

Wakari School Board of Trustees
CHILD ABUSE POLICY
19 February 1997

PURPOSE

To have effective procedures for ensuring the safety and well being of children.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Adults are receptive and sensitive to children so that the children feel listened to and believed.
- 2 The school uses the most appropriate support agency for suspected cases of sexual, physical, emotional, or physical abuse and/or neglect.
- 3 In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action is the school directing the third party to a helping agency without becoming involved. The school may be involved at a later date.
- 4 Keeping Ourselves Safe and self-esteem units are taught as part of the health programme to increase children's assertiveness skills in dealing with uncomfortable situations and to help raise consciousness of the issues.
- 5 Parents are informed, except where the student's welfare is likely to be threatened. Whichever agency is involved in the case is responsible for informing parents as they have the skills to handle the situation in the most appropriate way to support the child.
- 6 Usually teachers who have concerns discuss them only with their syndicate leader or the principal. An outside agency is normally only involved with the prior knowledge of the principal.
- 7 Where further action is necessary, it is usually the Principal who contacts the appropriate agency without identifying the child, and seeks advice on the appropriate action
- 8 Teachers use the checklists attached to help identify children possibly at risk.
- 9 All information/discussion is confidential to those involved. Data is stored in one place known to the senior staff. Data is only kept for the duration of the problem.

10 Once an agency has been involved, that agency and, where appropriate, the Police, investigate and the school acts on advice from the agency.

11 Whenever an interview is held with a child, an adult on the staff whom the child has confidence in, is present. The welfare of the child is the first priority and wherever that is compromised the interview is terminated. Staff members attending such interviews have the ability to make this judgment

note : points 6 and 7 above are not to preclude the ability of any person to report directly to an external agency.

Complaints Against Staff Involving Sexual Abuse

Once a helping agency is involved, the following procedures are followed and are in line with those set out in the Teachers' Employment Contract re Complaints Against Teachers.

- 1 The Principal informs the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 2 Both inform the staff member who is advised to seek legal and/or union representation.
- 3 The school informs the union.
- 4 The staff member is suspended on full pay once an investigation has begun, in line with Section 2.21g of the Teachers' Collective Contract. At this stage the rest of the staff are informed. Counsellors from SES or NZEI can be made available to any staff.

EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

- 1 This policy will be reviewed by the board in accordance with its self-review guidelines and timetable.
- 2 The board will make its review report available to parents and staff.

Signed.....Chairperson.....Principal
..... Date