

RATIONALE

As Christian educators, we are committed to upholding the safety, dignity, and worth of every child, recognising each one as made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

This policy outlines the Board's commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all staff in the protection of children and young people. It includes the Board's expectations for reporting and addressing suspected child abuse. This policy is in line with the Children's Act 2014 and the Education and Training Act 2020.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board has an obligation to ensure that Bethlehem College is a spiritually, physically and emotionally safe place for all students.

The Board is committed to ensure the welfare of children and young people in its care; that they thrive, belong and achieve.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the areas of responsibility and expectations within the College to prevent child abuse and neglect and promote the protection of all children and young people.

Where physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse is suspected, the College will take appropriate action in the child or young person's interest, as outlined in this document and enacted through associated procedures.

All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

The Board delegates responsibility to the principal (and/or designated person) to ensure that all children and young people's safety procedures are implemented, supported and maintained.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Proverbs 31:8-9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Matthew 7:12

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

DEFINITIONS

Key terms used in this policy are defined in the accompanying CPP(3.14.01)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following responsibilities may be amended by the Board, in particular the delegation of responsibilities to a designated person that is not the principal. This may include amended or additional responsibilities to those set out below.

Role	Responsibility
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Board	Implementation and regular review of the Child Protection Policy.
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Support and resource the Principal, senior staff (and designated person / persons) to ensure compliance with child protection policy/procedures.

Safety checking procedures are followed where the Board is directly involved/responsible with any appointment process, including applicable vetting and screening, to ensure that child safeguarding is a priority in relation to any appointment.

Every contract or funding arrangement that the Board enters requires the adoption of child protection policies where applicable.

Ensure the best interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances and decision making.

Ensure compliance with any reporting requirements arising out of Board decisions concerning staff or volunteers, including reporting obligations under legislation.

Principal	That child protection is a key focus within the College and that appropriate protocols, procedures and training for staff and volunteers are in place.
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The rights and needs of children come first in relation to any decision-making within the school – that the safety and welfare of each child is the paramount consideration in all circumstances.

Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Procedure in day-to-day practice and any changes or amendments to procedures that would improve child protection, or the application of this policy, be reported to the Board.

Support staff to comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure including arranging training and/or refresher courses to enable staff to identify signs and symptoms of actual or potential abuse.

Require staff to work in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and make available professional development, resources and/or advice to help staff to carry out their roles in terms of this policy and accompanying procedure.

Promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice, raise issues of concern or otherwise report and act on potential abuse.

Consult, discuss and share relevant information with the Board in line with the College's commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concern about abuse (or report of abuse).

Seek advice as necessary from the New Zealand School Boards Association (NZSBA) and/or other qualified advisor and any relevant Agency where there are reports of abuse or potential abuse, issues concerning child protection and child

safeguarding that are outside behavioural/conduct issues involving students that would otherwise be dealt with in accordance with the school's student management procedures.

Ensure that this Child Protection Policy and Procedure forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

Ensure that all reports and/or allegations of abuse are managed appropriately and in accordance with this policy and associated procedure.

Determine the appropriate pathway for dealing with an allegation of abuse, including assessing whether a matter is appropriately dealt with in accordance with the school's student management procedures and/or notification to any external Agencies such as Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.

Ensure and safeguard clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection cases.

Retain and develop links with relevant local agencies including Oranga Tamariki and Police.

Ensure that all staff are recruited and employed in accordance with applicable recruitment policies and procedures, and that core workers are subject to safety checks as required by the Children's Act 2014.

Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training so that they are skilled, confident, competent and well supported in meeting these protection responsibilities.

Staff

Understand and adhere to the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Understand how to identify and report potential or actual abuse and neglect of children and to retain a record of any concern and report of abuse.

Complete training as reasonably required and appropriate to the staff members' areas of work and role in the school.

Be aware of and alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, record and report any concern about children's safety or welfare to the principal and/or designated person.

Work in cooperation with the principal and/or designated person along with the parents and/or caregivers unless this compromises the safety of the child.

Safety Checks and Professional Development

The college will carry out safety checks for core children's workers as required under the Children's Act 2014, including identity confirmation, prescribed information review, and a risk assessment. This will be required at least every three years. Recruitment and employment practices will also meet teacher registration requirements under the Education and Training Act 2020 and New Zealand Teaching Council guidance.

Staff will be supported with appropriate resources and training to ensure they have the necessary skills for their roles, including mandatory professional development tailored to their level of contact with children and responsibilities related to child safety.

Refer to the associated procedures for full details – (CPP 3.14.01).

Responding to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff, Board members, and volunteers must take action if they suspect child abuse or neglect, regardless of who is involved. Concerns must be reported to the principal or delegate and handled according to the

Policy Number 3.14	Last Reviewed: Term 2, 2025	Next Review Due: Term 4, 2026
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Child Protection Procedure. The response may include immediate contact with Police if the child is in danger, or referral to Oranga Tamariki if the concern relates to events outside the school. If the suspected abuse involves someone within the school, further assessment will be made, with external advice if required (eg NZSBA).

The principal or delegate will ensure the child's safety is the top priority, legal obligations will be upheld, and accurate records maintained. The Board will be kept informed "in committee" to maintain privacy. Refer to the Child Protection Procedure for detailed guidance.

Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to the application and implementation of this Child Protection Policy:

- Care of Children Act 2004.
- Children's Act 2014.
- Education and Training Act 2020.
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
- Privacy Act 2020.

Additional Information

Screening and Vetting: The process for obtaining checks from another agency for screening and vetting purposes as set out in schedule 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020 and Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers (Regulations 2015) and the Health and safety act (2015)

Information on reporting abuse: www.education.govt.nz/nz/school/student-support/emergencies-and-traumatic-incidents

Safety checks for volunteers: www.education.govt.nz/asset/documents/school/traumatic/incidents-and-emergency/traumatic-incidents-checklist-2018.pdf

Vetting means the formal process of obtaining checks from another agency, e.g. the Police vetting service, criminal record checks. Schedule 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020 sets out requirements for schools for police vetting.

Screening means an internal process for identifying suitable candidates – in this case, those who can be relied on to keep children in your care safe. Screening is about following a process to collect enough information so that you can be satisfied, having assessed the risks, that the applicant is safe to work with children in the role they are applying for. More specifically, it means verifying their identity, gathering information about them through application forms, interviews and reference checks, and finally checking what you know through the use of external checks like the Police vetting service.

See Children's Act 2014 Part <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM5501618.html>

Any person 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 the matter to the Principal or designated person. For further information on reporting abuse go to: <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies-and-traumatic-incidents/>

The Ministry of Education encourages this as best practice, especially if the person is a regular volunteer and will be alone with or have overnight contact with children. See: <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Traumatic-incidents-and-emergencies/Traumatic->

Policy Number 3.14	Last Reviewed: Term 2, 2025	Next Review Due: Term 4, 2026
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Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and updated to ensure compliance with legislation, related policies and procedures and considering operational factors/experience.

The Board will be responsible for the review of the policy in consultation with the principal and/or designated person.

The Board may request that the procedure will be reviewed considering legal requirements, feedback from staff, and our commitment to continuous improvement and safeguarding.

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