



WAIMEA COLLEGE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Reference: Health and Safety NAG 5

Rationale

The school should at all times be a safe environment that caters for the physical and emotional wellbeing of its students. Thus, where the school becomes aware that any student may be experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect, it has the responsibility to take timely, appropriate action to ensure that the student is protected and supported to the fullest extent possible. The school has a responsibility under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 to vet and screen all workers in the school.

Purpose:

Part A

1. To ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the student is paramount.
2. To provide procedures for dealing with known or suspected cases of abuse in an efficient, effective manner (see Appendix I).
3. To provide school staff with clear guidelines for dealing with suspected or reported abuse.
4. To ensure that children and young people are provided with preventative education to enhance their safety and awareness.

Part B

5. To identify both core and non-core worker roles and provide guidelines for vetting and screening of workers and volunteers.

Guidelines Part A

1. Training needs to be given to all staff, to help them to identify suspected abuse and/or neglect, and to be able to respond appropriately. This training should be provided by the school guidance team and/or NZCYFS and NZ Police.
2. Students should have access, through the school's health programme to information about child abuse and appropriate responses to it through the relevant parts of this curriculum.
3. Any staff member who is aware of an allegation of abuse should discuss her/his concerns immediately with Guidance who, will evaluate the situation and determine an appropriate course of action.
4. It is essential that confidentiality be adhered to. However, unconditional confidentiality should not be promised to the student concerned and she/he should be cautioned about this.
5. A Guidance staff member should be nominated as a safety advocate for the student.
6. Decisions about informing parents or caregivers should be made after consultation between Guidance and the statutory agency called in by them.
7. In the case of a report of abuse from a third party to the school, the Principal and Guidance will consult to decide on a course of action. It may be decided that an outside agency will become involved, e.g. NZ Police, CAMHS, CYFS, etc.
8. The Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will deal with any media enquiries relating to abuse. All other staff and students should refuse to make any comment to the media or the public.
9. Support for the student should continue after intervention (See Appendix III).

Guidelines Part B

1. Appendix IV defines core and non-core workers, as well as volunteers. Identity confirmation and police vetting must be carried out in all cases.
2. Identity confirmation is through an original primary identity document (e.g. passport, birth

certificate, firearms licence) **and** an original secondary identity document (e.g. driver licence, 18+ card, Community Services Card). One of these must have a photo.

3. If applicable, documentary evidence of a change of name must be provided.
4. The following further safety checks may be made:
 - i. Interview the potential worker
 - ii. Obtain a work history covering at least the last five years
 - iii. Obtain and consider information from at least one referee, not related to the worker or part of their extended family
 - iv. Seeking relevant information from any relevant professional organisation, licensing authority or registration authority including confirmation that the potential worker is currently a member of the organisation or currently licensed or registered by the authority.
5. All documentation relating to safety checks and vetting will be stored securely by the Resource Manager until it is no longer of use.

Conclusion:

The safety of students and timely, effective intervention underpin this policy.

It is developed to ensure that staff and parents/caregivers are aware of the procedures the school will take to protect its students from any kind of abuse.

Related documents and legislation:

- The Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Children's Action Plan (NZ Government)
- Waimea College Appointments Policy
- Waimea College Complaints Policy

Adopted:

