



*Educating for Time and Eternity*

## **Policy No. 16 Child Protection Policy**

*You hear O Lord the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed in order that man who is of the earth may terrify no more.*

*Psalms 10:17-18*

### **Rationale**

We have as a Board the obligation to ensure the well-being of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. As Christian educators, we want to restore our pupils by pointing them always to Jesus and His healing.

All children under Section 15 of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act will be linked to a social worker or local Police if need arises in the area of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or ill treatment, neglect or deprivation circumstances.

Our commitment at our school is to protect and educate parents and children regarding vulnerable children from abuse and neglect through its actions, activities and staff intervention. We recognise the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of all of our pupils.

We recognise the importance of the culture of the family and its rights in decision making.

### **Purpose**

To comply with all legislative requirements.

Our policy provides a broad framework to protect children, including staff in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect. All children are treated with dignity and respect and have a right to receive help if needed. This applies also to all staff including volunteers and part time or temporary roles and contractors (eg Plumbers and Electricians).

This also includes all children that staff may encounter, including siblings of the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff as they provide their service.

We will use all agencies to support our staff and children wherever appropriate. Sometimes we need specialist knowledge and training options. Sometimes it may be a pastoral concern that we may link the parents so that they can get help from their Church community.

## Training

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to recognize, respond and prevent abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff will be made aware of this policy on child protection.

## Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- Indicators are signs or symptoms that, when found either on their own or in various combinations, point to possible abuse, family violence or neglect. In many cases, indicators are found in combinations or clusters.  
Indicators do not necessarily prove or mean that a child has been harmed. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. Sometimes indicators can result from life events, which do not involve abuse e.g. accidental injury.
- We understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.
- We understand that when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to our SENCO, the Principal or the appropriate outside agency.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall well-being and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.

We recognise the signs of potential abuse:

- Physical signs (e.g., unexplained injuries, bruises, burns - look at the shape of the burn in case it is a stove ring or cigarette etc, fractures - especially to the head or face, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, head injuries, abdominal injuries.) Also look out for regularity of these injuries to see if there is a pattern forming.
- Developmental delays (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g. sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g., age inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression). If this involves a staff member it must be put in writing by the Complainant or parent and this will be investigated by the appropriate leader.
- The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).

We are aware of the signs of potential neglect:

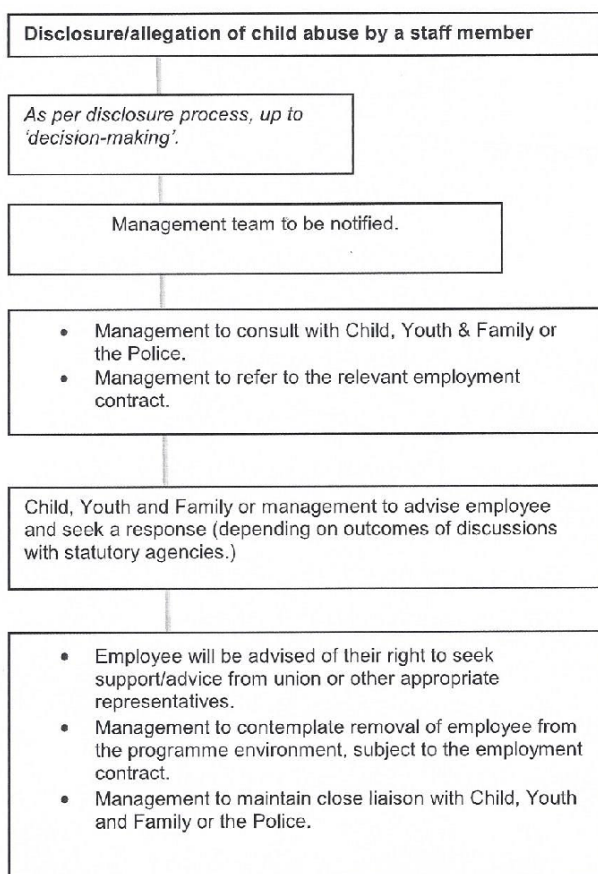
- Physical signs (e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight).

- Developmental delays (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g., disengagement/ neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).
- Neglectful supervision (e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).
- Medical neglect (e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).

