



Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School and Kindergarten

Child Protection Policy

Rationale:

The Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten acknowledges without restrictions that a safe learning environment is to be provided to the children at all times.

It is also self-evident to all members of the school & kindergarten that children are to be treated with dignity and care.

Objectives:

1. All allegations, disclosures or suspicions of physical, emotional or sexual abuse will be taken seriously and responded to promptly by the College of Teachers through the implementation of the Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten Child Abuse Reporting Procedures.
2. All reports made by a parent to a staff member of concerns about inappropriate child behaviour will be discussed by the College of Teachers and the reporting parent informed of the outcome of the discussion.
3. To be able to respond to any suspected case of child abuse in the appropriate manner, or to neglect allegations, all staff members are trained by professionals on a regular basis, so that everybody is prepared to respond to a child abuse situation and decide in a responsible way which actions are most appropriate for the specific case.

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4. The Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten mandates the College of Teachers to operate as a Child Safety advocate in the case of disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.
5. Where an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour concerns the conduct of a member of Staff, the school management will follow the school's Complaints Policy and/or applicable employment contract requirements and the Chairperson of the Board will be informed.
6. The Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten is familiar with all regulations and New Zealand laws concerning child protection and fully accepts them.

Signed: _____

Dated: ____/____/____ Review Date: ____/____/____

Child Protection Procedures:

The Reporting of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour

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- 1) Allegations, disclosures and suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
- 2) All relevant observations and communications clearly recorded on a contact sheet and checked and signed by the person who has expressed the concern.
- 3) Refer to Appendix A: *Safe Handling*, from *Let's Stop Child Abuse Together* - CYF
- 4) Suspected abuse should usually be reported by the College of Teachers to the appropriate outside agency, however, any person, in good faith, may report suspected abuse to an outside agency.
- 5) Where a teacher suspects abuse or inappropriate behaviour (including neglect) they will discuss their concerns in the first instance with the College of Teachers who will activate these procedures where appropriate.
- 6) In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action will be to direct that party to a helping agency without becoming involved. The school may however, become involved subsequently.
- 7) In the case of a child disclosing abuse or inappropriate behaviour, the information will pass promptly to the College of Teachers who will refer the issue directly to the most appropriate agency and act on the advice of that agency.
- 8) If an allegation is made against an employee of the school, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be informed promptly and involved in any follow-up action in consultation with the New Zealand Police and the Children and Young Person's Service. The Principal and Board Chair have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the

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employee in such an instance. They will ensure the child is not exposed to unnecessary risk as well as uphold the board's role as employer through actions that are consistent with relevant employment contracts.

- 9) Parents will be informed of this referral except where the child's welfare is likely to be threatened by this action. The agency contacted will be responsible for informing parents. The decision of when and who contacts the child's parents will be made in consultation with the outside agency.
- 10) All personnel involved with an instance of child abuse will refer to the Interagency Protocols for Child Abuse Management -Breaking The Cycle Publication held by the College of Teachers.

Child Protection

1. To protect children from abuse or inappropriate behaviour, and to protect staff members from false allegations, all staff and other adults should always be visible when with children
2. Opportunities for all adults at school to be alone with children should be limited as far as that is possible.
3. For their own protection children cannot leave the centre without a written permission from their parents, except from cases of emergency.
4. Especially on outings the safety of a child must be guaranteed.
5. When an adult touches a child it has to be in an acceptable manner, so that its human dignity is not harmed at any point of time.

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- **CONCLUSION:** By the given statements, clear guidelines are shown for the prevention of any kind of abuse, for the protection of the children of the Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten and for the appropriate and professional handling of an abuse issue if one occurs.

Appendix A

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY LET'S STOP CHILD ABUSE TOGETHER

Rules of safe handling

- Don't panic.
- Listen to the child.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Write down what the child says.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing.
- Tell them that they will get help.
- Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person.

Guiding principles

- *Always give priority to the safety and well-being of the child or young person*
- *Report early*
- *Do not interview*
- *Call Child, Youth and Family or the Police*

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Abuse and neglect are signals that intervention is necessary. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene will usually result in ongoing or further harm to the child or young person. Some children and young people die from physical abuse and neglect. Some are permanently disabled or disfigured. Children and young people may suffer long-lasting emotional and/or psychological harm as a result of any form of abuse and neglect.

The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse. Severe, potentially fatal injuries are not always visible. Severe emotional and/or psychological impacts of abuse may appear only in the longer term. It is essential to see and, if age-appropriate, talk to the child or young person. Be aware of explanations that do not match the signs. Those you speak to will not necessarily be truthful with you.

It is essential to seek competent specialist advice, either medical, psychological or cultural. If a situation appears to justify removing a child or young person to safety, it also justifies urgent specialist assessment. Collective discussion about emergency action is preferable to individual response.

Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse. It may also be a precursor to, or go along with, other forms of abuse. It must be treated seriously.

Child abuse and neglect are not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. Keep an open mind. All signs must be considered in the wider situational context of the child or young person and their family or whanau. Be sure you seek sound cultural advice. Culture is no excuse for abuse and neglect. The best people to challenge culturally unsound excuses for abuse are respected and authoritative members of that particular culture who have knowledge and skills in child protection.

A child's or young person's behaviour is no excuse for abuse and neglect. Children or young people may be described as difficult or hyperactive. However, abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the adult perpetrator regardless of the behaviour of the child or young person.

A parent or caregiver's stress or deprivation is no excuse for abuse and neglect. Such explanations may help to explain the context in which abuse and neglect occurred. However, abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the adult perpetrator. Beware of blaming, justification and rationalisation as excuses for abuse and neglect. Minimising is also a common dynamic.

The aim of child protective services is to promote positive and enduring change in the lives of children, young people and their families. All action taken with respect to children and young people must reflect the principles and objectives of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (CYP&F Act). Priority must be given to the safety and well-being of the child or young person.