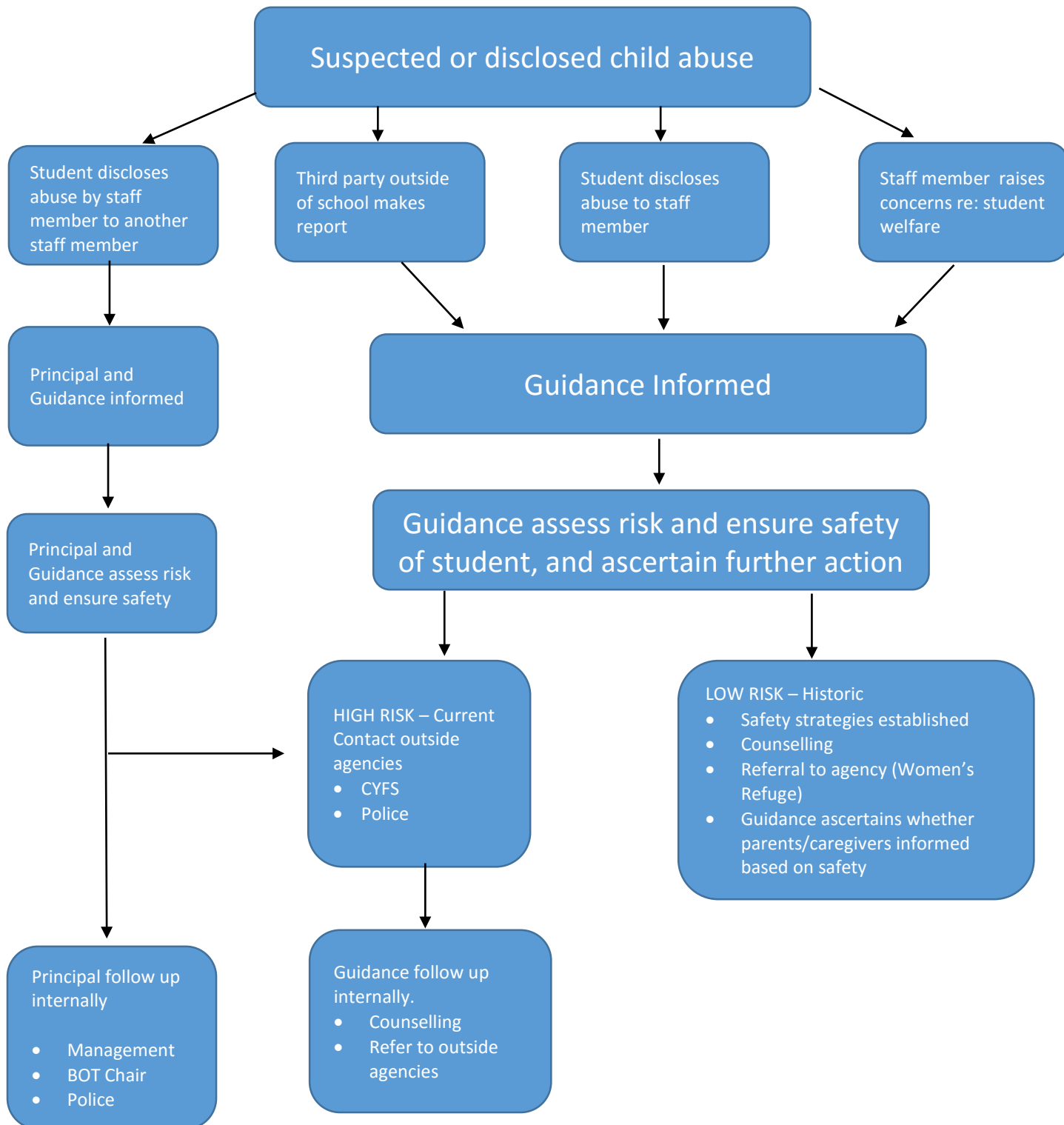
Chairperson:

