



Child Protection Policy:

October 2017

Rationale

The wellbeing and safety of children and young people is of paramount concern to the Board of Trustees of Murchison Area School. The school accepts that children have a fundamental right to have their needs met in an environment safe from abuse and neglect. The school accepts its responsibility under the legislation for engaging in safe employment practices and playing a role in the prevention and identification of child abuse and neglect. The school is committed to modelling and providing a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.

Purpose

The school recognises the important role and responsibility that all staff have in identifying and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect and in responding appropriately to concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

The school is committed to working with other children related agencies to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

The school's Board of Trustees, in accordance with the requirements of Part 2, Section 18 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 will:

- a) adopt this child protection policy
- b) ensure that the policy is available on the school website and is available upon request from the school office
- c) ensure that all agencies, contracts or funding arrangements fulfil the requirements of this policy
- d) review the policy every three years

Guidelines

- 1 The Principal ensures that leaders within the school work together with other children's agencies (such as the Police, Child Youth and Family, Social Workers, etc.) to improve the well-being of vulnerable children by:
 - protecting them from abuse and neglect
 - improving their physical and mental health and their cultural and emotional well-being
 - improving their educational outcomes and their participation in cultural and extra-curricular activities
 - strengthening their connection to their families, whānau, hapu and iwi, or other culturally recognised family groups
 - increasing their participation in self-decision making and their contribution to society
 - improving their social and economic well-being
- 2 The Principal ensures that there are procedures in place to identify and respond to allegations regarding abuse.
- 3 The Principal ensures that there are procedures in place to deal with the possibility of an allegation involving a staff member.

Definitions:

Child abuse:

Child abuse is a broad term which includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential to cause or effect serious harm to a child.

Child neglect:

Child neglect is the failure or omission to care for a child. This failure or omission to care can be physical, emotional, medical or educational or involve a lack of supervision.

Core worker: Core worker means a children's worker whose work in, or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with the child or children in the course of that work, the person is either:

- The only person present; or
- Is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over the child or children present

Non-core worker: means a children's worker who is not a core worker
Confidentiality and Information sharing

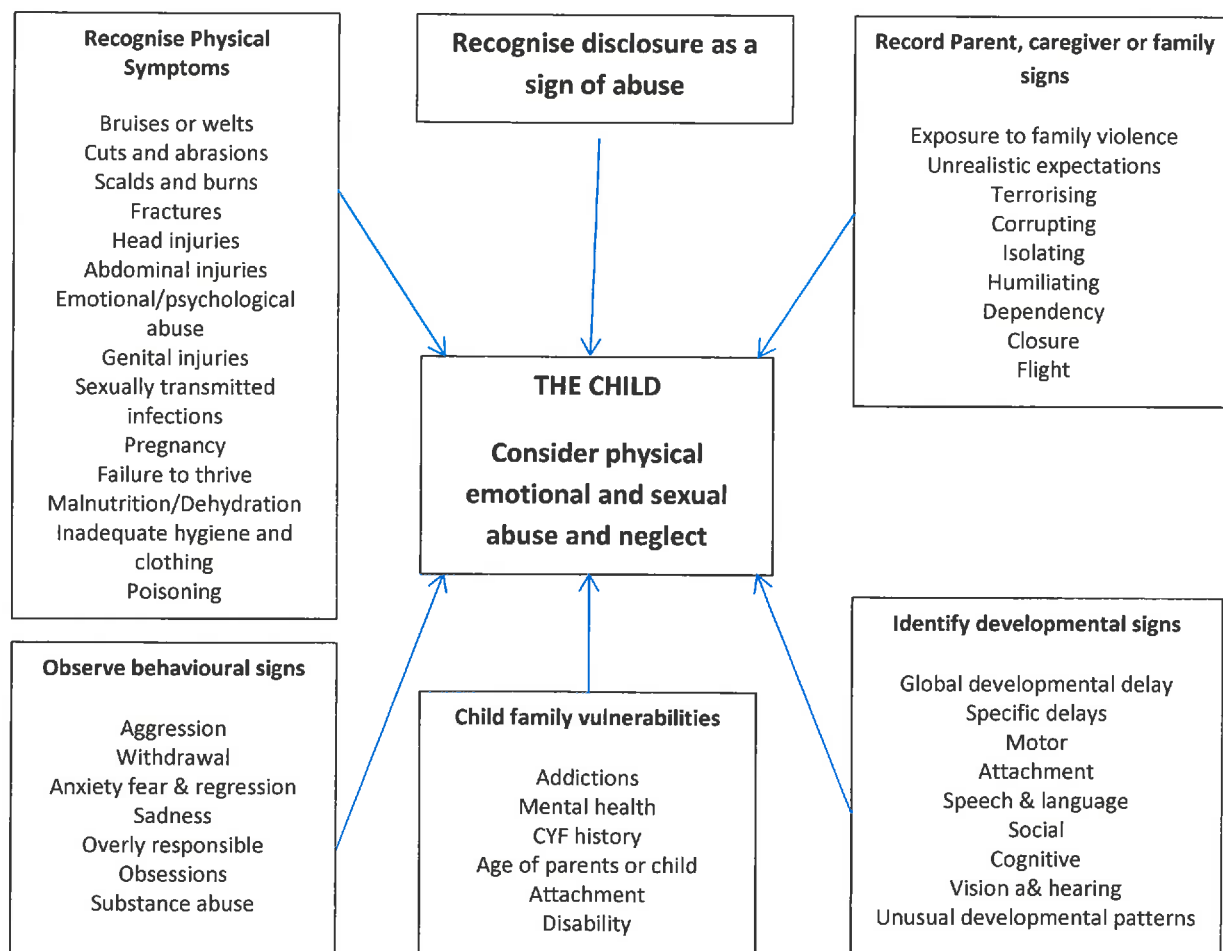
The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (CYPF) 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

