

Tōku Ara (My Path) is a residential localised curriculum specifically designed for Whangamatā Area School Year 10 students at the Wharekawa campus in Ōpoutere.

CHILD PROTECTION

OUR MISSION IS...

To set students on a path of personal growth, and support them to discover and develop their potential, through challenging experiences within our local environment.

PURPOSE

- To ensure that the team at Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust understand the requirements and expectations regarding the safeguarding and welfare of children in its care.
- To outline the way Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust will deal with breaches of this policy and the consequences for failing to follow this policy and/or other associated policies.

SCOPE

- This policy applies to all employees of Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust while at work and it also applies to behaviour and conduct outside of the normal working day.
- This policy also applies to all contractors, subcontractors, and visitors to the workplace.

OVERVIEW

- Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. We recognise our responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in our activities.
- Employees will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.
- For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.
- Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust will support statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police) to investigate child welfare concerns and will report suspected cases and concerns as appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

- Abuse: any acts or omissions which are cruel, violent, or demeaning in nature leading to an adverse effect on an individual. This includes, but is not limited to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Further definitions follow; o Physical abuse: non-accidental injury, which could be caused by smacking, punching, kicking, shaking, biting, burning, or throwing a child. o Sexual abuse: involving children in sexual activities they do not fully understand, and to which they are unable to give informed consent. o Emotional abuse: adults treating a child in such a way that their emotional and physical development is restricted. This could include verbal abuse, denigration, active rejection, lack of love and/or support.
- Child: a person under the age of 18 years old who is not married or in a civil union.
- Children's worker: means a person who works in, or provides, a regulated service, and the person's work: o may or does involve regular or overnight contact with a child or children (other than with children who are co-workers); and o takes place without a parent or guardian of the child, or of each child, being present.

- Child protection: activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 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 is the only children's worker present; or is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present.
- Disclosure: information given to an employee by a child, parent, or caregiver, or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- Neglect: a form of abuse where the basic survival needs of a child are not being met. Examples include withholding food, not providing adequate shelter or clothing, depriving the child of medical or dental care, not providing love or security.
- Welfare: the health, wellness, happiness, and wellbeing of a person.

PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so. ▪ Children have a right to participate in sport and recreation that is safe.
- Children should feel respected, valued, and encouraged to enjoy their participation and to reach their full potential.
- Our organisation will work in partnership together with children, parents/carers and whānau, and government agencies to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- Adhere to the recommendations of the Children's Act 2014 where no child will be in the care of a person whose safety cannot be ascertained.
- Concerns of child safety shall always be investigated and responded to appropriately.
- Information and data which is required by law to be given to third parties in the case of child welfare investigations shall be treated with respect & integrity.
- Employees will be given training, support, and guidance on how to support children's welfare as well as how to act in suspected abuse or neglect scenarios.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through:

- Promoting the health and welfare of children.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Requiring staff to adopt and abide by this policy and procedures.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with the policy and procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy and procedures.

TRAINING & SUPPORT

- Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust is committed to supporting employees to prevent, recognise, and respond to concerns of child welfare.
- Training will be provided to allow all employees to understand:
 - o the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
 - o Role and responsibilities around record keeping and reporting.
 - o Responsibilities to children.
 - o Limitations and boundaries of their role.
- If you require further training and support, please discuss this with your manager.

SAFEGUARDS & PROCEDURES

Screening

- As part of our duty of care, we must ensure that suitable and appropriate employees are engaged to work with children. When recruiting people to engage with children we will ensure that there is robust recruitment process that includes:
 - o creating a job description.
 - o developing candidate specifications.
 - o advertising the position.
 - o an appropriate selection process, including interviewing.
 - o following up on referees; and o screening (e.g. police vetting).

Appointing a Child Protection Officer

- A Child Protection Officer (CPO) shall be appointed to manage child protection issues by:
 - o Ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to.
 - o Acting as the main contact for child protection matters;
 - o Keeping up to date with developments in child protection legislation.
 - o Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken; and
 - o Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

Best Practice Protocols

- The protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations.
 - o Applying a child-centred approach, where all children are treated equally and with dignity.
 - o Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.
 - o Optimise communication with both children and parents.
 - o Creating a safe and open working environment.
 - o Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity.
 - o Seek permission to touch when doing the above.
- Communications with children:
 - o Ensure all communication with young people takes place within the boundaries of a professional relationship.
 - o Do not engage in communication with a child, on a one-to-one basis, through social media, texting, or email, other than for relevant coach/athlete feedback or administration.
 - o Ensure that any digital communication with a child remains professional and brief. This includes, but is not limited to, social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tumblr, and Snapchat.
 - o Use direct, appropriate language which does not give rise to comment or speculation.
 - o Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk, or which may compromise the organization or their own professional standing.

