



**Westbridge Residential School and Halswell  
Residential College**



**Combined Board of Trustees**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Background**

This policy outlines the Board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all staff in the protection of children. It includes the Board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are required to be familiar with this policy, and any associated procedures and protocols.

The Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in its care; to ensure they thrive, belong and achieve. The Board is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is the Board's top priority. Advice must be sought, through appropriate agencies, in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989, any person in the 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 and may also report the matter to a social worker or to the police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the Board, the Board delegates responsibility to the Principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the Principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the schools.
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make this policy available on the schools' internet site or available on request.
4. Ensure that every contract or funding arrangement that the schools enter, requires the adoption of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures where required.
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.

6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
7. 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.
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, and to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure the Child Protection Policy and any associated procedures and protocols are understood and implemented.
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information in a timely way, in line with the commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, regarding any concerns about an individual child, with the Board or other appropriate person/s.
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors and where required external legal counsel, on employment matters, and other relevant agencies, where child safety issues arise.
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their responsibilities and roles, in terms of this policy.
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

**Prepared by:** Combined Board of Trustees

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