



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

National Administration Guideline 5 - Health and Safety

Background to Policy

This policy is implemented to supply guidance in regards to Section 15, Child and Young Persons and their Families Act (child protection) if you have concerns of child abuse.

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the Boards' commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the boards expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by staff or members of the public.

Policy Implementation

- 1) For more detailed advice on the actions necessary refer to the attached policy guidance sheet in the first instance
- 2) Inform the principal or deputy principal immediately of your concerns .
- 3) [www.education.govt.nz/child protection](http://www.education.govt.nz/child-protection)
- 4) Vulnerable children act 2014
- 5) Section 15, Child, Young Persons and their Families Act
- 6) This policy is to be reviewed within three years of implementation.

This policy will be reviewed as per the Board's Effectiveness Review Programme

Confirmed by the Board of Trustees on: 18th September 2017 (date)

The planned review date will be: 18th September 2019 (date)

T. O'Brien
Chairperson

Principal

9. Child Protection Policy

This policy outlines the board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

The board of trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

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 and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the board, the board delegates responsibility to the principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
3. Make this policy available on the school's internet site or available on request
4. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response
8. 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
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal
10. 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 designated person
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member

Safety checks

The [Vulnerable Children Act 2014 \(VCA\)](#) introduced safety checks as one of the measures to help reduce the risk of harm to children. Safety checks must be completed for all people employed or engaged in work that involves regular or overnight contact with children.

- Employee - *a person of any age employed by an employer to do any work for hire or reward*
- Engaged – *someone other than an employee who is engaged to do any work for gain or reward – e.g. a contractor*

Under the VCA there are no requirement to complete safety checks for volunteers, however volunteers often work with children and NZSTA recommend that a Police vet is completed for all volunteers.

Student teachers are likely to have been safety checked by the education organisation they attend, however it is still the responsibility of the board to ensure these are done. Boards can agree with Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) that the checks will be done on behalf of the board.

Under the VCA the safety check consists of

Identity confirmation s5 (VCA regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you need to do to ensure that someone is who they say they are?
Information about previous criminal convictions (if any) s6 – (VCA regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Police vet will identify any criminal convictions that would prevent them working at your school.
Other information s7 – (VCA regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. is there anything in their previous work history that identifies any concerns?
Risk assessment s8 – (VCA regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the person pose any risk to the safety of children? • What do we need to do to make sure they are safe to work with children?
Periodic safety checks part 2 – (VCA regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we ensure ongoing commitment to child safety?

Identity confirmation

There have been cases in schools where people have gained employment using someone else's identification and qualifications. Without verifying their identity, any other information you gather cannot be relied on.

You need:

- One primary form of identification, for example:
 - NZ or overseas passport
 - NZ full birth certificate that is issued on or after 1 Jan 1998 with a unique ID number

- A secondary form of official identification, for example:
 - NZ drivers licence
 - Community Services Card
 - IRD number

- One of the forms of identification must include a photo
- You can also use electronic identification for example RealMe

If the name of the person differs from the name on the documentation they provide, e.g. marriage or deed poll, they will need to produce a supporting document that shows evidence of the name change.

If it is identified that a name has been used by another person please contact NZSTA for further advice.

Information about previous criminal convictions (if any) - Police vet

The Education Act 1989 has always required the Police vetting of all staff, with the Education Council completing the Police vet for teachers. Boards, or the person with the delegated authority, are required to complete these for all other staff.

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (VCA) has introduced the additional requirement of safety checks, which includes the Police vet.

Other Information

To undertake a comprehensive risk assessment as part of a safety check you need to obtain the following information;

- A chronological summary of the applicant's work history for the preceding 5 years including the position they held in the organisation.
- Any professional organisations they are a member of if it is relevant to the role e.g. a school counsellor may belong to the NZ Association of Counsellors.
- Any licence relevant to the activity e.g. drivers or bus licence if driving is part of their role
- Any registration authority that has issued a registration or practising certificate e.g. teacher registration
- Any other information that the board or person with the delegated authority considers to be relevant in the assessment of the person, e.g. where possible qualifications should be verified. The Education Council should have checked the first qualification issued to a teacher as part of their checks e.g. an undergraduate degree but may not have a record of any subsequent qualifications e.g. Masters

You must interview any applicant who you may wish to employ or engage. NZSTA recommends that this is done face to face. During the interview you must consider;

- would the person pose a risk to children and if so, to what extent?
- what is their attitude to child safety?

You should include questions to find out about;

- the applicant and their qualifications
- their view on discipline and keeping children safe
- their attitudes and experiences when working with children

Reference checking allows you to find out if there are any gaps or differences from what the candidate has told you.

The candidate must provide at least 1 but preferably 3 referees who are not related to the applicant. One of the referees must be from an organisation or authority they have worked for or belong to. It is recommended by NZSTA that you seek contact details that include a landline or work number if possible as it is harder to verify who is on the end of a cell phone. One of their referees should be their immediate past employer or if possible their current employer. If they are reluctant to provide their current employer, check the reasons why.

By using the [NZSTA application form](#) it allows you to contact referees other than those specified. This will permit you to seek further information or clarification if any issues or concerns are raised.

Risk assessment

Once you have gathered all the information from the identify verification, Police vet, and any other information, the board or delegated authority must undertake a risk assessment to ascertain if there would be any risk to the safety of children if they were to be employed.

If they have a [schedule 2 specified offence](#) you cannot employ them unless they have an exemption. It is the responsibility of the person with the offence to apply for the exemption.

Periodic safety checks

Periodic checks must be completed on anyone who is employed or engaged at the school within, 3 years of their last safety check.

As part of this check they must;

- confirm whether he or she has changed their name since the last safety check
- complete a Police check for any non-teaching employees
- obtain the names of any professional organisation, licensing authority or registration authority they belong to and check with these organisations or authority that the person is currently registered with them. E.g. verify with the Education Council that teachers have a current practising certificate.

The board or delegated person must then complete a risk assessment to ensure that this person does not pose a risk to the safety of children.

Review schedule: Within 3 years

Related documentation and information

- Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website www.nzsta.org.nz
- Ministry of Education website www.education.govt.nz
- [Vulnerable Children Act 2014](#)
- Further information and sample child protection templates are available in the Children's Action Plan guideline Safer Organisations, Safer Children: <http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>