

Abuse Recognition and Reporting

Coatesville School is committed to the care and protection of its students.

"Child", in the context of our school's child protection policies, means a child or young person aged under 18 years (who is not married or in a civil union) – Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Staff

Staff must be receptive and sensitive to students so that students feel listened to and believed. Staff members are trained to consider overall wellbeing and risk of harm to the child, which includes recognising the **definitions and symptoms** of neglect, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children. It is normal for staff to feel uncertain. The important thing is that they can recognise when something is wrong, especially if they notice a pattern, or several signs that make them concerned. Staff should feel empowered to act on suspected abuse and neglect, even when the patterns of symptoms are subtle, while avoiding adhering to stereotypes and making assumptions.

Staff will be familiarised with child protection policies and procedures, and abuse recognition and reporting procedures as part of the school's **Professional Development and Safe Practice**. Staff must engage with this policy every year (see **Implementation Audits and Reports**).

If the concern involves a staff member and child, see also **Complaints** and **Protected Disclosure**.

Students

Students should know what to do and who to talk to if they are being harmed, feel uncomfortable, or want to disclose abuse. Our school uses the Keeping Ourselves Safe programme.

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, defines child abuse as the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

Unless the information was disclosed or supplied in bad faith, the person making the disclosure cannot be prosecuted.

Acting on concerns

- If a concern about a child doesn't amount to a suspicion of abuse or neglect, the school may choose to involve, and work with, community social service providers to identify and address the needs of the child. Our designated person for child protection knows who to contact.
- If a concern does amount to a suspicion of abuse or neglect see below.

Responding to a child

- If you believe a student is being abused, act immediately to ensure their safety.
- Inform the principal and agree on an appropriate course of action, in a timely manner.
- Listen to the student and reassure them, but do not make any promises or commitments that cannot be kept.
- Ensure that any information or disclosures made by the student are written down.
- Ensure the student is supported and that there is a responsible adult at the school who is available to the student throughout the investigation, and afterwards.
- Ask open-ended questions. **Do not formally interview the student.** Only obtain necessary and relevant facts. Record word-for-word what the

student says. Include the date, time, and who was present, in any written notes.

Reporting concerns

As above, inform the principal and agree on an appropriate course of action, in a timely manner.

Any person can make a direct referral to the Police, or Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children if they believe a child is being abused.

- Make a referral to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children:
 - for an urgent referral, call the Contact Centre 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774), or the Police.
 - for a non-urgent referral, follow the process on the **Children's Teams** section of the website.
- After making the referral, get support for yourself from appropriate persons, if needed.
- **Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver should be determined by Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and police, in consultation with the school.**
- Advise the board.

Storing information

- Securely store records documenting concerns, conversations, advice received, actions taken (including rationale), and any warnings issued. Keep this concern with any other concerns as records help identify patterns.

Refer to the **NZSTA Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse**.

Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse/Neglect/Family Violence

These definitions are taken from Safer Organisations Safer Children: Guidelines for child protection

policies to build safer organisations.

Type of abuse	Definition	Examples
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

		<p>such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
<p>Emotional abuse</p>	<p>Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.</p>	<p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>Neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious.</p>	<p>Neglect can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
Family violence	<p>Family violence is abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse).</p> <p>Family violence covers a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature that typically involve fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation.</p> <p>It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family.</p> <p>(Te Rito - the NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy)</p>	<p>This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013)</p> <p>Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners). • Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult). • Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust). • Parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent); sibling abuse (violence among siblings), (Te Rito – NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, Ministry of Social Development, 2002).
Intimate partner violence	<p>Intimate partner violence is a subset of family violence.</p>	<p>The NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse states that intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner</p>