



TE AWAMUTU COLLEGE

POLICY STATEMENT ON CHILD PROTECTION

Rationale

Te Awamutu College has particular responsibilities under legislation as well as those expected by society to provide an environment which ensures that all children and young people are treated with dignity and respect and are provided with a safe environment which supports and enhances their physical and emotional well-being.

Purpose

1. To emphasise that of paramount consideration are the well-being and best interests of the child or young person *and Te Awamutu College is committed to making decisions that ultimately reflect the aims of this policy.*
2. To provide guidelines for everyone working with children and young people in the school environment.

Te Awamutu College is committed to protecting all students in its care from abuse, neglect and harm, and assuring the public that they can have the greatest confidence in the organisation. Therefore, Te Awamutu College will adhere to safe practices and ensure that our stakeholders are made aware of this. Recognizing the importance of this policy, Te Awamutu College staff are made aware of this policy in the first half of Term One each year.

Our Child Protection policy, along with supporting policies and procedures, applies to any student at Te Awamutu College who is defined as a child under the Children's Act 2014 (Part 1, s. 5). Where this policy refers to "students" to maintain consistency with other school documentation, child protection requirements apply, with the exception of those outside the Children's Act definition. Concerns about students who are 18 years and over are directed to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, or the New Zealand Police. The Children's Act defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. This definition is expanded in certain contexts of the Act in terms of age and the child's relationship with care agencies. In Part 1 of the Children's Act 2014, unless the context otherwise requires, child means any of the following: (a) a person who is under the age of 18 years: (b) a person who is under the age of 21 years and has been in care (as defined in this subsection): (c) a person who is under the age of 25 years and is receiving transition support from the department under Part 7 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 Children's Act 2014 (Part 1, s. 5)

3. To ensure that children and young people are provided with preventative education to enhance their safety and awareness.

We may use programmes to help students identify healthy and unhealthy relationships. They should talk to our guidance counsellors.

4. To assist in implementation of procedures for dealing with cases of current or historical abuse.
5. To identify which external agencies should be used, services they provide, liaison required and appropriate referral procedures.

Te Awamutu College will comply with all government and legislative responsibilities and requirements relating to child protection, and will ensure that this Policy and Procedures are regularly reviewed in accordance with accepted best practice.

Guidelines

1. The safety of the child or young person must be the first consideration. Any staff member 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 should report the matter to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Guidance Counsellor. They will speak with the Principal and a referral will be made to the appropriate external agency.

If there is immediate danger:

- *Phone the police on 111.*
- *If possible, protect the immediate safety of the student.*
- *Following the incident, inform the designated child protection person*
- *Record any actions taken.*

If there is no immediate danger:

- *Record a factual account of any concerns that have come up, or any disclosures that are made.*
- *For any concerns, consult the designated child protection person, who works with relevant school staff and external agencies as necessary.*
- *The designated child protection person may consult with the principal and board to decide whether to share information externally.*
- *Where a concern does not warrant notifying Oranga Tamariki, the school may partner with social service providers to identify and address the needs of the student.*
- *If necessary, Oranga Tamariki investigates and advises relevant staff about any action that should be taken to support students.*
- *Decisions about informing parents or caregivers about suspected or actual child abuse or neglect are made after consultation between the school and Oranga Tamariki.*
- *All decisions are recorded in writing and kept in a secure child protection file, with any decision-making processes explained*

The Guidance Staff will be responsible for assessing all known information about child/young person's safety concerns, maintaining open relationships with the child/young person and family/whanau, unless this would result in an escalation of risk.

Guidance Staff or Social Worker will assess the level of need and risk through consultation with any relevant statutory and non-statutory agency. These agencies provide a network of multi-layered support services, and Te Awamutu College will work collaboratively with these agencies to support vulnerable children and their families.

Te Awamutu College will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, and the New Zealand Police.

Any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be harmed physically, sexually, emotionally, or by family violence, or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, or the Police.

Staff will not inform families/whānau of suspected or actual abuse unless this has been discussed with, and approved by Oranga Tamariki.

All suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour will be recorded in writing, noting any observations, impressions and communications in regards to a specific child/children. Confidentiality and professionalism must be maintained at all times.

Should specific information, be requested by Oranga Tamariki, Police or any other agency, all staff involved shall provide this information in a timely matter keeping the safety of children paramount. Guidance will then inform the Principal or delegate.

