2001
- Privacy Act 1993
- Health Information Privacy Code 1994
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Human Rights Act
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

This policy will be reviewed **EVERY THREE YEARS** and updated regularly in light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislation and associated policies.

2. Scope:

This policy covers all staff of Southcity Christian School who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by Southcity Christian School, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Southcity Christian School. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

This policy covers the Board of Trustees and their responsibilities in the safety and well-being of children.

This policy applies to all children who attend Southcity Christian School and to those with whom staff come into contact in the course of their work (ie siblings).

All staff (including contractors and volunteers) have a responsibility to discuss any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, with the Principal.

3. Definitions:

- For the purpose of this policy, **“Child”** means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years. **“Young person”** means a boy or girl of, or over the age of 14 years, but under 17 years. (Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1989, Section 2).
- For the purpose of this policy, **“Staff”** means people working at Southcity Christian School. It includes employees, contractors, consultants, students, associates and volunteers whether working on a full time, part time, casual or temporary basis.
- **“Child abuse”** is defined in the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1989, as the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. See appendix for expanded definitions of abuse.

4. Principles:

This Child Protection Policy confirms the commitment of Southcity Christian School to the protection of children and proceeds to:

- Outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide
- Define child abuse
- Outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of abuse or ill-treatment is known or suspected
- Establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff
- Explore the implications for staff training

Southcity Christian School will ensure that:

- Staff are carefully selected with the principles of this policy in mind
- Staff are appropriately trained in issues of child protection
- Staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures and/or guidelines

Southcity Christian School recognises that the family’s primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained. However, the child’s safety and well-being will have priority.

All services provided by Southcity Christian School for the safety and well-being of children adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

5. Responsibilities:

Any member of staff, paid or voluntary, may directly witness child abuse or have allegations made by a child or an adult, relayed to them. There may also be disclosures of abuse that have occurred prior to attending Southcity Christian School. As sustained abuse and neglect of children can have major long term effects on all aspects of their health, development and well-being, it is the intention of Southcity Christian School to ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children at all times. This is achieved through consistent and agreed protocols regarding child protection, as well as the regular undertaking of awareness-raising training.

Each staff member must:

- Be aware of, and alert to, potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
- Record (usually in writing) a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention.
- Appropriately seek advice and support from the Principal, who will then contact external agencies if appropriate. **However, should the Principal decide against contacting the external agencies, and the staff member feels very strongly that they should be contacted, the staff member can contact them directly (for advice, or to report the case).**
- Work in co-operation with the parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety of the child.

It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators or neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Child, Youth and Family and the Police.

Role of the Principal

The role of the Principal is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is effectively implemented throughout Southcity Christian School. Ensure that all staff are aware of and have access to full copies of the procedures for reporting child abuse.
- Ensure that all staff are employed, in accordance with approved guidelines to identify those people safe to work with children.
- Ensure that all staff receive child protection training.
- Receive information that suggests potential or actual risk of harm to a child who attends Southcity Christian School, irrespective of whether the alleged abuse is current, past or likely to occur. The Principal will advise and support staff, and based on the initial detail, will make a decision about further action.
- Ensure all staff are supported appropriately, when dealing with child protection concerns.
- Make referrals to Child, Youth and Family as appropriate.
- Ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately. No investigation will occur without appropriate consultation and a decision whether a response from Child Youth and Family or the Police is required.
- If the allegation/complaint is about a staff member, ensure that this is appropriately referred to the Education Council of New Zealand.
- Ensure and safeguard clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection cases. These must contain all available information relating to the cause for concern and any subsequent action taken. Especially note when it has been decided not to make a notification to Child Youth and Family or the police. These records are to be kept separate from the student's black folder for the purpose of confidentiality.

Role of the Board of Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount.
- Support the Principal to ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately. No investigation will occur without appropriate consultation and a decision whether a response from Child Youth and Family or the Police is required.
- Support the Principal to ensure that allegations or complaints are appropriately referred to the Education Council of New Zealand.
- Inform the Principal immediately should any member of the Board of Trustees be aware of a concern for the wellbeing and safety of any child who attends Southcity Christian School.
- The Chair of the Board of Trustees will be directly informed of any allegations of abuse directed against the Principal.

6. Confidentiality and Information sharing

Privacy Act (1993)

Principle 11;

Defines limits on disclosure of personal information: “An agency that holds personal information shall not disclose the information to a person or body or agency” HOWEVER

where the use of the information will reduce the threat to the life or health of others, this may be done.

