

8. DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Rationale

The James Hargest College Board of Trustees and Staff are committed to the physical and emotional safety of all students. Furthermore, the Children’s Act 2014 (amended 2017) and the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017 obliges the school to have a child protection policy that provides procedures and guidelines for any staff, or contractors who become aware of, or are concerned about the emotional and/or physical safety of any student.

Purpose

To provide guidelines and procedures for staff, or contractors, for when a student discloses physical, emotional, racial or sexual abuse, or when a staff member becomes aware/concerned about a student’s physical, emotional, racial or sexual safety.

To ensure school policy aligns with the Children Act 2014 (amended 2017) and the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017.

Guidelines

- When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against another person, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of the young person.
- Physical, emotional, racial or sexual abuse is any activity or experience imposed upon or participated in that is an exploitation of the individual’s innocence, trust and/or powerlessness. The Board considers any form of abuse is unacceptable.
- Any member of staff, or contractor, working with a student who suspects abuse or has abuse disclosed to them (eg risk of death, grievous bodily harm, neglect, or sexual assault) **must** follow the procedures outlined below. Under no circumstances are they to deal with the disclosure on their own. The guidance team or senior management is to be notified immediately.
- All new members to staff, or contractors, will be made aware of this Disclosure of Abuse Policy and procedure during the induction stage of their employment. An annual presentation recapping the policy will be presented to all staff at a staff meeting.

Procedures for Disclosure of Abuse

If a young person voluntarily discloses abuse or shows concerning behaviours indicative of abuse

1. Staff will not question a young person who has disclosed abuse. However, it is important that the young person is listened to and responded to appropriately.

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Staff are directed to:

- Reassure the young person that it was right to disclose.
 - NOT TO INTERVIEW THE YOUNG PERSON
 - Record the discussion in the young person's language as soon as possible. Sign, date and keep this information confidential.
 - Not agree to keep the matter secret. Tell the young person that the abuse needs to stop and a member of the guidance team or senior management needs to be involved.
2. Staff will report disclosure, or concerns to a member of the guidance team or member of the senior management team immediately.
 3. The guidance counsellor or senior management member will notify Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police as appropriate.
 4. The notification will be recorded on the 'Concerns and OT notification' register that is held by the school compliance officers (Associate principals at the Junior and Senior Campuses) by the person making the notification.
 5. Although the parent or caregiver of the young person will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed e.g. when the parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator and may put the child at further risk or when custodial orders prevent this.
 6. Debriefing and support will be offered to the member of staff who has received the disclosure.

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