

10. Child Abuse Allegations Policy

This policy is made on the basis that all students should be treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment. When allegations are made of events or issues that threaten that safety, school management will act on those allegations while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

Policy Purpose

Mahurangi College will pursue the well-being and safety of the students in its care as a primary goal. It is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children. This commitment means that the interests and welfare of the child will be the prime consideration when any decision is made about a child suspected of being neglected or abused, emotionally, physically or sexually.

Policy

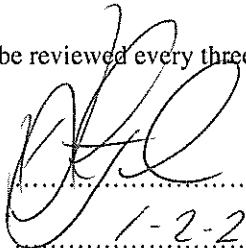
- Mahurangi College recognises the sensitive and confidential nature of any concern regarding suspected child abuse. The main aim is to protect the student and engage help for them. All information and discussions will be kept confidential.
- Students are encouraged to seek help for themselves, or for another student, by talking to any staff member. That staff member is then required to report to the suspected abuse to the Guidance Counsellor or Principal.
- As appropriate, the Guidance Counsellor or Principal may seek advice from or report to CYFS and/or the police. No referrals will be made to CYF or the police without the Principal or Deputy Principal’s knowledge.

Where the counselor, after investigation, has good cause to suspect abuse from a parent, family member or caregiver this will be reported to CYFS or the police.

- A written record must be kept of any disclosures by the child and of events surrounding the concern but the child should not be formally interviewed – staff should only obtain relevant facts as far as is necessary to confirm initial suspicions.
- Where anyone at the College individually or collectively suspects that child abuse has been perpetrated by a member of staff, it will be promptly reported to the Principal who will notify the Board Chair. If, after making initial enquiries, the employer decides to initiate an investigation then the staff member will normally be suspended on full pay in line with the Teachers Collective Employment Contract. At this stage the rest of the staff will be informed. (Counsellors can be made available to staff where needed).
- Whenever an interview by the police or other outside agencies is held with a student at school a counsellor will be informed and an appropriate staff member will be present. The welfare of the student must be first priority and wherever that is compromised the interview must be terminated.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees.

Approved:  (Board Chair)

Date: 1-2-2019