



Child Protection Policy

Named Person The Principal

Students have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. The school has an important role to play in the recognition and referral of abuse.

Because of their daily contact with students, staff are well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. It is not the responsibility of staff to investigate suspected abuse, nor is the school an investigation or intervention agency.

Teachers must never give students an absolute guarantee of confidentiality but must observe a student's rights to confidentiality if it is in her/his best interests.

Disclosure of abuse

Be alert to the fact that a confidential conversation may lead to a disclosure and staff should warn a student that what she/he says may have to be passed on to the appropriate person. On no account promise confidentiality and then break that promise.

If any form of abuse is suspected, staff are under a duty to report it to the Principal or her/his delegated deputy.

Forms of Abuse

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Racial harassment
- Bullying

If a disclosure of abuse is made, staff must convince the student that she/he has done the right thing in reporting the problem. The student should be told that the information must be passed to the Principal as part of the school's Child Protection procedures.

Staff should listen to a student's account and should not attempt counselling or suggest alternative explanations for her/his concerns.

Staff should not ask leading questions or press for evidence. If legal proceedings should arise it must not appear that ideas were put in a student's head.

Staff should make a written, dated record of the conversation within 24 hours and pass a copy to the Principal. The report should contain the information received from

the student and the action taken, if any. If any physical evidence is seen, that should be recorded on the Child Protection chart. The report should outline who was subsequently involved in the disclosure. Act with discretion. Allegations can be made maliciously; on the other hand students' concerns can be disregarded. This is why thoroughly objective reports are essential.

Recognition of abuse or neglect

An abused child will not always exhibit physical evidence. Changes in behaviour should give rise for concern and should be recorded and referred to an appropriate person.

Any significant change in a student's behaviour should be noted and reported. Staff should act with discretion and not ask leading questions.

Possible symptoms of abuse/neglect

- Attention seeking
- Low self-esteem
- Apathy
- Unusually poor academic performance
- Self-harm
- Sexual precociousness
- Eating problems

Staff should not engage in 'investigation' if these symptoms occur not should they act as amateur counsellors. The management of a situation must be discussed with the Principal, her/his Deputy or Head of Pastoral.

The Principal will decide how to deal with any incident of disclosure or report of suspected abuse.