Recruitment and Employment

- 1 The Principal will ensure that safe recruitment practices in line with the Vulnerable Children Act of 2014 and Section 78C and 78CA of the Education Act are in place. In accordance with these Acts, the school is required to police vet all core and non-core workers, including contractors and their employees, who work at the school if they are likely to have unsupervised access to students at the school during normal hours.
- 2 In addition to a police vet, core and non-core workers will also be subject to identity verification, references and an interview. A work history will be sought and previous employers will be contacted. If there is any risk that an applicant might pose a risk to a child that applicant will not be employed. A checklist is to be used for all appointments.
- 3 Notwithstanding 1 & 2 above, if core children's workers e.g. Public Health Nurses, Family Planning Nurses, Youth Workers, who have been safety checked by their own employer have unsupervised access to students, the school will not proceed with a police vet but will seek an assurance from their employer by letter that this has been done.

Identifying the signs abuse or neglect:

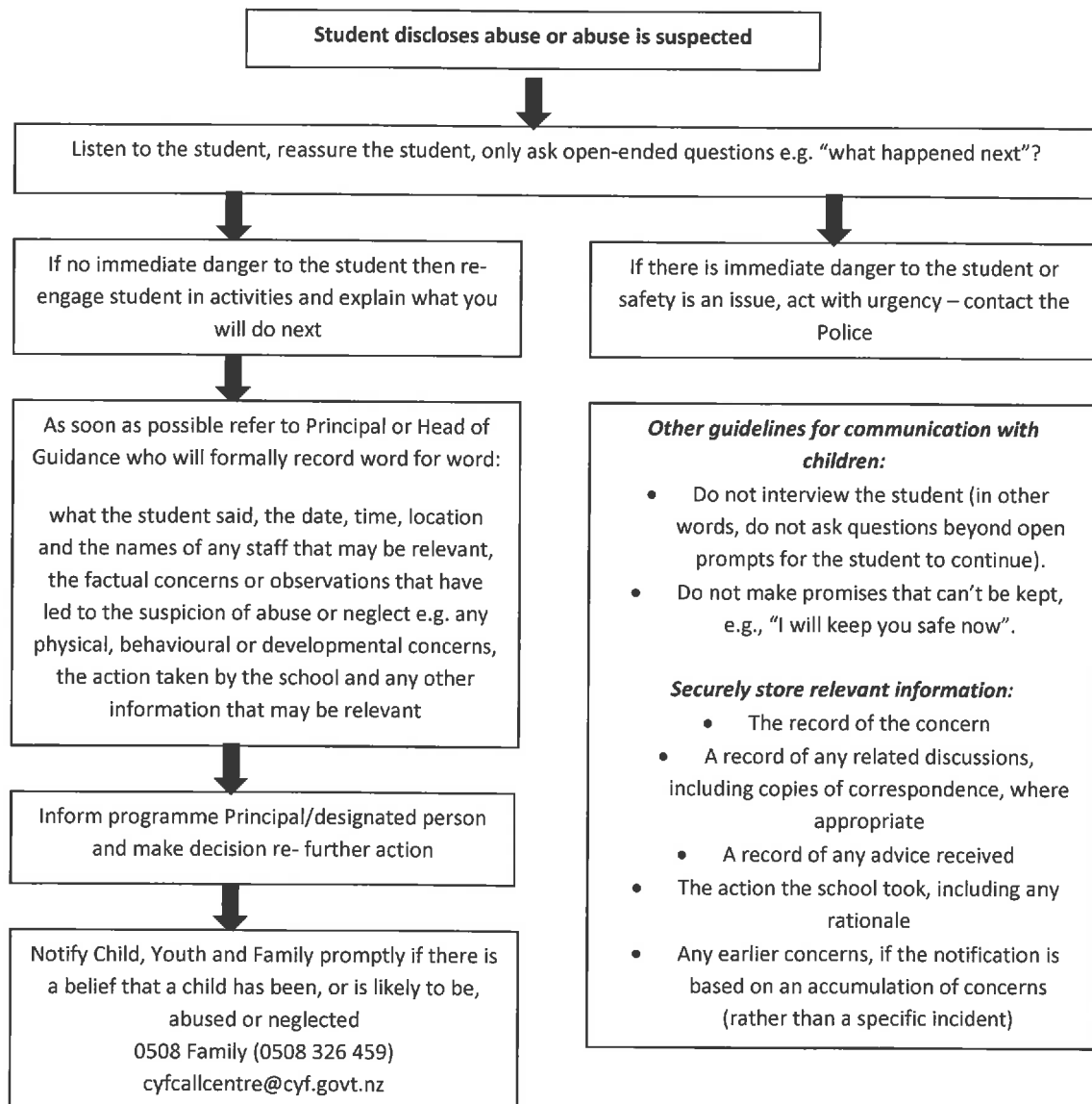
The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below may indicate abuse or neglect. However they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child or young person's situation



Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

- 1 There is a process to follow when an incident or suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported. See the 'Child Abuse Reporting Process' flowchart below
- 2 All suspicions or reports of incidents will be reported to and discussed with the Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible.
- 3 S/he will make a written report of the incident.
- 4 If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the Child Abuse Coordinator will immediately take steps to protect the child and may notify Child, Youth and Family.
- 5 Sometimes the involvement of statutory agencies will be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families. In these situations, the school will refer the family to an appropriate statutory or non-statutory agency which can provide supportive services to the family and respond to the needs of the vulnerable children in their care in a manner proportionate to the level of need and risk.

