

**Pompallier Catholic School**  
**Policy in Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs” (Matthew 19: 14) Our Special Character is at the heart of decisions made when children’s safety is the issue.

**Rationale:**

This policy acknowledges that boards of trustees have particular responsibilities under legislation as well as through social expectations to provide a safe environment that caters for the physical and emotional well being of its students. Such an environment should aim to ensure that all children and young people are treated with dignity and respect. Young people’s Mana and Tapu need to be respected as Christ would have wanted.

**Definition:**

Child abuse is a situation in which a child is suffering from:

- Serious physical injury - inflicted by other than accidental means
- Harm - by reason of neglect, malnutrition, sexual abuse
- Going without - basic physical care
- Growing Up - under conditions which threaten his/her emotional and physical survival.
- Family Violence: Children who witness or are subjected to Family Violence can be abused as a result of this.

This definition recognises that abuse can be –

PHYSICAL   EMOTIONAL   SEXUAL   NEGLECT   FAMILY VIOLENCE  
OR  
RELATED TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**Purpose:**

The recommended policy on reporting child abuse and neglect in schools will be successfully implemented with:

1. An emphasis that the paramount consideration in such a policy is the welfare and interests of the child or young person (CYF Act (s6))
2. The provision of guidelines and training for teachers and others working with children and young people in the school environment
3. A commitment to ensure that children and young people are provided with preventative education to enhance their safety and awareness
4. The development of procedures for dealing with cases of current or historical abuse
5. The identification of which external agencies CYF / Police should be used, what services they provide, what liaison is required along with appropriate referral procedures.

**Guidelines Procedures:**

1. The safety of the child is paramount.
2. Schools need to facilitate training for all staff to help them identify suspected abuse and neglect, and to respond appropriately. The publications - “Child Abuse Everybody’s Problem” ‘Sexual Abuse and the School’ and ‘Breaking the Cycle’ contain information to assist staff with the signs and indicators of abuse.
3. The law - ‘Children, Young Persons & their Families Act 1989’ governs the way in which abuse matters are investigated.

4. Schools are required to provide preventative education thorough the delivery of the Health and Physical Education curriculum, KOS and Life Education..
5. Decisions about informing parents or caregivers will be made after consultation between the school and the statutory child protective service called in by them.
6. Professional ethics and boundaries will underpin all processes followed and actions taken. The privacy of those concerned must be respected.
7. Teachers who have concerns should discuss them with the Deputy Principal or Principal. No outside agency will be involved without the prior knowledge of the Principal
8. To manage suspected cases of child abuse and / or neglect a staff member (D.P.) will be nominated as a support person (safety advocate for the child).

### **Reporting Procedures**

- If the child or young person is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.
- Listen to the child or young person and reassure them but do not make promises or commitments you cannot keep.
- Ensure that any information or disclosures by the child or young person are written down and check that comments and event’s surrounding the concern have also been recorded.
- Ensure that the child or young person has a responsible adult supporting them through this process and that the support role is clearly defined.
- Do not formally interview the child or young person. Obtain only necessary relevant facts if and when clarification is needed.
- Inform the principal.
- 7. Hold immediate discussion with guidance counsellor or child safety advocate.
- 8. Agree on appropriate course of action.
- The principal ensures notification to NZCYF or the police, get support for yourself from the appropriate persons if needed.
- 10. Protection of the informant is essential in cases of suspected abuse. It is therefore vital that the appropriate people, CYF and or the police, deal with the situation. CYF and the police make every effort to ensure confidentiality. Giving evidence in a court of law is rare.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. A copy of this policy and the procedures is made available to all teachers throughout the Organisation document available in each classroom.
2. Also to be included is the flow chart of action as taken from page 5 - 8 ‘Breaking the Cycle’.
- 3 Staff meeting to read and discuss “Breaking the Cycle”

**Date approved:** .....

**Chairperson:** .....

**Date reviewed:** .....

## **REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

1. A staff meeting is required to read/discuss and understand “Breaking the cycle” from Child Youth & Family Service and the procedures required. A copy of this is available in the policy folder with this policy.
2. Every staff member is to have access to a copy of “Checklist of signs showing that a child may be suffering from sexual or physical abuse”. Folder ‘Child Matters’, Booklet how can I tell.
3. A staff member who suspects abuse must firstly report it to the school support per Eg: TRK, Principal, SWISS, RTLB, PHN. The matter must not be discussed with anyone else. Do not attempt to interview the child.
4. If the school support person shares a concern, it must be reported to the Principal first and then to CYF and or the Police.
5. The school support person will then work with CYF and the Police.
6. Protection of the informant is essential in cases of suspected abuse. It is therefore vital that the appropriate people (CYF and Police) deal with the situation. CYF and the Police make every effort to ensure confidentiality. Giving evidence in a court of law is rare.

## **Abuse to Students Procedure**

- Staff must be receptive and sensitive to children so that children feel listened to and believed.
- Keeping safe and self worth units will be taught as part of the Health Curriculum to increase children's self efficacy in dealing with uncomfortable situations, and to help raise teacher's consciousness of the issues.
- The safety of the child is paramount and if the child is in danger or in an unsafe situation, action needs to be taken quickly to secure his/her safety. CYF and Police should be advised quickly.
- Staff who have concerns about any children are to discuss them with one of the Senior Staff. If further investigation or action is felt necessary the Principal must be informed. No outside agency will be involved without prior knowledge of the Principal.
- Accurate and full records shall be kept of disclosures for the duration of the child's stay at the school.
- All information and discussions, including the identity of the informant, will be confidential to the staff involved. Data will be stored in one place known to the senior staff. This will be forwarded to the child's next school at the discretion of the principal.
- Where further investigation or action is necessary, the Principal will contact the appropriate agency, give them the relevant information, and leave it in their hands. It is important to name the child as information may be already held by CYF.
- Decisions about informing parents/caregivers will be made after consultation with CYF or Police.

### **Guidelines to follow in situations when a child discloses abuse:**

- If the child is in danger or is unsafe, act to secure their immediate safety
- Listen to the child and reassure them but do not make promises or commitments you cannot keep.
- Inform the Principal and discuss with the appropriate support teacher.
- Principal to ensure that the child has an appropriate person taking responsibility for supporting them.
- Write down what the child says.
- Do not formally interview the child. Obtain only necessary relevant facts if and when clarification is needed.
- Refer to the New Zealand Child Youth & Family or the Police. Await further contact before taking any action.
- After making sure the referral has gone to CYF or the Police, get support for yourself from the appropriate agencies as set out in the appendices