See <https://www.privacy.org.nz/how-to-comply/sharing-information-about-vulnerable-children/>

Southcity Christian School will seek advice from Child, Youth and Family and/ or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the Principal or Board Chairperson. Staff must be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Child, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, 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.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles- i.e., the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so, to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Staff may however, disclose information under the Privacy Act where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety. Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Child, Youth and Family.

7. Safe recruitment of staff

All appointments (permanent, fixed term, casual or volunteer) to positions that have direct and /or frequent contact with children or young people, will be conditional on safety checks, including a Police check.

Registered teachers are Police vetted through the Educational Council when they are registered.

8. Training of staff

All staff will receive child protection training at the level appropriate to their role. The Designated Person for Child Protection (usually the Principal) will undertake more intensive training. This person will be accessible to staff to provide advice and support.

All staff will be given appropriate training covering basic awareness of child protection. This will include an overview of signs and indicators of abuse, and also the procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse. Training will include:

- Roles and responsibilities of staff regarding child protection.
- Recognising and responding to the signs and indicators of actual or suspected abuse.
- Ensuring staff understand and can follow the Child Protection Policy and the procedures for reporting a concern.
- All staff will receive updated training every three years as a minimum.

9. Induction of new staff

All new staff will receive child protection training as part of their induction and will receive a copy of this policy as part of the induction process.

10. Safe Working Practices

- A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is a potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
- Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others. Adults who work with children must therefore act in a way that is considered safe practice.
- Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, must take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phone, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites, social networking and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They must not request or respond to, any personal information from the child or young person, other than that which is appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults must ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

- Any sexual activity between an adult and a child or young person will be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.
- When physical contact is made with a child, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and /or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- All staff are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the Education Council Code of Professional Responsibility.

11. Allegations made against members of staff, regarding inappropriate actions with children.

- Southcity Christian School has a duty of care to the children who attend our school. A failure to report a significant concern about a child is a breach of that child's human rights.
- Anyone who has reason to make a complaint will be made aware of the Southcity Christian School complaints process. If an issue raised as a complaint also constitutes an allegation of abuse, then this must be referred directly to the Principal.
- Making a disclosure or a complaint against someone in a position of power or authority, is always difficult. At the outset, it must be clearly communicated with the child or adult that their concern is being taken seriously and will be responded to in accordance with this policy.
- Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff, volunteers or representatives of other agencies must be taken seriously and reported to the Principal who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined in this policy. Concerns may be raised in a number of ways eg:
 - Directly by staff hearing or observing issues of concern or behaviour of concern.
 - Direct disclosure by the child or young person.
 - Indirect disclosure e.g. through written or art work or through friends.
 - Complaint from a parent or caregiver or whanau member.
 - Reports by other colleagues or agencies.
 - As an anonymous report.
- If the allegation is against the Principal, then this must be reported directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- It is **NOT** the responsibility of staff to investigate allegations of child abuse. Allegations against staff will be discussed with the Board of Trustees where a decision will be made if a notification to Child, Youth and Family is appropriate.

- In all child protection cases, Southcity Christian School will co-operate fully with both Child, Youth and Family and the Police in their investigations and assessments.
- If the Police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, then the member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.
- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken, if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or inappropriate behaviour may have occurred. The allegation may represent poor practice by a member of staff, which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.
- A complaint or allegation against a member of staff may require a report to the Education Council. Further information regarding the thresholds for reports to the Education Council is in the Appendix.
- All staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children and young people. All staff have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others. Any concerns or reasonable suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Principal.
- A person tendering his/her resignation, or ceasing to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation of abuse against a child, or young person, being followed up in accordance with these procedures.

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years.

Review date

Next review date

Chairperson signature

12. Child Protection Procedures:

All staff will respond to concerns of child abuse by following the identified procedures, consulting appropriately and collaborating with external agencies.

The procedures set out below will help staff with:

- The identification of abuse
- Handling disclosures whether verbal or behavioural, from a child
- Reporting procedures

Identification of abuse

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

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person.

Neglect

Neglect is any act or omission that results in impaired physical functioning, injury and/or development of a child or young person.

Cumulative harm

Cumulative harm is the existence of compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or “layers” of neglect. The unremitting daily impact on the child can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of the child’s life.

Vulnerability

Vulnerable children are children who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now and into the future, as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised, and is in some cases, due to their own complex needs. Environment factors that influence a child’s vulnerability include not having their base emotional, physical, social, developmental and/or cultural needs met at home or in their wider community.