To keep children safe, the Privacy Act 2020 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

Relevant information appropriate for disclosure to key staff will be found in KAMAR.

We support the wellbeing/hauora of our students by establishing positive learning environments and promoting respectful relationships between students and staff. We have a designated child protection person, who is the primary point of contact for concerns about students, including concerns about abuse or neglect. At Te Awamutu College, this person is the Principal, or Principal's delegated authority. In situations of concern, we aim to work together and intervene early to support student safety and wellbeing. We foster a safe atmosphere for our students to speak up if they feel that something is wrong or that they are being mistreated.

This policy applies to all adults who come into contact with students and children at Te Awamutu College including employees, caregiver, volunteers, part-time or temporary roles, and contractors.

- 2. Liaison with Oranga Tamariki, the Police and the Guidance Counsellor regarding professional learning and development will take place. Professional learning and development will occur for staff on what child abuse and neglect are and the procedures to be followed at Te Awamutu College.*

Te Awamutu College employees will be familiar with the signs, indicators and risk factors associated with abuse and neglect.

It is expected that any employee who has a concern regarding the safety of a child, will contact their manager/supervisor or appropriate Dean, Guidance Counsellor or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss those concerns immediately.

All Te Awamutu College employees will maintain professional relationships with families and put the needs of the child first. Where an employee notices a pattern occurring, or several signs that are a cause for concern, they must consult with/seek advice from the manager/supervisor or appropriate Dean, Guidance Counsellor or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3. Preventative education will be provided through the delivery of the Health and Physical Education curriculum.

We may use programmes to help students identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.

4. In the case of a notification, decisions about informing parents or caregivers will be made after consultation between the school and the statutory child protection service involved.
5. Professional ethics and boundaries will underpin all processes followed and actions taken. The privacy of those concerned must be respected.

If an external agency such as the Police or Oranga Tamariki asks to interview a student on school grounds, the school ensures the rights of the student are upheld. If Oranga Tamariki or similar support agencies contacts the school to interview a student, that student has the right to a support person, if they wish. This support person (e.g. Guidance, Dean, SLT) focusses on the safety and well-being of the student.

6. The Principal (delegated by the Board) will ensure that the relevant principles and duties of Oranga Tamariki: Act 1989 No. 24 (1 July 2019)(Children's and Young People's Act 1989) and Vulnerable Children Act 2014 are followed and adhered to.

Te Awamutu College will comply with current legislative requirements for the safety checking of new and existing children's workers. This includes the requirement for employers to carry out a safety check on any new employees who will be employed as 'core workers' (see definitions below) from 1 July 2015, and 'non-core workers' from 1 July 2016.

7. The Principal (delegated by the Board) will ensure that the processes of the Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015 are completed.

Te Awamutu College will complete safety checking of all new staff by; requiring a police vetting, identity verification, references and a formal interview. Work history will be sought and previous employers will be contacted. No applicant will be employed if it is suspected that they pose a risk to a child. All new and existing staff are required to be aware of the Child Protection Policy, and to be familiar with any review/amendments to the policy.

8. The Principal (delegated by the Board) will ensure that every contract or funding arrangement, that the school enters into includes child protection policies where required/appropriate.

Definitions:

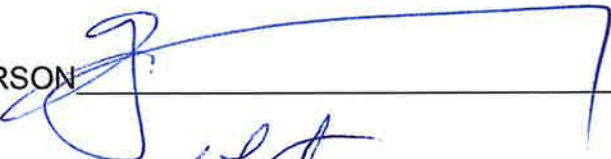
Children's worker means a person who works in, or provides, a regulated service, and the person's work-
(a) may or does involve regular or overnight contact with a child or children (other than with children who are co-workers); and
(b) takes place without a parent or guardian of the child, or of each child, being present.

Core worker means a children's worker whose work in or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with a child or children in the course of that work, the person-
(a) is the only children's worker present; or
(b) is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present

Key agency means any of the following:

- (a) the Ministry of Social Development;
- (b) the Ministry of Health;
- (c) the Ministry of Education;
- (d) the Ministry of Justice;
- (e) the department responsible for the administration of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and The Children's Act 2014.

Non-core worker means a children's worker who is not a core worker.

CHAIRPERSON 

DATE 21/8/24

PRINCIPAL 

DATE 21/8/24