



Te Aroha College Child Protection Policy

Rationale and Purpose

Te Aroha College is committed to the safety and well-being of all students. This policy outlines our commitment to child protection and our procedures for identifying and responding to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and young people. This policy aligns with the Children's Act 2014 and other relevant New Zealand legislation, ensuring that all staff members understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following New Zealand legislation:

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Crimes Act 1961

Definitions

Child Abuse: Includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and family violence.

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years.

Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP): A senior staff member appointed to take responsibility for child protection matters.

Policy Statement

Te Aroha College is committed to:

- Promoting the well-being of children and protecting them from harm.
- Ensuring all staff understand and comply with child protection policies and procedures.
- Providing a safe environment where students feel respected and secure.
- Working collaboratively with external agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of children.



Procedures

1. Recruitment and Training

1.1 All prospective employees and volunteers will undergo thorough vetting procedures, including police vetting and reference checks, in accordance with the Children's Act 2014.

1.2 All staff members will receive training on child protection policies and procedures upon employment and at regular intervals thereafter.

2. Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse

2.1 All staff members are required to be vigilant and aware of the signs of potential child abuse and neglect.

2.2 If a staff member suspects child abuse or neglect, they must report their concerns immediately to the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP).

2.3 The DPCP will assess the information provided and decide on the appropriate action, which may include:

- Reporting the matter to Oranga Tamariki (the Ministry for Children).
- Reporting the matter to the New Zealand Police.
- Consulting with other professionals involved with the child and family.

3. Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

3.1 If a child discloses abuse, the staff member must:

- Listen carefully and reassure the child.
- Record the disclosure verbatim, noting the date, time, and context.
- Report the disclosure immediately to the DPCP.
- Avoid making promises they cannot keep, such as promising confidentiality.

3.2 The DPCP will take appropriate action in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 2.3.

4. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

4.1 Information about suspected or disclosed child abuse will be shared on a need-to-know basis to protect the privacy of the child and their family.



4.2 All records relating to child protection concerns will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.

5. Supporting Children and Families

5.1 Te Aroha College will provide support to children who are victims of abuse and their families, including referrals to appropriate external agencies.

5.2 The school will ensure that victims of abuse continue to receive education in a safe and supportive environment.

6. Code of Conduct for Staff

6.1 Staff members must adhere to the school's code of conduct, which includes maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with students and avoiding any behaviour that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate or harmful.

6.2 Staff members must report any breaches of the code of conduct to the DPCP immediately.

7. Review of the Policy

7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains effective and compliant with relevant legislation.

Conclusion

Te Aroha College is dedicated to providing a safe environment for all students. By implementing this child protection policy, the school aims to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities and that any concerns about child safety are addressed promptly and effectively.

Ratified: June 2024
Date of next review: June 2027