

Child Protection Policy

Purpose Miramar Central School (MCS) is committed to ensuring that the interests and welfare of children and young persons are the first and paramount consideration and will act accordingly to ensure that issues of reported or suspected abuse of children or young people is dealt with.

This policy sets out the ways abuse can be identified and how it should be reported at Miramar Central School.

Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer for Miramar Central School will be the Deputy Principal. A second person, the Assistant Principal, will also hold the role when the DP is on annual, sick or extended leave.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

The lists below are not a definitive list of abuse or neglect. If staff observe something that concerns them they should discuss their concerns with the Miramar Central School Child Protection Officer.

Abuse

Intentional 'harming or maltreatment, whether physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional. Abuse is generally seen as an act of commission or deliberate act, whereas neglect is seen as an act of omission.

- *Physical Abuse*: Involves the infliction of physical pain by injury or force. This can include, but is not limited to, bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning or fabricating an illness.
- *Psychological/Emotional Abuse*: Involves verbal and physical behaviour that causes mental or emotional anguish or fear. This can include, but is not limited to, patterns of isolation, corruption or exploitation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Terrorising or exposing children and young people to violence is also considered emotional abuse.
- *Sexual Abuse*: Involves sexually abuse and exploitative behaviors including exposure to pornography, voyeurism, exhibitionism, sexual or suggestive behaviour, threats, force or the inability of the person to give consent.
- *Material Abuse*: Involves the illegal or improper exploitation and/or use of funds or other resources.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as a failure to care for. As a point of differentiation from the wider definition of abuse, neglect can be viewed as an act of omission, rather than of commission.

- *Active Neglect* is conscious and intentional deprivation of basic support such as food, shelter, clothing, warmth.
- *Passive Neglect* is a refusal or failure due to inadequate knowledge or disputing the value of the prescribed services, to provide basic necessities.
- *Self-Neglect* occurs when a student or their whānau experiences harmful physical, psychological, material and/or social effects as a result of failing to provide him/herself with the basic necessities for physical and/or mental well-being.

Roles and Responsibilities

¹[see website](#)



Teachers, support staff, parents and volunteers at Miramar Central School may all be in the position to notice behavioural, emotional or physical changes that may indicate abuse. Everyone in a core or non-core role is responsible for reporting their concerns of abuse and neglect to the Child Protection Officer. Staff should document their concerns or observations and refer them to the Child Protection Officer. Staff should not question or further converse with the child to obtain more information.

Identifying abuse and neglect

Identifying abuse and neglect can be obvious (e.g. bruising or other injuries) or it can be difficult (isolating emotional trauma from day to day behavioural challenges). If staff observe something that concerns them they should discuss their concerns with the Miramar Central School Child Protection Officer.

Warning signs may include but are not limited to:

- Changes in a child's behaviour such as being withdrawn and quiet, not wanting to participate in activities they used to like, not wanting to go home.
- Behaviour changing where a child might be 'acting out'
- Bruises, scratches and cuts that never seem to heal
- Prolonged or regular absence from school
- Turning up to school consistently hungry and/or with no lunch
- Stories and artwork have a noticeable change which is not age appropriate or of concern (due to the nature of the stories and/or artwork)
- Violent or sexual behaviour towards other children
- Through conversation or overheard conversation.
- Turning up to school consistently dirty and unwashed /unclean.

The lists of identifying factors below are not a definitive list of how to identify abuse or neglect.

- *Physical Abuse:* Eating disorders, substance abuse or disengagement with normal activities, unexplained and/or regular bruising, fractures, burns or limps. Children and young people may have trouble speaking or staying awake during the day.
- *Psychological/Emotional Abuse:* Eating disorders, substance abuse, changes in self-perception, sleep problems, obsessive behaviour evidence of self-harm.
- *Sexual Abuse:* This can become apparent if a child or young person initiates or engages in inappropriate sexual play, they have a fear of a certain person, display evidence of eating disorders or substance abuse or display signs of aggression or disengagement/neediness that concerns others. Behaviour such as excessive itching could indicate sexually transmitted diseases. Eating disorders, substance abuse or disengagement with normal activities
- *Material Abuse:* Students or individuals may suddenly acquire material goods without sound and consistent explanation of where the money came from.

Suspected Child Abuse Process

Where it is suspected that there is a case of child abuse and/or neglect within any of the social services provided the process is as follows:

- Any other suspicions, concerns or injuries must be noted. Dates, times of suspected abuse are noted.
- This can include observations of the caregivers or parents when children are picked up, comments from other children, behaviour noticed before and after school



Miramar Central School

Te Kura O Whataitai

Empowering Our Children

Tel: 04 939-0684, P O Box 15048, Miramar, Wellington 6233, 38 Park Road, Miramar, Wellington 6022
Email: office@miramarcentral.school.nz Website: www.miramarcentral.school.nz

- Full documentation with dates, times and observations forwarded to the Child Protection Officer
- The Child Protection Officer will discuss the concerns and any evidence to the Principal
- Any concerns that indicate the welfare and safety of the child is of immediate concern must be referred to the Principal immediately or as soon as possible,

Reporting abuse procedure

Teachers, support staff, parents and volunteers have a responsibility to be concerned with the well-being and safety of our students. People who work at school are in a strong position to provide support for children in cases of suspected abuse. The best interests of the child or young person are paramount, therefore suspicions of abuse should be reported. Legal protection is given to the informant if this is done in 'good faith' and without malicious intent.

Where abuse is suspected Miramar Central School will be able to act using agreed procedures.

- Decisions should be made on the basis of objective observation and consultation.
- Records should be factual with dates and times included. Speculation should not be made as to how or why events occurred. All records must be given to the Child Protection Officer who is then responsible for informing the Principal.
- At all stages confidentiality and objectivity of the student, their family and the school community must be maintained.
- A student's initial disclosure of suspected abuse is a critical moment and must be handled carefully. Staff must not press the students disclosure
- The Principal has the responsibility for coordinating action and supporting the staff member to report to the Police or Oranga Tamariki (Child, Youth and Family (CYFS)) in cases of suspected abuse.
- Re-informing students, parents, legal caregivers:
 - If someone in the student's home situation is suspected the Principal should first report and seek advice from the Police and/or Oranga Tamariki (Child, Youth and Family (CYFS)).
 - Where the welfare of the student is not threatened by revealing the details of the suspected abuse to the parents or caregivers, then they should be informed immediately by the Principal.
- Information should be fed back to people who can support the student and the teacher.
- The following procedures must be adhered to when dealing with suspected abuse.
- The Principal (or their delegate) is ultimately responsible for any referrals to outside agencies.

Reviewed: 17 June 2018

BOT Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

MCS Principal : _____

Date: _____

FLOW CHART FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN (2014 Act) PROCEDURES AT MIRAMAR CENTRAL SCHOOL

Child Protection Office – DP (or Assistant Principal or Principal)



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Disclosure or Concerns about Child Abuse Outside School

Staff member notices or is told of behavioural, emotional or physical changes in a child

Document concerns with dates, times and suspected abuse

Discuss with Child Protection Officer

Child protection officer discusses with Principal

Decision made on how to proceed

Principal refers concerns to Police or Department of Social Development (Oranga Tamariki)

Direction taken from these agencies as to how to proceed with telling parents/caregivers

Disclosure or Concerns about Child Abuse Inside School

Subject to the overriding safety of the child

The staff member will be informed by the Principal or Deputy of the allegation as soon as possible

The staff member will be encouraged to seek appropriate advice and support

The school will seek the advice of NZSTA

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will be informed.