- Social media, internet, or public use of images of children:
 - o Particular care must be taken if photos of a child are intended for use on our website or social media sites.
 - o Obtain and document consent by the parent or caregiver before utilising any images in this manner. Ensure they are fully aware what media will be utilised.
 - o Ensure the parent/caregiver has seen, or accurately understood, the image to be used.
 - o Authorised image capturing of children must occur on Wharekawa Adventure Education Trust devices, employee's personal devices cannot be used under any circumstances.
- Transporting children:
 - o Parental consent is required before transporting children in a vehicle.
 - o Any impromptu or emergency arrangements are recorded and can be justified if required.
 - o Children will not be driven unaccompanied, unless absolutely required, in which case they must be seated in the rear of the vehicle.
 - o Anyone who transports children must:
- Comply with the NZ Road Code.
- Be fit to drive and not under the influence of any substance/s which may impair judgement and/or their ability to drive. This includes, but is not limited to, illicit drugs, alcohol, and/or any prescribed medication which may fit the above criteria; and
- Accept that the safety and welfare of the child/children in their care are their responsibility until they are safely passed to their parent or caregiver.
- Supervision and visitors:
 - o Employees should avoid situations where they are alone with children.
 - o Employees should be aware of where children are always.
 - o Visitors should be always monitored.
 - o Except in an emergency, children may not leave the employer's premises without written parental consent.

REPORTING GUIDELINES

1. The welfare and interests of the child or young person is paramount
2. Staff are to follow the procedures outlined below for reporting abuse.
 - I. If the child or young person is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.
 - II. The Director will act as a safety advocate for the student while they are at Tōku Ara.
 - III. Listen to the child or young person and reassure them but do not make promises or commitments you cannot keep.
 - IV. Ensure that any information or disclosures by the child or young person are written down as soon as practicable after the event and check that comments and events surrounding the concern have also been recorded. Documentation may subsequently be used in Court as evidence for either side.
 - V. Ensure that the child or young person has a responsible adult supporting them through this process and that the support role is clearly defined (Child Safety Advocate).
 - VI. Do not formally interview the child or young person. Obtain only necessary relevant facts if and when clarification is needed.
 - VII. Inform the Director.
 - VIII. Director calls immediate discussion with Principal and DP inclusion or child safety advocate from the school.
 - IX. Agree on appropriate course of action.
 - X. The Principal ensures notification to CYFS or the Police. Await further contact before taking any action.

- XI. After making sure the referral has gone to CYFS or the Police, provide appropriate support for those that require this.
- XII. If the Principal and Child Safety Advocate cannot agree on a course of action, a mediator may be required, e.g. the School Public Health Nurse.
- XIII. Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation between the school and the statutory child protection service (CYFS or Police) called in by them.
- XIV. Support agencies such as Child Youth and Family, NZ Police, PPTA and NZEI will be used as soon as possible
- XV. Consider cultural issues.
- XVI. Principal must inform the WAS Board Chairperson that a CYFS referral has been made.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES

These steps are to be followed when dealing with an employee:

1. The Director should consult with the Principal to ensure implementation of procedures regarding reporting.
2. The Chairperson of the WAET Board should be informed by the Director as soon as possible.
3. The Director will ensure records are kept of any comments by the student/child, complaints and / or allegations, and follow-up action taken.
4. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee of Tōku Ara will be made in consultation with the following:
 - Child Youth and Family
 - New Zealand Police
 - Chairperson of WAET
 - Chairperson of WAS Board of Trustees
5. The Director, Principal and / or the Chairperson of WAET will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the Staff member concerned. An immediate consultation will be sought with the agencies involved. The purpose of this consultation is to enable the Director, Principal and the Chairperson to discuss the concern or allegation and to:
 - determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation
 - consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Board may take as an employer and possible police intervention
 - consider the employer role of the board in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee contracts
6. When it has been determined that the WAET Board should pursue the matter, as an employer, the Board shall advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. The employer will refer to the relevant employee contract in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.
7. The employee complained against will be advised of their right to seek support/advice from: the appropriate union / representative or other relevant organisations if applicable.
8. Under no circumstances will the child or young person raising the concern or making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the Board to contemplate removal of the employee from the Tōku Ara environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employee contract.

9. All actions of the Board must be consistent and applicable with the individual employment Agreement.

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