

## Child Protection

### Introduction:

Otago Girls' High School is committed to modelling and providing a safe environment free from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

### Rationale:

- Ensure that the interest and protection of the child is paramount in all circumstances.
- Recognise the rights of family whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- Ensure that all staff understand that they need to forward concerns if they become aware of signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- Work with staff and partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented and concerns about the well being of a child are appropriately addressed.
- Promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge unethical practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
- Recognise that children have a fundamental right to have their needs met in an environment safe from abuse and neglect.
- Accept our responsibility under the legislation for engaging in safe employment practices and playing a role in the prevention and identification of child abuse and neglect.

### Procedures:

- Leaders within the school work together with other children's agencies (such as the Police, Oranga Tamariki, Social Workers, etc.) to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children (*refer Appendix 1 for details*).
- Procedures are in place to identify and respond to allegations regarding abuse (*refer Appendix 1a, 2b and 2c*).
- Procedures are in place to deal with the possibility of an allegation involving a staff member (*refer Appendix 3a and 3b*).
- Child Protection Coordinators (DPs and Counsellors) are adequately resourced (*refer Appendix 4*).
- Relevant information is shared and discussed in a timely way with the Board or designated person(s) when there are concerns about an individual child.
- Advice is sought from NZSTA advisors on employment matters, and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
- Professional development, resources and/or advice is provided to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy (*refer Appendix 5*).
- Appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements are developed as required.
- Explanation and discussion of this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

- Records are kept separate from the usual system of students records and access to these records will be restricted. They should be held for at least ten years.
- In accordance with the Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (CYPF) 1989 information will be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.
- Safe recruitment practices are in place in line with the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act of 2014 and Section 78C and 78CA of the Education and Training Act 2020.

## 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 cause or effect serious harm to a child (*refer to Appendix 6*).

### *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 education or involve a lack of supervision.

## Conclusion:

In accordance with the requirements of Part 2, Section 18 (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 the Board will:

- adopt this child protection policy;
- ensure that the policy is available on the school website and is available upon request from the school office;
- ensure that all agencies, contractors or funding arrangements fulfil the requirements of this policy; and
- review the policy every three years.


## Supporting documents

- *safer organisations Safer Children – Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations, Safer Children*  
<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/chidrens-teams/>
- *vulnerable Children Act 2014*  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>
- *Health and Safety Reform Bill*  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2014/0192/5.0/DLM5976660.html>
- *Organa Tamariki Act 1989 / Children’s and Young People’s Wellbeing Act 1989*  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/127.0/DLM147088.html>

- *Indicators of different types of abuse are detailed in this resource:*  
<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/56/learn%20about%20childabuse/recognise%20the%20signs>
- *Further information including frequently asked questions (FAQ's) are available on the NZSTA website [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz)  
Ministry of Education website [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)*

**Note:**

*This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following Appendixes*

<p><b>Signed by Principal - 12.02.2024</b></p> 	<p><b>Date to be reviewed -</b></p> <p><b>November 2026</b></p>
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