Child on child harmful behaviour

It is important to be aware that children can harm other children. These behaviours are outside of what may be considered the normal range, and can extend to bullying, violence or sexual assault. Therefore

when a child alleges inappropriate harmful behaviour by another child, then the child protection procedures outlined in this policy must be considered for both children. (When the behaviour has intent, power, is unwanted, repetitive, traumatic, and involves secrecy, then this is beyond the normal range of children's behaviours)

Suicidal concerns or Self Harming behaviours

It is important to be aware that children can harm themselves or attempt suicide. When a child identifies thoughts of suicide, or self-harming behaviour, the Principal must be notified immediately. If immediate action is required, phone the Mental Health Team at Waikato Hospital (0800 50 50 50 Emergencies only)

Further information regarding signs and indicators of abuse is included in the Appendix.

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When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against another person, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of the child.

Contact the Principal for advice and guidance around your suspicions. At any time, staff may seek advice from Child Youth and Family (0508 FAMILY – 0508 326 459) regarding child protection concerns.

Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be situations when this does not happen:

- **The parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator**
- **The child may be intimidated into silence**
- **There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed**

Disclosure

Types of Disclosure

- **Direct disclosure** – The child discloses a situation to you directly eg Dad hits me with a stick. Uncle Jim touches my bottom.
- **Indirect disclosure** – The child is vague around what is actually happening eg Dad does things I don't like. Mum and I have a secret.
- **Third party disclosure** – The child tells one of their friends/classmates, who comes to tell the class teacher or another adult.
- **Conditional disclosure** – The child says they will tell you something, but you need to promise that it will remain a secret.

Dealing with disclosures of abuse

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance. When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously.

It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

Dealing with a disclosure

- If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a staff member, it is important for the staff member to take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the staff member's own opinion on what the child is saying.
- Don't panic.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
- Listen to the child and reassure them, but do not make any promises or commitments you cannot keep. (ie if the child asks you to keep what they have said, a secret.)
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure.
- Do not formally interview the child – obtain only necessary relevant facts.
- **DO NOT** question the child about the event, but clarify their words. Should they say "Uncle Bob did such and such" – rather ask "who is Uncle Bob and where does he live?"
- Should you need to clarify what was said to get a better understanding – then ask the child, "When you said that Uncle Bob did such and such, what did you mean?"
- Carefully record any physical or behavioural observations and anything said by the child (using the child's own words as far as possible. Include date, time who was present etc.
- Consult immediately (or as soon as possible) with the Principal. Discuss and agree on an appropriate course of action, including whether a report of concern is to be made.
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with the school chaplain or a relevant person.

Important Notes:

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the children.
- Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child is difficult, but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

Things TO SAY when a child discloses

- Thank the child for telling you, and then clarify your understanding. "When you said..... "What did you mean?"or "Who is Uncle Bob and where does he live?"
- Use their words back to them – ask "How come? How come you were at home alone last night?"

- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

Things NOT TO SAY when a child discloses

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I am shocked!'
- 'Oh that explains a lot'
- 'No not...he's a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

Things TO DO

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the Principal.
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.

Things NOT TO DO

- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself.
- Do NOT formally interview the child.
- Never ask leading questions.
- Never push for information or make assumptions.
- Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.
- Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
- Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality.
- Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers.
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the principal.

Discuss the matter with the school chaplain or a relevant person.

Under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse on their own. Any incidents, concerns or suspicions must be reported, following Southcity Christian School procedures.

Always follow the procedure in the boxes below:

Disclosure

“Dad hits me with a stick.”
“Mum whacks me with the jug cord.”
“Uncle Bob touches my bottom.”
“I don’t like me uncle.”

Reassure

“How come?”
“Tell me about it.”
“It’s not OK what happened to you.”
“I believe you.”
“It’s not your fault.”

Consult

Principal
CYFS (for advice)
Child Protection Policy

Record

What was said (child’s own words)
What format did the disclosure take?
When did this happen?
Use record of concern form

Report

Principal
CYFS
Police
Children’s Team

*Further information regarding responding to a disclosure is included in the Appendix-
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Recording information

A record of concern form is an effective way of recording concerns and notifying the Principal.

Where there is a disclosure, it is very important that the information is recorded fairly soon after it has been told, to ensure accuracy is maintained.

Please record the child’s actual words. Do not make any assumptions around what the child is saying. Always clarify, by saying, “Explain that to me”.

A Record of Concern form can be found in the staff room cubby holes. It is on coloured paper. The original will be kept in a confidential folder, by the Principal. A copy is to be kept by the class teacher, in a format that is not accessed by the children (ie not black folders)

Record of Concern Form

Child name:	
Date:	
Time:	
Notes:	
Action:	
Signed:	
Name:	
Date:	

Confidentiality and Information sharing

Responding to requests for information

Consider

- Who wants the information?
- Do you have proof of who they are?
- Who do they act for?
- Who is the most appropriate person to give this information?
- What is the purpose of the information?
- Do we need parent permission to give this information?
- What will be done with the information?
- How at risk is the child?
- Could the relationship between the school and the family be so damaged by sharing information against their wishes, that it may be better not to share?

