Child Protection

Puketapu School Hawkes Bay aims to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and security of all children by practising open and accountable child centered decision-making. We recognise the importance of involving family/whānau in decision-making about their children and will involve children in decision-making about themselves in age-appropriate ways. We acknowledge that is everyone's responsibility and we promote our child protection policies to our school community.

"Child", in the context of our school's child protection policies, means a child or young person aged under 18 years (who is not married or in a civil union) – Children's Act 2014.

Sharing information

We share information with appropriate agencies if sharing that information will protect or improve the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child. In all circumstances, Puketapu School Hawkes Bay is carefully guided by privacy considerations in the sharing of information. By law, we can share information with the police and Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children.

Student and staff safety

We take concerns about the safety of students seriously and respond to them quickly. Prevention and early intervention are important, and we use the least intrusive intervention possible to protect vulnerable children.

We promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

When addressing a formal complaint, the school does not use settlement agreements where these contradict a culture of child protection.

Child protection policy requirements

Schools are subject to the Children's Act 2014, and must have child protection policies which are readily available. As required by the Act, child protection practices are incorporated into our policies and procedures. Puketapu School Hawkes Bay has a designated person responsible for child protection policies. Our designated person is the principal, and is the primary point of contact for concerns about a child, including concerns about abuse or neglect. Our child protection policies apply to school staff, contractors, and volunteers.

External agency interviews

If Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children contacts the school to interview a child, that child has the right to a support person to sit alongside them if they wish. This support person (e.g. guidance counsellor, teacher, or principal) focuses on the safety and wellbeing of the child.

The police may contact the school to question a student – that student has the right to remain silent, and the right to a lawyer. If the student is under 18 and is interviewed by police they can nominate an adult to support them.

Reviewing our policies and procedures related to child protection

Key child protection policies and procedures are reviewed at least once every three years as part of the SchoolDocs review cycle. Our school's designated person for child protection is involved in reviewing any policies and procedures related to child protection.

The principal **assures the board** yearly on the implementation of key child protection policies/procedures.