




WHANGANUI HIGH SCHOOL POLICY DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES IN SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION	1	This policy is made on the basis that all children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment. When allegations are made that threaten that safety, the Senior Leadership Team will act on those allegations while taking care to treat the employee fairly.
OBJECTIVES	1	<p>To ensure and/or provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the safety of the child or young person is the first consideration; b) that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively; c) that in the case of a complaint against an employee, action is guided by the applicable employment contract and/or principles of natural justice; d) clear guidance for the Senior Leadership Team and employee in respect of any allegations received concerning children or young persons within the school environment.
RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES	1	<p>The recommended procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. The child or young person must be adequately protected.</p> <p><i>Refer to "Recommended Reporting Procedures and Flowchart" (Policy 5.11)</i></p>
	2	<p>Please note there are two procedures to be followed here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the reporting procedure in respect of the child or young person; b) the procedure for dealing with the employee.
	3	In all cases it is suggested that no one person should have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues.
	4	<p>These steps are to be followed when dealing with an employee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Principal should consult with the child advocate or Guidance Counsellors to ensure implementation of policy regarding reporting. b) The Presiding Member of the Board should be informed as soon as possible. c) The Principal is advised to ensure records are kept of any comments by the student, complaints and/or allegations, and follow-up action taken.
	5	<p>The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee of the school should be made in consultation with, including but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Presiding Member of the Board b) NZSTA Principal Advisor c) Teaching Council d) School Lawyer e) Insurers f) Oranga Tamariki g) New Zealand Police
	6	The Principal and/or the Presiding Member of the Board will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the employee. As mentioned above, it is strongly recommended that an immediate consultation is sought with the agencies involved. The purpose of this consultation is to enable the Principal and the Presiding Member to discuss the concern or allegation and to:

	<p>a) determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation;</p> <p>b) consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Board may take as an employer and possible Police intervention;</p> <p>c) consider the employer role of the Board in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee contracts.</p> <p>7 When it has been determined the Board should pursue the matter as an employer, the Board should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. It is vital that the employer should refer to the relevant employee contract in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.</p> <p>8 The employee complained against should be advised of their right to seek support and advice from:</p> <p>d) NZEI, PPTA counsellor or field officer, or other appropriate union or representative;</p> <p>e) other relevant teachers' organisation if applicable.</p> <p>9 Under no circumstances should the child or young person raising the concern or making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the Board to contemplate removal of the employee from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employee contract.</p> <p>10 All actions of the Board must be consistent and applicable with the collective employment contract or individual employment contract.</p> <p>11 Boards should take care to ensure actions taken by the school do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by any external agency. It is strongly recommended that the Board maintain a close liaison with Oranga Tamariki and the Police to achieve this.</p>
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Students are treated with dignity and respect and the right to have their needs met in a safe environment.
EVALUATION	The Board, in association with the Principal, will review this policy on a three-yearly cycle in accordance with the School's quality management cycle.

Approved by the Board

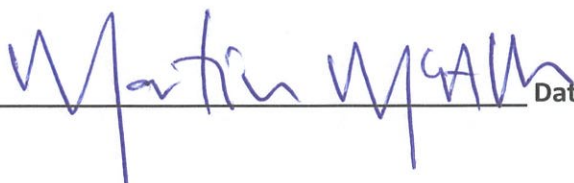
Signed Presiding Member:



Date:

25/3/24

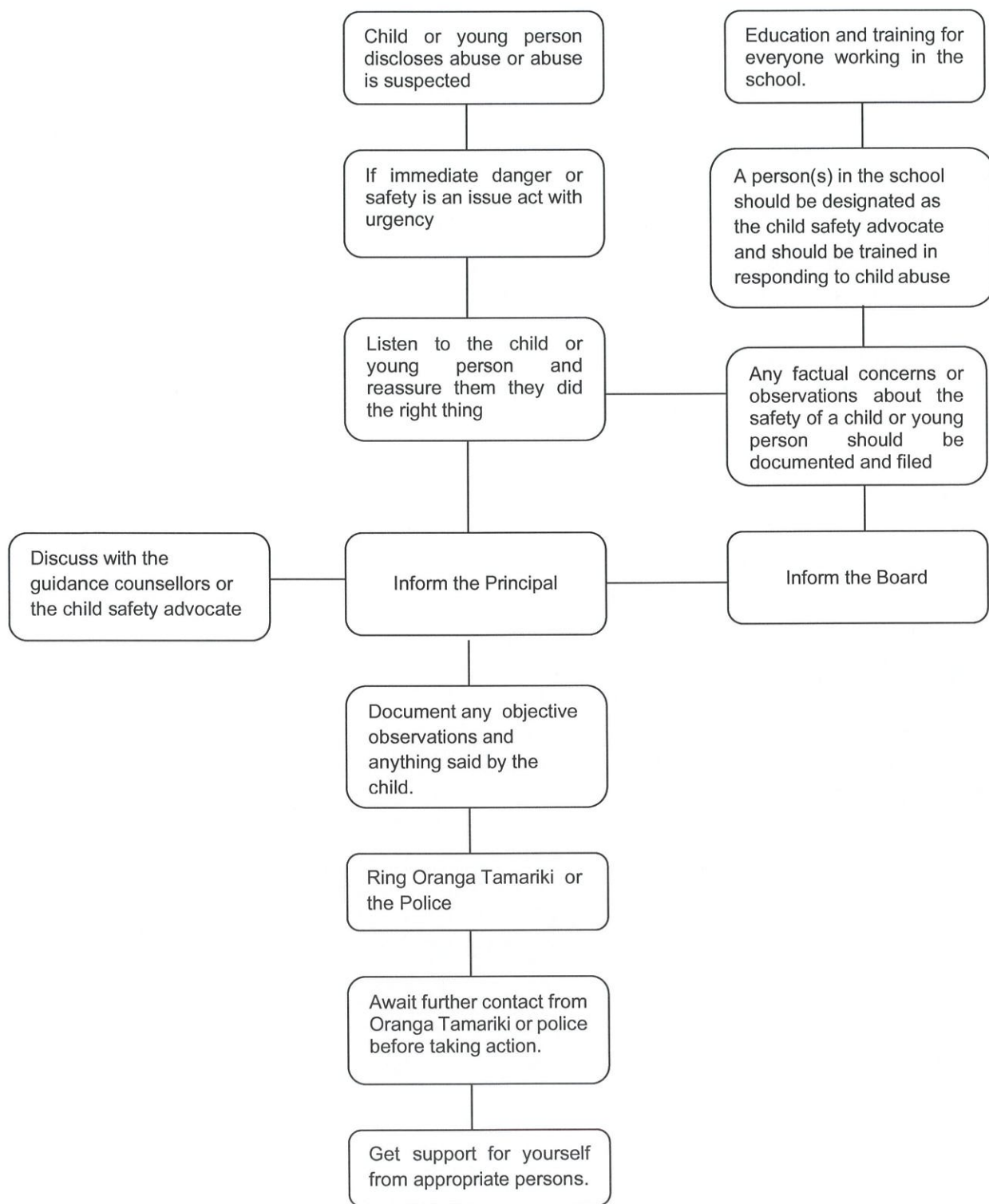
Signed Principal:



Date:

25/3/24

FLOW CHART FOR ACTION



POINTS TO NOTE

- 1 Documentation may subsequently be used in court as evidence for either side.
- 2 Avoid making judgements simply record the facts.
- 3 Interviewing of suspected abuse victims is a specialised procedure best left to those who are trained in such techniques.
- 4 The child advocate should be responsible for ensuring that the child's welfare remains paramount.