Key points in regards to sharing information

- Confirm the identity of the person requesting the information.
- You must obtain consent from parents and caregivers to share information, unless the child will be placed at risk of significant harm if you do not share the information (ie if the parent/caregiver is the abuser).
- Consent must be informed. This means that the person giving consent understands why people are being told information; What will happen to that information; Who will be told what; Who they will then pass the information on to.
- Make sure that the information you are sharing is accurate, up to date, necessary for the purpose you are sharing it, and only shared with those who need to know it.
- Differentiate between opinion and observation. If stating an opinion, record factual information that supports your opinion.
- The information should be shared securely.
- While the allegation is being considered or investigated, every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality, and guard against publicity.
- Notify the Principal that you have been approached for information.
- Document all steps in the process. Ensure that all documentation is placed on the child's Child Protection File.

Safe recruitment of staff

Applications:

- A CV will be required.
- A standard application form will be used.
- A clear job description will be provided.

Shortlisting:

- Information will be gathered from the applicant to determine suitability.

Interview:

- A face to face interview will be conducted.
- Interviews will include a pre-planned question programme.

Conditional offer:

- Vetting and screening checks will be undertaken.
- References will be contacted.
- Qualifications, if appropriate will be verified.

Confirmation of employment:

- A full assessment of the information available is conducted and a decision to employ is made.
- Rescreening will take place every three years.

Child Protection Policy – Appendix

Definitions of Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others. Psychological bullying /threatening is also classified as emotional abuse.

Physical indicators:

- Bed wetting or bed soiling with no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (eg headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Non organic failure to thrive
- Pale, emaciated
- Prolonged vomiting and / or diarrhoea
- Malnutrition
- Dressed differently to other children in the family

Behavioural indicators:

- Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
- Running away from home, avoiding attending school
- Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
- Antisocial behaviours
- Lack of self esteem
- Obsessive behaviours
- Eating disorders

Caregiver indicators:

- Labels the child as inferior or publicly humiliates the child (eg name calling)
- Treats the child differently from siblings or peers in ways that suggest dislike for the child
- Actively refuses to help the child
- Constantly threatens the child with physical harm or death
- Locks the child in a closet or room for extended periods of time
- Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
- Withholds physical and verbal affection
- Keeps the child at home in the role of servant or surrogate parent
- Has unrealistic expectations of child
- Involves child in adult issues such as separation or arguments over child's care

- Exposes child to witnessing situations of arguing and violence in the home

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs.

Physical indicators:

- Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
- Often extremely dirty and unwashed
- Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
- Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods
- May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult
- Does not receive adequate medical or dental care
- Malnourished – this can be both underweight or overweight
- Lacks adequate shelter
- Non-organic failure to thrive

Behavioural indicators:

- Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
- Lack of attachment to parents/caregivers
- Indiscriminate attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance and performance
- Demanding of affection and attention
- Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
- May steal food
- Poor social skills
- No understanding of basic hygiene

Caregiver indicators:

- Puts own needs ahead of child's
- Fails to provide child's basic needs
- Demonstrates little or no interest in child's life – does not attend school activities, social events
- Leaves the child alone or inappropriately supervised
- Drug and alcohol use
- Depressed

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning (cigarette smoke, P, alcohol), or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Physical indicators: (often unexplained or inconsistent with explanation given)

- Bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions
- Burns – small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns etc
- Fractures and dislocations – skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
- Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
- Fractures in very young children

Behavioural indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- Wary of adults or a particular person
- Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- Cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly
- May be extremely compliant and eager to please
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
- May regress (e.g. bedwetting)
- May indicate general sadness
- Could have vision or hearing delay
- Is violent to other children or animals

Caregiver indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- May appear unconcerned about child's wellbeing
- May state the child is prone to injuries and lies about how they occur
- Delays in seeking medical attention
- May take the child to multiple medical appointments and seek medical treatment without an obvious need

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual touching or behaviour that gives the person sexual pleasure or gratification.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative – eg rape, kissing, touching, masturbation), as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours (whether consensual or not). Exposing children to anything sexual can be classified as sexual abuse. It does not have to involve any "touching".