Child abuse Reporting Process Flowchart



Allegations or concerns about staff

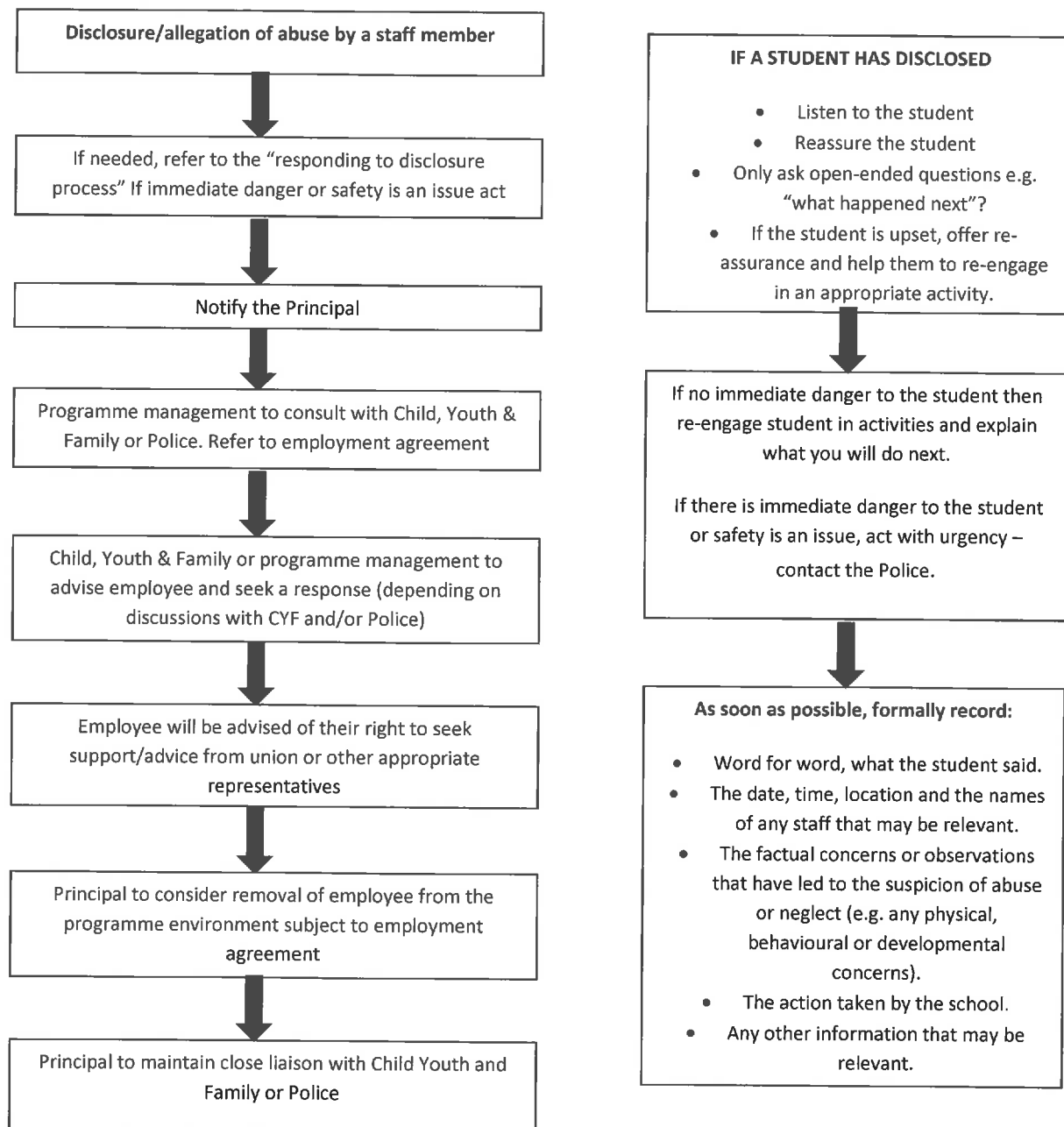
- 1 There is a process to follow when an allegation of child abuse is made in relation to a staff member. See “When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member” flowchart below.
- 2 If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, the Principal or delegated person will consult with Child, Youth and Family or the Police before advising the person concerned and informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice. The Principal will provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond.
- 3 The staff member should be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.
- 4 The school commits to not using *settlement agreements* where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some *settlement agreements* allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerns the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid, unpaid or in any school-related role), the matter must be reported promptly to the Principal.

Under no circumstances should the student making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the school to consider removing the staff member from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract. All actions will be undertaken with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality.

When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member flowchart



Prevention of possible abuse or neglect

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff can identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and know how to respond.

The school will provide training, resources and/or advice to enable all staff to carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

Core and non-core workers will attend training, refresher training and regular updates which will ensure that they have the competence to identify and manage actual or potential abuse or neglect and empower them to keep our students safe.

This training will ensure that staff:

- Are conversant with the school's Child Protection Policy
- Understand child abuse and neglect and the indicators of child abuse and neglect
- Understand the standard of adult behaviour expected of adults in relation to children
- Understand how to minimise the risk of child abuse
- Understand their need to seek advice when child abuse or neglect is suspected.
- Understand the school's process once child abuse or neglect is identified or suspected
- Understand their legal obligations and responsibilities with regard to this process
- Understand that the school supports the roles of the New Zealand Police and Child Youth and Family in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies
- Understand the statutory referral processes and agency management of identified or suspected child abuse or neglect

Process for security or storage of information

Records should be kept separate from the usual system of student records and access to the records should be restricted. They should be held for at least ten years.

Supporting Documents

- Safer Organisations Safer Children – Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Health and Safety Reform Bill
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- “Working together to keep children and young people safe” is a resource for helping people recognise when families are vulnerable and how they can help, through to spotting the signs of abuse, who to talk to, how to report their concerns, and what happens when a report of concern comes through to Child, Youth and Family.
<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others/working-together-to-keep-children-and-young-people-safe.html> (Click “Working together to keep children and young people safe”)
- The various indicators of different types of abuse that can be found here:
<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/56/learn-about-childabuse/recognise-the-signs>