

POLICY NAME: Child Protection Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 04.02.02

Policy Objective

Pukekohe Christian School is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with a physical and emotionally safe environment. Students are taught that their identity is found through the fact that we are all made in God’s image and precious in His sight. They learn that God loves each and every one of us and they can grow in confidence with this knowledge.

1. To ensure that children are kept safe from abuse. PCS is committed to child protection and recognizes the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children and ensuring their wellbeing in all areas of their lives.
2. To provide an environment where adults will be receptive and sensitive to students so that students feel listened to and believed. The Board has an obligation and a desire to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so that they thrive, belong and achieve all that God expects of them. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority and advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of alleged or suspected child abuse.

To provide guidelines for staff to follow if it is suspected that a student is being or has been physically or sexually abused in line with section 15 of the Children, Young Person and their Families Act. All staff suspecting harm, whether it be in the form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the local police. ***‘Preventing vulnerability is the most effective way to create positive life changes. This means focusing on the underlying factors that make families and children more vulnerable, and on strengthening families and whānau to provide children with the best possible opportunity to experience a loving and stable home.’***

Oranga Tamariki website <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/>

3. All employees and volunteers at PCS must read this policy. Education Review Office informs us: ***“It is the ethical responsibility of teachers, leaders and trustees to consider, promote, balance and respond to all aspects of the student, including their physical, social, emotional, academic and spiritual needs. Student wellbeing is not only an ethical and moral obligation for teachers, leaders and trustees but also a legal responsibility.”***
4. To ensure compliance with the *Code of Practice* provisions for the safety of international students.
5. To provide a nurturing and tolerant environment that ensures the wellbeing of all students by valuing and honoring all individuals within the school community, whilst

preserving the biblical culture into which those students were originally enrolled. PCS strives to ensure that every student experiences love, acceptance and inclusion, in keeping with the Biblical command to love others, as Christ loves us without compromising the values that underpin the school.

Definition of child abuse

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

Policy

1. The Principal is to act as the Child Protection Officer. Therefore the Principal should be made aware of any suspected or alleged abuse at the earliest opportunity.
2. All instances of child abuse or suspected child abuse must be reported to the Principal immediately. 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.

The Principal must sanction any intervention by the school within the guidelines contained in the Vulnerable Child Act, 2014. In the case of a report from a third party to the school, this shall be referred to the Principal, who will direct the third party to appropriate helping agencies. The school may be involved at a later date if required.

3. If teachers have concerns about a change in the behavior of a student, it should be discussed at staff meeting level. Ongoing concerns will be followed up by the Senior Management team in their meetings. If appropriate, focusing on the safety of the child as paramount, the parents will be informed of the change in behavior. Pastoral care will be provided involving the parents and the student. Professional development for staff will ensure that staff are able to carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
4. Parents will be informed, except where the student's welfare is likely to be threatened. The Principal will take advice on how best to inform the parents from the appropriate agency and if necessary, the agency will inform the parents.
5. If teachers have concerns about a change in the behavior of a student, it should be discussed at staff meeting level. Ongoing concerns will be followed up by the Senior Management team in their meetings. If appropriate, focusing on the safety of the child as paramount, the parents will be informed of the change in behavior.
6. If a teacher, senior manager or the principal suspect child abuse, the appropriate form, Suspected Abuse, should be filled out and given to the principal or a member of the senior management team for review. The form should be reviewed by 2 members of

staff, in confidence, before a decision to report the abuse is made. The form will be stored in the student's file but any further information will be stored in the locked filing cabinet situated in the Cambridge office. When reporting the incident, the principal will contact the appropriate agency and provide the relevant details, seeking advice before providing the student's name.

7. If a staff member, senior teacher or the principal interviews a child regarding abuse, or has a child disclose information unexpectedly; the minimum amount of discussion should occur. Once the teacher suspects abuse, they should limit the conversation. Suspected child abuse will need to be reported so confidentiality must not be promised to the child.
8. When reporting the suspected abuse, the staff member or principal is protected by the Protected Disclosures Act 2000, "he or she believes on reasonable grounds that the information he or she discloses is about serious wrongdoing" even if the belief is proven to be mistaken.
9. Once an agency is involved, they will take the necessary action, with police involvement where necessary and the principal will be advised by the agency in supporting the student.
10. The circumstances surrounding the abuse or suspected abuse must remain confidential amongst the staff members involved.
11. All adults working within the school community directly with students, must be police checked and added to the PCS database. This includes parents volunteering on camps, teacher aides, administrative staff, caretaker, librarian, invigilators and parent volunteers.
12. Appointments. Successful applicants will be police checked. Verbal references will be taken in addition to the written references. Specific questioning concerning interaction with students and young people will form part of the oral reference.
13. Staff members should not remain alone at school with individual students following the end of the school day or during the holidays.
14. During school trips and camps, parents or staff members should not take detours to additional places and must follow the prepared schedule.
15. If a staff member is accused of child abuse, the disciplinary procedures outlined in the Misconduct policy will apply.
16. If a staff member has to use physical restraint on a student, it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer and the relevant "Incident of Physical Restraint form" must be sent to the Ministry of Education. A copy of this must be kept in the Physical restraint file and the student's file. Students at risk of requiring physical restraint must have this identified in the individual Educational Plan and parent consent must be given and

recorded in writing. Physical restraint must only be used if there is a serious and imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person.

17. Ensuring emotional wellbeing of students and staff is a priority. The school will conduct student and staff surveys on an annual basis to assess student wellbeing and make a plan to support students as necessary. Pastoral support and counselling (where possible) will be provided to students and staff. Wellbeing will be addressed in professional development for staff and assemblies/health lessons for students.

Policy Review: annually	Policy Approved: April 2020	Next Review Due: April 2021
-------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Appendix	1 2	Suspected abuse form Vulnerable Children's Act Safety Procedure for Appointments
----------	--------	--