Physical indicators:

- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or stools
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Urinary tract infections

- Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably

Behavioural indicators:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Refuses to go home, or to a specific person's home, for no apparent reason
- Fear of a certain person
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviours

Caregiver indicators:

- May be unusually over-protective of the child
- Accuses the child of being sexually provocative
- Misuses alcohol or drugs
- Invades the child's privacy (eg during dressing, in the bathroom)
- May favour the victim over other children

Intimate Partner Violence or Family Violence

Intimate Partner Violence includes threatening to harm people, pets or property, and causes family members to live in fear. Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence, even if they are not personally injured or physically present.

While some men experience violence from partners and family members, women and children are the most likely victims of family violence.

Indicators in the Child:

- Physical injuries consistent with the indicators of Physical abuse
- Absenteeism from school
- Bullying or aggressive behaviour
- Complaints of headaches or stomach aches with no apparent medical reason
- Talking or describing violent behaviours

Indicators in the Victim:

- Physical injuries including; bruising to chest and abdomen, injuries during pregnancy
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Fearful
- Submissive

Indicators in the Perpetrator:

- Isolates and controls partner and children
- Threatens, criticises, intimidates, uses aggressive and physical abuse towards partner and children
- Minimises and denies own behaviour, or blames victim for the perpetrator's own behaviour

Guidelines for responding when a child tells of his/her abuse

It is important that you as the adult remain calm and confident when a child tells you what has been happening to him or her. Every child is different in how, when and where they will tell an adult about abusive experiences, so it will most likely happen when you are least expecting it! Your facial expressions and your tone of voice are as important as what you actually say to the child.

Stay calm, listen and **reassure** the child and at times you may need to **clarify** what the child has said so that you can take the appropriate action. If a child sees that you are upset or not able to cope with what he or she is telling you, they may not continue to tell you what has been happening or take back (ie retract) the original statements they have made.

DO

- Listen, allow the child to tell as much as they want without interrupting. (remember listening is not questioning)
- Respond reassuringly to the child
- If you do ask a question, avoid asking leading questions. Only ask open questions that seek clarification so that you can decide what action you need to take
- Most importantly "BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAY"
- Document what the child said and the responses that you made and any clarifying questions asked (word for word and remember to put the date, time, place and who was present.)

DO NOT

- Question in a way that introduces words, phrases, people's names or concepts
- Indicate that you disbelieve the child
- Try to correct, confront, change, challenge or influence what they say
- Respond by saying "You should have told me sooner" or "Why did you let him/her do that?"

Disclosures that indicate an abusive experience:

Those working with children know not to “question the child” if a disclosure of abuse is made. This is correct – questions should not be asked if the child makes what could be considered a “clear disclosure” of abuse eg “Mum punched me in the head and made my nose bleed”, or “Uncle got into my bed and put his hand in my bum”. These type of disclosure require

- A reassuring response by an adult
- The adult must take immediate action by contacting Child, Youth and Family and/ or Police.

EDUCATION COUNCIL of AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

For the purposes of [section 394 of the Education Act 1989, which imposes the general requirement that employers have to report serious misconduct], an employer of a teacher must immediately report to the Education Council **if it has reason to believe that the teacher has engaged in any of the following kinds of serious misconduct:**

- Physical abuse of a child or young person (which includes physical abuse carried out under the direction, or with the connivance, of the teacher).
- Sexual abuse of a child or young person (which includes sexual abuse carried out under the direction, or with the connivance, of the teacher).
- Psychological abuse of a child or young person, which may include (but is not limited to) physical abuse of another person, or damage to property, inflicted in front of a child or young person, threats of physical or sexual abuse, and harassment.
- An inappropriate relationship with a person under the age of 16 years.
- An inappropriate relationship with a student with whom the teacher is, or was when the relationship commenced, in contact with as a result of his / her position as a teacher.
- Neglect or ill-treatment of a child or young person in the teacher’s care.
- Neglect or ill-treatment of an animal in the teacher’s care.

- Theft or fraud.
- Manufacture of, cultivation of, supply of, dealing in, or use of controlled drugs.
- Permitting, or acquiescing in, the manufacture of, cultivation of, supply of, dealing in, or use of controlled drugs by a child or young person.
- Viewing, accessing, or possessing pornographic material while at a school or early childhood education service or engaged in the business of a school or early childhood education service.
- Viewing, accessing, or possessing pornographic material that depicts children or young persons or that depicts animals engaged in sexual acts with humans.
- Breaching the standards or rules of the school or early childhood education service concerning the use of alcohol at the school or while engaged in the business of the school or early childhood education service.
- Any other act or omission that could be the subject of a prosecution for an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months or more.
- Any act or omission that brings, or is likely to bring discredit to the teaching profession.

Physical, sexual, or psychological abuse is reportable whether it occurs as-

- A single act;
- Or a number of acts forming part of a pattern of behaviour, even if some or all of those acts, viewed in isolation, are minor or trivial.