**CUST SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Cust School aims to ensure the safety and security of all children by practising open and

accountable child-centred decision-making. We recognise the importance of involving

family/whānau in decision-making about their children, and will involve children in

decision-making about themselves in age-appropriate ways. We acknowledge that child protection is everyone’s responsibility and we promote our child protection policies to our school community.

"Child", in the context of our school's child protection policies, means a child or young person aged under 18 years (who is not married or in a civil union) – Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

We take concerns about the safety of students seriously, and respond to them quickly. Prevention and early intervention are important, and we support the principle of applying the least intrusive intervention possible to protect vulnerable children.

We share information with appropriate agencies if sharing that information will protect or improve the safety, health, or well-being of a child. By law, we can share information with the police and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki.

Schools are subject to the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, and must have child protection policies which are readily available. As required by the Act, child protection practices are incorporated into our policies and procedures. Cust School has a designated person responsible for child protection policies. Our designated person is the principal, and is the primary point of contact for concerns about a child, including concerns about abuse or neglect. Our child protection policies apply to school staff, contractors, and volunteers.

**Reporting concerns**

As above, **inform the principal**and agree on an appropriate course of action, in a timely manner.

**Any person can make a direct referral** to the Police, or the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, if they believe a child is being abused.

* Make a referral to the [**[http://cust.schooldocs.co.nz/arrowright.gif](javascript:toggleBlock('1020'))Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki**](javascript:toggleBlock('1020')):
  + for an urgent referral, call the Contact Centre 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774), or the Police.
  + for a non-urgent referral, follow the process on the [**Children's Teams**](https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-teams/contacts-and-referrals/) section of the website.
* After making the referral, get support for yourself from appropriate persons, if needed.
* **Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver should be determined by the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki and police, in consultation with the school.**
* Advise the board.

**Definitions – see below**

#### Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse/Neglect/Family Violence

These definitions are taken from Safer Organisations Safer Children: Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations.

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| **Type of abuse** | **Definition** |  | **Examples** |
| **Physical abuse** | Any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. |  | It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness. |
| **Sexual abuse** | Any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. |  | Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:   * Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution. * Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments. |
| **Emotional abuse** | Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. |  | This can include:   * Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse. * Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence. |
| **Neglect** | Neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. |  | Neglect can be:   * Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing). * Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love). * Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them). * Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs). * Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs). |
| **Family violence** | Family violence is abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse). |  | This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013) |
|  | Family violence covers a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature that typically involve fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation.  It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family.  (Te Rito - the NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy) |  | Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:   * Spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners). * Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult). * Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust). * Parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent); sibling abuse (violence among siblings), (Te Rito – NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, Ministry of Social Development, 2002). |
| **Intimate partner violence** | Intimate partner violence is a subset of family violence. |  | The NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse states that intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013). |