

KingsWay School

Child Protection Policy

Overview:

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, including the prevention of child abuse or maltreatment is paramount for KingsWay School. The purpose of this document is to describe the processes and procedures that the school will follow to ensure children are safe, and that incidents of suspected and potential abuse and neglect are identified and responded to appropriately. The policy applies to all staff employed by the school, contracted to school and volunteers, including parents who have contact with children at the school or during school activities.

Key Principles:

- The interests of the child will be the chief consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect.
- This organisation commits to support the statutory agencies (Oranga Tamakiri – Ministry for Vulnerable Children).
- Recognition of the culture of the family/whanau, its importance and the rights of family/whanau to participate in decision-making about their children unless this would result in an escalation of risk to the child.
- We commit 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.
- All staff and volunteers who have unsupervised access to children will be police vetted as part of normal practice.

Procedures for Child Protection at KingsWay School

Indicators of abuse or neglect

Child abuse refers to the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or serious deprivation of any child or young person (Section 14B Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989).

Indicators are signs or symptoms that, when found either on their own or in various combinations, point to possible abuse, family violence or neglect. In many cases, indicators are found in combinations or clusters.

Indicators do not necessarily prove or mean that a child has been harmed. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. Sometimes indicators can result from life events, which do not involve abuse e.g. accidental injury.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any behaviour which results in physical harm to a child. If you're worried about a child being physically abused, the signs to look out for are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions – particularly in unusual places like the face, on their back or tummy, buttocks, or the backs of their legs. Also look out for regularity of these injuries to see if there is a pattern forming
- Unexplained fractures or dislocations – many kids are active resulting in bumps and breaks, but people need to be thinking about how and why these injuries happen. Especially worrying are fractures to the head or face, and hip or shoulder dislocations. Be very concerned if this is happening in young babies, who are less active and not moving around enough to accidentally hurt themselves

- Burn marks – anywhere on the body are concerning, and if not easily explained need to be notified. Be mindful of burns in the shape of an object like a stove ring or iron, cigarette marks or rope burn
- The child or their parent – can't recall how the injuries occurred – or their explanations change or don't make sense.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including child sexual exploitation, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse is any act where an adult or a more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose. This may be consensual or not, and can happen within or outside the family.

Most sexual abuse is done by someone the child knows and trusts. Sexual abuse may include physical sexual acts, or could be things like exposure to pornographic material and internet sites, or sexual conversations.

The following signs are an indication that a child may be being sexually abused:

- Physical indicators – like unusual or excessive itching, bruising, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in the genital or anal area, and urinary tract infections. Also be concerned and ask questions if there is ever blood in a child's urine or faeces, it's painful for them to go to the toilet, or if a child or young girl is showing signs of being sexually active. When pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease is identified, abuse must always be considered, especially in girls under 16 years.
- Age inappropriate sexual play or interest – and other unusual behaviour like sexually explicit drawings, descriptions and talk about sex can indicate this type of abuse.
- Fear of a certain person or place – children might be trying to express their fear without saying exactly what they are frightened of, so listen carefully, and take what they say seriously.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour where the child is rejected and put down. They may be isolated, constantly degraded and criticised, or negatively compared to others.

As emotional abuse is a component of all abuse and neglect, the signs are often encompassed in the other abuse types. You may often see the same indicators as you would for neglect, along with other signs that are particular to emotional abuse.

The effects of emotional abuse may only become evident as the child gets older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviours.

A child who is emotionally abused may show the following signs in addition to what you would expect to see from neglect:

- Sleep problems like bed-wetting or soiling – with no medical cause, nightmares and poor sleeping patterns.
- Frequent physical complaints – real or imagined such as headaches, nausea and vomiting, and abdominal pains. This might coincide with the child being very underweight or dehydrated.
- Signs of anxiety – including poor self-esteem, being unable to cope in social settings and sometimes obsessive behaviour. Children who are abused are very sad and alone, and might talk about hurting themselves or ending their lives.

Neglect

Neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, they are just as serious, leading to damaged self-esteem and a lost opportunity to thrive in the world. It can consist of:

- Physical neglect – not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, enough food and clothing.
- Neglectful supervision – leaving children home alone, or without someone safe looking after them during the day or night.
- Emotional neglect – not giving children the comfort, attention and love they need through play, talk, and everyday affection.
- Medical neglect – the failure to take care of their health needs.
- Educational neglect – allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol children in school, or inattention to special education needs to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Information on identifying possible abuse or neglect is detailed in *'Working together to keep children and young people safe. An Interagency Guide (Child, Youth and Family 2011)*

<https://www.mvcot.govt.nz>

Appropriate procedures should a concern arise

- If there is a concern or disclosure by a student the Designated Person for Child Protection will be informed.
- If there is suspected abuse the Designated Person for Child Protection will, in consultation with the Principal, notify Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Vulnerable Children).

Recruitment guidelines including screening and vetting procedures

- All employees of KingsWay School will be police vetted prior to commencement
- All Volunteers that will be unsupervised with access to children or attending overnight trips need to be police vetted

Safe working practices and agreed staff behaviours

- Staff are not to engage in social media with current students
- When working alone with a student e.g. tutoring, staff are encouraged to work in a visible space with an open door or have another adult or student present
- Staff are to avoid being alone in a motor vehicle with a student. Parents should be notified if this needs to occur.

Child protection training for all adults working with children

- All staff will be upskilled in the Child Protection Procedures by Designated person for child protection every odd year and present annually at new staff induction
- All parents informed of expectations regarding child safety at New Parent Induction Evening
- Child Protection Policy is available on the School's website
- All volunteers need to be informed as part of their application.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

