

## **OPERATIONAL POLICY**

### **6.8 Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

This policy outlines the Huntly College Board of Trustees commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes the Board's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

The Huntly College Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care so they thrive, belong and achieve. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

In line with Section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person in our school / kura 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 must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local police.

Although ultimate accountability sits with the Board, the Board delegates responsibility to the Principal to ensure that all child safety procedures are implemented and available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and parents. Therefore, the Principal must:

1. Develop appropriate procedures to meet child safety requirements as required and appropriate to the school.
2. Comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities.
3. Make this policy available on the school's website or available on request.
4. Ensure that every contract, or funding arrangement, that the school enters into requires the adoption of child protection policies where required.
5. Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
6. Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
7. Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response.
8. Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
9. Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
10. Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way regarding any concerns about an individual child with the Board or designated person.
11. Seek advice as necessary from NZSTA advisors on employment matters and other relevant agencies where child safety issues arise.
12. Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
13. Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

14. A Child Protection Co-ordinator will be appointed to oversee the delivery of most aspects of this policy and related procedure. At Huntly College, our designated Child Protection Co-ordinator is the Principal, who is the primary point of contact for concerns about students, including concerns about abuse or neglect. The designated Child Protection Co-ordinator is available and accessible to all staff and has experience and training in responding to child protection concerns.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Abuse:** harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, and / or deprivation of any child. It includes actual, potential and suspected abuse.
2. **Physical Abuse:** any act/s that may result in physical harm.
3. **Emotional Abuse:** any act/s or omission/s that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and / or emotional functioning or development.
4. **Sexual Abuse:** any act/s that involve forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the young person is aware its happening or not.
5. **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.
6. **Child / tamariki / young person / rangatahi / student:** any child or young person aged under 18 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.
7. **Child Protection:** activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected, real or risk of abuse or neglect.
8. **Child Protection Co-ordinator:** the staff member responsible for co-ordinating child protection and the implementation of this procedure.
9. **Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator:** the staff member responsible for supporting the Child Protection Co-ordinator in this role. It would normally be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team member with responsibility for Pastoral Care.
10. **Confidentiality:** a set of rules or a promise that limits access or places restrictions on the distribution of certain types of information.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **General:** All adults working with or on behalf of students at Huntly College have a responsibility to protect them. There are also key people within Huntly College who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures.
2. **Child Protection Co-ordinator:** It is the role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator to ensure that:
  - a) all child protection procedures are followed within the school.
  - b) appropriate action is taken when Child Protection Co-ordinator becomes aware of failure to follow procedures.
  - c) the Health and Safety Policy which covers the Child Protection Policy and Procedure are regularly reviewed as required by the Board of Trustees self-review procedures.
  - d) regular policy audit and assessment procedures are undertaken.
  - e) meaningful training and refresher courses are provided to all staff.
  - f) continued development of functional relationships with key stakeholders occurs (i.e. central and local government and non-government agencies).
  - g) a register of students for whom safety may be an issue is maintained and a safety plan is generated and circulated as appropriate.
  - h) students are monitored regarding their school attendance, welfare and presentation.
  - i) all concerns about the child protection plan and / or the child's welfare are discussed and recorded until the student is no longer at further risk of significant harm.
  - j) referrals are made as necessary.
  - k) the policy is advertised regularly to our wider community as per procedure 3.5.

- l) an annual report to the Board of Trustees detailing any changes required to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by all staff and other relevant issues be made.
3. **Board of Trustees (BOT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** The BOT and SLT are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes. As part of the school's recruitment and vetting process, police checks and other referrals will be sought for all staff that have unsupervised access to students.
4. **Principal / Staff:** In implementing this policy, it is recognised that a culture where staff feel confident, they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal is essential at Huntly College. This culture is the responsibility of the Principal.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training.
2. The Deputy Principal responsible for relief teaching staff will ensure they are aware of the school's policy and the identity of the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
3. Any members of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives an allegation, a disclosure of abuse or neglect, or suspects that abuse or neglect may have occurred **must report it** immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator or in their absence, the Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of a Deputy Principal.
4. The Child Protection Co-ordinator or Deputy will always consider referring cases of actual, or suspected, abuse and / or neglect to the appropriate Government Agency (e.g. Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, Police, Ministry of Social Development).
5. The initial induction programme for any new staff member will include appropriate review of the Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

1. All teaching and non-teaching staff will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively including use of physical restraint.
2. Advanced training will be available for staff including, but not limited to, the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
3. Temporary staff and volunteers who work with students in the school will be made aware of their responsibilities with regard to the school's arrangements for child protection.
4. Where there are concerns about child protection, support will always be available for staff from the Huntly College Counsellor and the Senior Leadership Team.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. In the context of Child Protection, the sole purpose of confidentiality is to benefit the student and this confidentiality is at the sole discretion of the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
2. Promises of confidentiality or secrecy must not extend to situations which may include child protection concerns.
3. All information regarding child protection issues will be shared with appropriate staff and is expected to be kept confidential.

## **RECORDS, MEETINGS AND MONITORING**

1. Huntly College will keep a record of any concern(s) held about a student, the status of such records and when and to whom these records will be shared.
2. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse and / or neglect or noticing signs and / or indicators of abuse and / or neglect, must pass such information onto the Huntly College Child Protection Co-ordinator, or the Senior Leadership Team. This should be treated as an urgent matter. These file notes are kept in a separate, confidential file and stored in the Huntly College Child Protection Co-ordinator's office.
3. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Co-ordinator to ensure that Huntly College is represented at any meeting for students enrolled at Huntly College.

## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT RISK**

1. Huntly College recognises that students who are abused and / or neglected and / or who witness violence may be vulnerable and may be require extra support and / or protection.
2. Huntly College staff recognise that school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of students at risk.
3. Huntly College will endeavour to support students through:
  - a) the curriculum and other appropriate programmes / events.
  - b) developing a positive, supportive and secure environment in which all students and adults well-being is respected and valued.
  - c) the curtailing of abusive and neglectful behaviours at school.
  - d) appropriate liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families.
  - e) a commitment to develop productive supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the student's best interest to do so.
  - f) the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
  - g) encouraging participation in cultural and sporting activities

## **SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF**

1. Abuse and / or neglect of students and / or adults is unacceptable at Huntly College by anyone.
2. Where allegations are made against a staff member, appropriate action should be taken following the Huntly College Complaints Procedure. It should be noted that all staff appointments for a "Children's Worker" follow a rigorous appointment procedure, including Primary and Secondary Identification Documents, Interview Process, Referee Contacts and finally police vetting to ensure that the College does not put any students at risk (2. Personnel and Appointments Policy – 2.1 Appointment of Staff Procedure).
3. Only authorised statutory agencies may investigate child abuse and / or neglect allegations.

### **Associated Legislation and Resources**

The following Legislation supersedes any of Huntly College's policies with specific mention:

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017
- Privacy Act 2020
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- NZSTA
- Ministry of Education
- Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children: Safer Organisations Safer Children

### **Associated Policies / Guidelines / Procedures**

2.0 Personnel and Appointments Policy

2.1 Appointment of Staff Procedure

6.0 Health and Safety Policy

**Review Schedule:** Triennially

**Ratified by Board of Trustees:** 04 July 2016

**Reviewed:** 31 July 2023

**Next Review:** July 2026

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Board Presiding Member**