



5:3

POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE

RATIONALE:

- St. Michael's Church School is a Christian School in the Anglican tradition reflecting the intentions of the St. Michael's Church School Statute.
- St Michael's Church School is committed to the care and protection of its students.

PURPOSES:

- Staff must be receptive and sensitive to students so that students feel listened to and believed.
- Staff members are up-skilled and, accordingly, implement the *D.A.R.E.* and *Keeping Ourselves Safe* programmes, using New Zealand Police personnel.
- The *Children, Young Persons and Their Families 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.

GUIDELINES:

- If a staff member believes a student is being abused, he/she is to act immediately to ensure the child's safety.
- It is mandatory to inform the principal (or acting principal) who will take the appropriate course of action.
- The Board Chair is to be informed.
- Listen to the student and reassure them, but do not make any promises or commitments.
- Ensure that any information or disclosures made by the student are written down.
- Ensure that the Principal (or Deputy Principal) and the staff member are available to the student throughout the investigation, and afterwards.
- Obtain necessary and relevant facts by writing down exactly what the student says.
- The Principal is to make a referral to Child Youth and Family by calling their national call centre 0508 326 459. Fax 09 914 1211. Private Bag 78907, Auckland or by visiting:
 - the 'Christchurch'/Papanui office at 84 Langdon's Road, Papanui
 - or the 'Sydenham' office at 4/25 Shands Road, Hornby.
- *** However, anyone has the right to report directly to the Child, Youth and Family service.**
- After making the referral, the Principal may get support for the staff member from appropriate persons as needed.

Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Neglect: Failure to provide a child's basic needs. i.e. The child is not given adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision.

Indicators:

- unsuitable clothing for weather
- being dirty or un-bathed
- extreme hunger
- apparent lack of supervision

Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental injury to a child

Indicators:

- unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- anti-social behaviour
- problems in school

- fear of adults
- drug or alcohol abuse
- self-destructive or suicidal behaviour
- depression or poor self-image

Emotional Neglect/Abuse: Neglect is a lack of emotional support and love, such as not attending to a child's need for affection, or providing necessary psychological care.

Abuse may involve ignoring or rejecting the child, failing to praise or positively reinforce the child, yelling and screaming, belittling, using derogatory names, criticising, and threatening or frightening the child.

Indicators:

- apathy
- depression
- hostility
- lack of concentration
- eating disorders

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act between an adult and a child. This can range from: touching, through to penetration or even the death of the victim, grooming, enticing children to pornography, or violating their privacy.

Indicators:

- inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or bodies
- physical injury or illness
- nightmares and bed wetting
- drastic changes in appetite
- over-compliance or excessive aggression
- fear of a particular person or family member
- withdrawal
- sudden fear of the dark
- extreme fear of being left alone
- secretiveness
- loss of memory
- depression
- suicidal behaviour
- eating disorders
- self-injury

N.B. Look for clusters of symptoms.

Take note that all matters are commensurate with our School's Privacy Policy.

CONCLUSION:

While it is recognised that any abuse may be very hard to define or detect, staff need to be sensitive to indicators and be supported in taking appropriate action.

Refer also 3:10 Policy on Privacy

Reviewed and Approved by Board and Staff 14/3/12

Education Review Office amendment (see page 1) ratified 20 September 2012*

For review in or before 2015