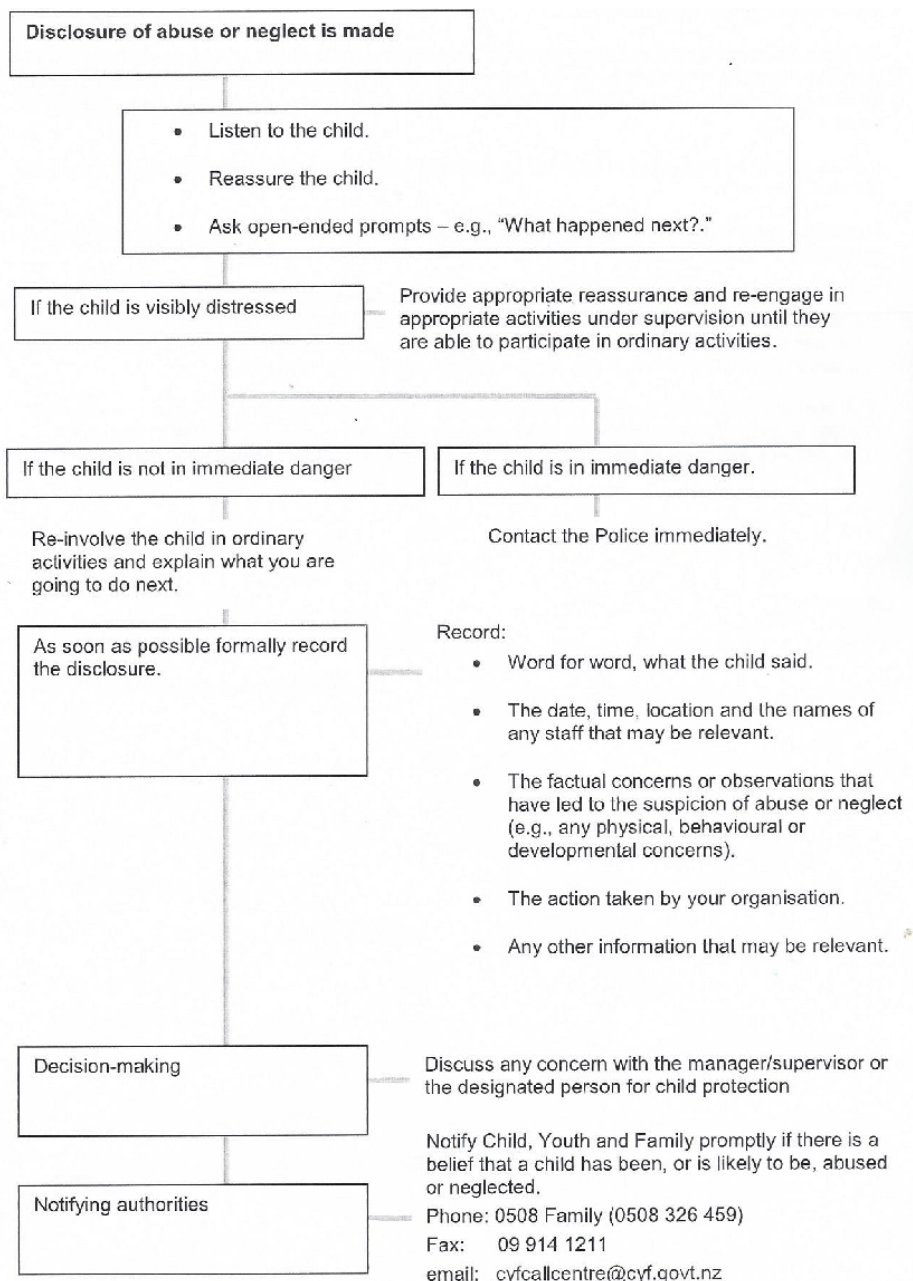
## When An Allegation Is Made Against A Member Of Staff

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be escalated to the management team.

To ensure the child is kept safe, management may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law.



We commit not to use '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 concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.



## Child Safe Practice Guidelines

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations where staff may be alone with children. Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets). Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times.

Visitors should be monitored at all times by staff and volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff.

If activities require one to one physical contact (i.e., classes in swimming, gymnastics etc.) parents and caregivers should be advised.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies (in education such as the Ministry of Education's Special Education group) to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.

Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it. Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from our school premises, or from the programme we provide, without written parental consent.

## Recruitment And Employment (Safety Checking)

Our recruitment policy reflects a commitment to child protection by including comprehensive screening procedures. Safety checks will be carried out, as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Storing relevant information	Securely store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The record of the concern.</li> <li>• A record of any related discussions (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate).</li> <li>• A record of any advice received.</li> <li>• The action your organisation took, including any rationale.</li> <li>• This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident).</li> </ul>	Records assist in identifying patterns.
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### 1. Who Needs To Be Safety Checked?

- a) Teachers – the “core worker” category – both registered and unregistered teachers, school counsellors, students on practicum, relieving teachers, teacher aides (but no unpaid volunteers);
- b) Non-Teaching Staff – the “non-core worker” category – who are in paid employment, support staff working in schools with regular contact with children, school bus drivers, school-based nurses or health professionals/ workers.

### 2. Timeline for implementing safety checks for teachers (and other “core workers”)

- a) *All newly appointed “core workers”*, who take up positions from 1 July 2015. (Those with convictions for specified offences will need to seek an exemption from the Workforce Restriction if they wish to take up a role as a “core worker”).
- b) The Workforce Restriction applies to *all existing “core workers”* from 1 July 2016, unless an exemption has already been granted;
- c) Safety checks must be repeated every three years; consequently *all existing “core workers”* must have been safety checked by 1 July 2018.

