

Rangiora High School Board



Child Protection Policy

Rationale

The Rangiora High School Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. The Board is committed to the prevention of abuse - we are committed to building a strong culture of child protection across our workplace by encouraging early identification and referral of vulnerable children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- “Child” means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years
- “Child abuse” is defined in The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person”.
- “Young person” means a boy or girl of or over the age of 14 years but under 17 years; but does not include any person who is or has been married or in a civil union (Children, Young Person, and Their Families Act 1989, Section 2).
- “staff” means all those employed by Rangiora High School, whether paid or voluntary, full time or part-time. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist Rangiora High School staff in providing a safe learning environment, protecting students from harm and to recognise and respond appropriately to any situation / incident / notification of child abuse.

This policy covers all staff of Rangiora High School who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, who may be working in any capacity at Rangiora High School or assisting in planned school events or activities such as school camps, sports or cultural events, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Rangiora High School. The rationale for this being that safeguarding and protecting children and young people is everyone’s responsibility. All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

A sense of belonging at school, good advocacy and positive teacher-student relationships and learning environments are all protective factors that support mental health and wellbeing during the transition to adulthood.

Principles

This will be achieved by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in

- Creating a culture that recognises and understands the importance of safeguarding - including listening to children and young people
- Identifying and referring children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, both at school and at home
- Preventing unsuitable people from working with children
- Having policies, systems and procedures that ensure children and young people are kept safe and allow for poor and unsafe practice to be challenged
- Identifying instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's or young person's welfare, and initiating or taking appropriate action to keep them safe; and
- Contributing to effective partnership between all those involved with providing safeguarding children and young people.

Guidelines

1. Roles and Responsibility of Staff

Clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of staff ensures consistency of behaviours, which keep both staff and children safe.

- a. Although ultimate accountability sits with the Board, the Board delegates responsibility to the Principal; Deputy Principal (Student Support); Head of Learner Support ([Designated Person for Child Protection](#)) and the Head of Department (Guidance) ([Designated Person for Child Protection](#)) to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the Principal must:
 - i. Develop appropriate procedures, complying with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities, to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school.
 - ii. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
 - iii. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
 - iv. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
 - v. Make this policy available on the school's internet site or available on request.
 - vi. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
 - vii. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
 - viii. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
 - ix. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child with the Board or Guidance Staff.
 - x. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.
 - xi. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
 - xii. Ensure that all documents relating to any suspected / identified / notified child abuse will be held in a secure manner (Child Protection File), and be treated as confidential.
 - xiii. Provide professional development programmes, resources and/or advice to

ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

- b. Any person in our school/kura who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived must report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately to the Designated Person and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

2. Child Protection Procedures

If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff it is important that staff take what the child says seriously.

- a. In line with section 15 of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act, any person in our school/kura who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived must follow school procedures must consult with the Designated Person. If the Designated Person is unavailable, then consultation should occur with the Principal.
- b. Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to contact / interview parents / whānau / caregivers or conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. This responsibility / decision rests with external agencies who have the expertise.
- c. All information and all decisions taken, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children), must be recorded in writing in full at the earliest opportunity and kept securely in a Child Protection file with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

3. Safe Recruitment of Staff

Before making any appointment, Senior Management will undertake a series of checks to ascertain the candidate's suitability and safety to work at Rangiora High School.

4. Professional Development of Staff

The Deputy Principal with responsibility for Professional Development will ensure that all staff will receive child protection training at the level appropriate to their role.

- a. The Designated Person(s) for Child Protection will undertake more intensive training in child protection.
- b. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member ensuring that their training needs are identified.
- c. All staff will update their child protection training every three years as a minimum

5. Safe Working Practices

All staff are expected to behave in manners that maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

6. Allegations Against Staff

Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff, volunteers or representatives of other agencies must be taken seriously and reported to the Principal who will deal with them immediately. Seeking advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise

Documentation and Legislation

- Care of Children Act 2004
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Children's Act 2014
- Crimes Act 1961
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Employment Relations Act, 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Privacy Act 2020
- Safer Organisations, Safer Children
- Public Service Act 2020
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014 - Requirements for schools and kura (Ministry of Education)
- Vulnerable Children Act, 2014

Related Policies

- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunities Policy
- Police Vetting Procedural Policy
- Professional Learning and Development Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Staff Handbook

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