

GREERTON VILLAGE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

POLICY: CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURE**Rationale:**

Child abuse may be encountered or suspected when a child discloses abuse to a friend or teacher, or when there are signs of injury, neglect, distress or sudden and inexplicable changes in a child's general attitude and behaviour.

It is the responsibility of every school to ensure the safety and health, both physical and emotional, of children in its care. It is the responsibility of the school to act in times where the safety of a child is in question.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to inform staff of actions which should be taken when they have cause to believe that a student is, or may be, the subject of abuse.

Guidelines:

1. Staff must bring all cases of suspected abuse of students to the immediate attention of the principal, or, if not applicable, to the Board of Trustees. This includes cases of suspected physical (including neglect), emotional or sexual abuse.
2. Principal or Board of Trustees will determine whether the disclosure or suspicion of abuse is;
 - a) an urgent safety need to such an extent that the child cannot return home that day: (urgent safety concern means that you believe that the child is highly likely to be immediately and seriously harmed, ill-treated, abused or seriously deprived) or
 - b) a non-urgent safety need whereby the child is not at immediate risk of further abuse.
3. Teachers or other staff who have a disclosure made to them in class will provide reassurance to the child, thank the child for sharing with them, inform the child that they will need to get some help to make sure that they are safe and follow the matter up with the Principal (or other senior staff) without delay.
4. The Principal will gather all information the school has about the child and determine if:
 - a) urgent, the Principal will make an immediate referral to the Child Youth and Family Reporting line or to local Police according to Section 15: Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989.
 - b) then the Principal will convene a consultation meeting with staff, SWIS or other professionals involved with the child and a plan will be made to ensure the child's safety. This meeting may include the whanau. The outcome of the meeting may include notification to statutory agencies, Strengthening Families, Children's Team or other community agencies.
5. If a staff member is implicated as being responsible for the abuse, the Board of Trustees Chairperson shall be informed immediately. The Board shall ensure that immediate steps are taken to manage the staff member according to NZEI Guidelines. A report of concern may be made to Police or to Child

Youth and Family as a part of this process. In managing a situation such as this, the safety of the child remains of paramount concern.

6. Any reporter of suspected child abuse is protected from any criminal civil or disciplinary action by Section 16 Children, Young Person and their Families Act.

Reviewed/Amended: 2018
Next Review Date: 2021