### 3. Timeline for implementing safety checks for non-teaching (“non-core workers”)

- a) All newly appointed “non-core workers”, who take up positions from 1 July 2016.
- b) Safety checks must be repeated every three years; consequently all existing “non-core workers” must have been safety checked by 1 July 2019.

### 4. Checking process

- a) Verify identity – obtain proof of people being who they say they are from original documents;
- b) Check history and behavior – Police vetting re criminal convictions, referee checks, interview;

- c) Risk assessment – what risk, and record if any, the person poses or might pose to children.
- d) Ensure all student teachers on practicum are Police Vet checked by their learning institute prior to commence their time at Westminster Christian School. Lecturers who review student teachers progress do not have to be Police Vet checked but must show at the office their identification / accreditation.

## **Conclusion**

This policy will be reviewed every three years and sent to our parent community for consultation.

This policy will be placed on our website.

Staff will have mandatory professional development in all areas of this policy annually.  
For all Definitions of words that apply to this policy, please refer to the attached Appendix 3 - "Definitions".

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Adopted: 26 July 2016

Reviewed: July 2018  
11 February 2020  
23 February 2021



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### Appendix 1



#### 5.2.1 Interview

You must interview any applicant who you may wish to employ or engage. This should be done face to face but can be conducted by Skype (or equivalent).

Below are some examples of questions you could use in an interview to check the candidate's attitude to child safety and whether they would pose a risk to children.

#### Example interview questions

##### Questions that provide information about the children's worker themselves

- › Whether complaints have ever been made about their professional practice and how they have responded to them.
- › Whether they have ever been convicted of an offence.
- › Whether they have ever been the subject of a complaints procedure during their employment.
- › Reasons for leaving previous jobs.

##### Questions that explore the children's worker's attitudes

Whether there has ever been a time when they have had to deal with the following situations, including the process and outcome. If that situation has not arisen, what they would do if:

- › a child or young person disclosed abuse
- › a child or young person was cheeky
- › a child or young person hit them
- › they discovered two children fighting or engaged in sexual play or who had stolen property
- › a child or young person invited them to become involved in intimate or touching behaviour
- › a child or young person threatened to make a false allegation of abuse about them.

##### Questions that indicate the children's worker's views on child safe practice

- › How they believe children should be disciplined.
- › Their thoughts on being alone on the job with children and young people.
- › The chances of an abuse allegation being made about them, if they were accepted for the job.

##### Questions that describe the children's worker's experiences and relationships in working with children

- › What rewarding experiences they have had working with children.
- › What they think constitutes professional practice when working with children.
- › Other relationships they have with children outside the working or volunteer environment.
- › The reason they think they get along with children or children like them.
- › The kind of relationships they hope to develop with the children and families in this organisation.

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### Appendix 2

#### 5.6 The Workforce Restriction and the Core Worker Exemption

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 includes the Workforce Restriction, which prohibits the employment of people with certain serious criminal convictions as core children's workers, unless they hold a Core Worker Exemption. Those convictions are specified in *Schedule 2 of the VCA* and will show up on children's worker's Police vet during their safety check.

As the Workforce Restriction applies to core children's workers, it is important to carefully identify whether each role in your organisation is core or non-core. The Workforce Restriction is being phased in and applies to new core workers from 1 July 2015, and to existing core workers from 1 July 2016.

Key dates	Requirements
From 1 July 2015	The Workforce Restriction applied to everyone applying for a new role in the core children's workforce unless they have an exemption from the Workforce Restriction.
From 1 July 2016	The 12 month transition period expires and the Workforce Restriction applies to everyone currently employed as core children's workers unless an exemption has been granted.

##### 5.6.1 The Workforce Restriction

All existing and new core workers with certain child abuse, sexual or violence convictions can't be appointed to a **new core children's worker role**, unless they have applied for and received a Core Worker Exemption, and from 1 July 2016 the Workforce Restriction applies to all **existing core workers**.

The offences which trigger the Workforce Restriction involve child victims and/or violent behaviour, including child abuse and sexual offending and are specified in 5.6.3 below. It is illegal to hire or continue to hire anyone in a core worker role (in line with the timeframes) if they have a conviction for one of the specified offences and do not hold a workforce exemption.

If you believe that a worker you're employing or engaging has a conviction for a specified offence, the Service manager or school board must immediately:

- › suspend the worker from all duties that require or enable them to act as a core worker, and continue to pay the worker as though they have been suspended on the grounds of serious misconduct
- › state the period of suspension, which must be not less than five working days (but may be extended from time to time). The period of suspension is a question for the school or service to determine – a longer suspension will give the person more time to seek an exemption or establish that they do not have a specified offence, but suspensions will need to be paid as though he or she had been suspended on the grounds of serious misconduct
- › tell the worker the reason and the grounds for the suspension.