

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

1. Listen to what children tell you and reflect on what you see.
2. Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. Do not make decisions alone. Consult with designated person in school and/or principal.
3. Record details of your concerns and observations or information received.
4. If it is considered a risk to the child is immediate, the principal or designated person will contact CYFS. (The public health nurse may be called upon to examine a child with overt signs of physical abuse or neglect.)
5. Seek support for yourself as these situations can be stressful.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD TELLS YOU OF HIS OR HER ABUSE

- a) Request release from class as soon as possible to enable you to talk to the child.
- b) Guard the child's privacy. Find an opportunity to talk to the child in private.
- c) Listen. Allow them to tell only as much as they want. Do not ask leading questions.
- d) If the incident has occurred outside school it is not your responsibility to determine the extent of the abuse nor the person responsible for it.
- e) Listen sympathetically and note what the child says.
- f) Be reassuring and supportive
- g) Do not over-react. The child will be monitoring every reaction. Remain composed.
- h) Do not promise the child you won't tell anyone.
- i) Do not criticise. eg Don't say 'You should have told me sooner'.
- j) Do not alert the alleged abuser.
- k) Keep a detailed written record of what has happened including dates, situation, people involved etc – complete this as soon as possible.
- l) Inform the principal or other designated staff member.
- m) Be aware that you may need to seek support for yourself. Dealing with abuse is difficult and can be a traumatic experience.

SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

AIM:

To protect children from possible abuse by staff members, other adults and children; and to protect staff from unfounded accusations of child abuse.

- All staff and visiting adults (including MUCE teachers) should be aware of our policy.
- Minimise situations where you are alone with a child or when children are left without adult supervision. Use careful judgement if this is unavoidable.
- Parents and caregivers must be advised that a student is receiving 1:1 learning or 'counselling'.
- Staff should avoid transporting a student on their own at all times.

- Regardless of a student's cultural customs, staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact.

Refer – NZEI Service and Support Manual 'Code of Conduct Physical Contact with Students'

- A comprehensive playground/classroom duty roster to ensure staff supervision of children (outside official in-class time) is in place at all times.

IF A STAFF MEMBER IS SUSPECTED OR ACCUSED OF CHILD ABUSE

(Refer to flow chart "Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse")

1. Notify the Principal of your concerns.
2. The Principal will advise the staff member concerned of the complaint and advise them to see support from an NZEI Counselor
3. For further steps refer to 'Complaint Policy and Procedure'.
4. If the staff member implicated in the allegation is the school Principal see 'Complaints Policy and Procedures'.

IF A CHILD IS SUSPECTED OF OR ACCUSED OF ABUSE

Advise the team leader or Principal of details. Consequent procedures will be determined by discussions and may be referred to "Behaviour Management Policy" (Refer to flow chart "Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse")

STAFF TRAINING

AIM:

To ensure that teaching and support staff have an awareness and knowledge of child abuse and have clearly stated procedures to follow.

1. Staff training will include:
 - How to recognise signs and symptoms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.
 - How to respond when abuse is suspected.
 - How to respond when a child tells you they have been abused.
 - How to recognise and deal with your own feelings and to get support for yourself.
 - What resources are available.
 - School's policy and procedures.
2. Training will be undertaken by appropriate outside agencies (CYFS) as part of staff development.

EMPLOYMENT

Checks will be made into the background of applicants for a job before they are employed to work in contact with children.

Refer: Early Childhood Education Services 'Prevent Child Abuse'