Waimea College Board of Trustees

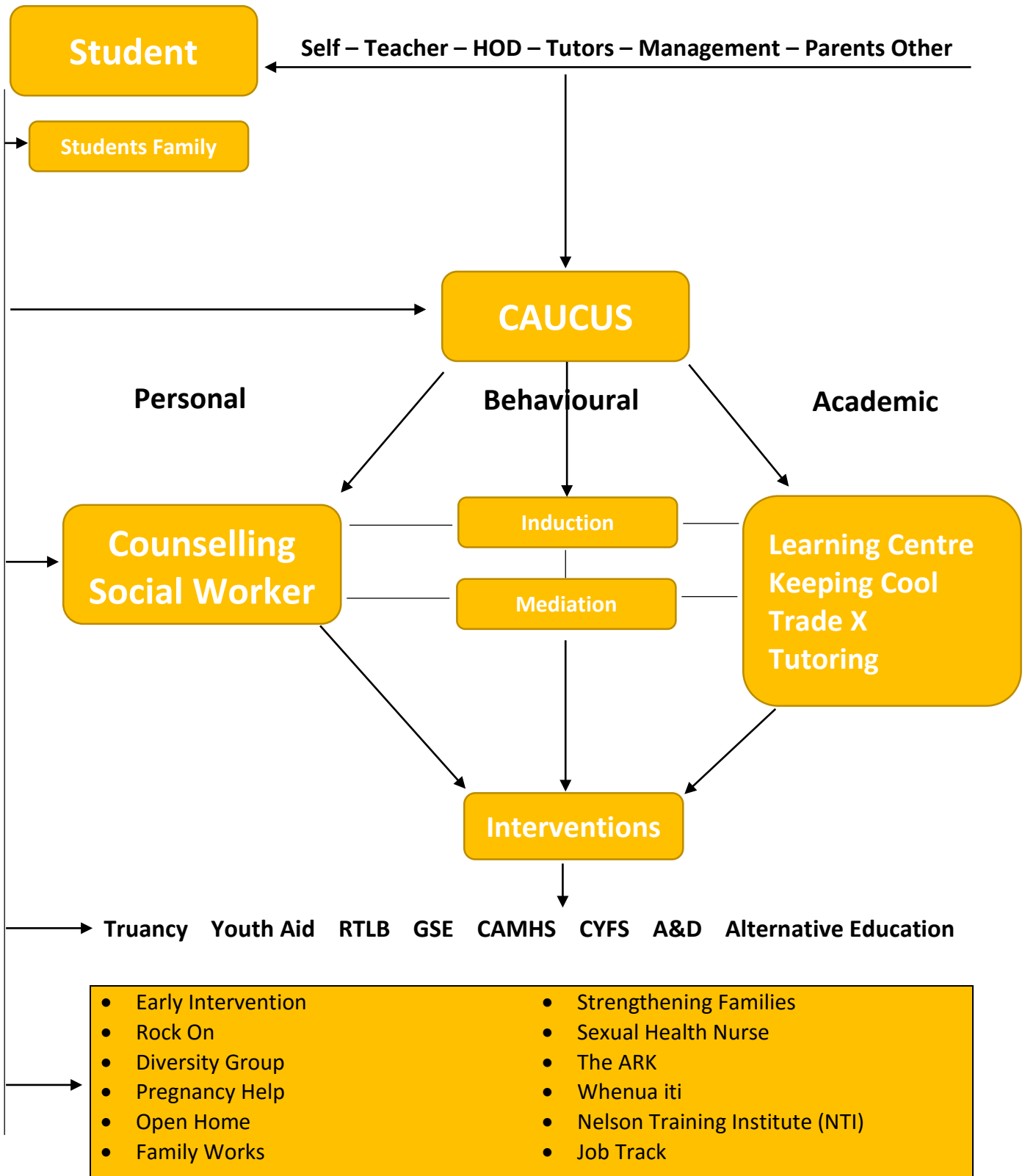
PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ABUSE

1. Report of alleged abuse to a staff member by a student, or abuse suspected by staff member.
2. Staff member immediately refers to Guidance, who consults with the HOD and they determine course of action to be taken, which ensures the safety of the student.
3. Where further action is necessary, the Principal or Guidance Counsellor may contact the Children and Young Person's Service or Police, (without identifying the student unless the situation is critical) and will seek advice on appropriate action.
4. Once a statutory agency has become involved, that agency will investigate and advise the school on any further role the school will play.
5. Whenever an interview by a statutory agency is held with a student, an adult on the staff, in whom the student has confidence, must be present. The welfare of the student must be first priority and whenever that is compromised, the interview must be terminated.
6. Staff involved will be informed of intervention outcomes.
7. Written records of interviews/procedures will be kept and filed by the Principal or Guidance.

Guidance Referral Pathway for Disclosure of Child Abuse



Guidance Referral Pathway



TAKING A DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: A GUIDE FOR STAFF

What follows are some guidelines to assist you in the event that a student chooses to talk to you about her/his abuse. If this happens, it is because the student wants help and has identified you as a person to trust and able to provide that help. Your response may be instrumental in determining positive outcomes for the student.

- 1. Protect the student's right to confidentiality**
 - a. Ensure that any discussion is carried out in private. Do not allow the student to tell the story within a group or class situation.
 - b. Ensure that your discussion of the situation is limited to key people who need to know, e.g. Guidance, (priority), Tutor.
- 2. Avoid promising unconditional confidentiality**
Reassure the student that what you will do with the information will be in her/his best interests to ensure their safety.
- 3. Listen Carefully**
Your greatest contribution is as a sympathetic listener. Avoid interrogating or pressing the Student with questions. Allow them to tell only as much as they want. It is not your responsibility to determine the extent of the abuse, nor the person responsible for it.
- 4. Any questions or discussion must be in language the student understands**
Avoid using your own terminology. Where possible, use the student's own descriptive words/phrases. You may seek clarification, but do not insist if this is clearly causing discomfort.
- 5. Avoid suggesting answers or explanations to the student**
Listen and record appropriate information that is needed. Guidance staff or the Police will discuss in detail the abuse that has occurred. It is not appropriate that you do so.
- 6. Believe and support the student in the interview**
Do not show shock, horror, disbelief, disapproval or anger. Avoid criticising family members, other professionals, or the alleged perpetrator. Also avoid implicit criticism of the student in statements such as "Why didn't you tell me sooner?" "Why did you let him/her?"
- 7. Do not over-react or panic**
The initial disclosure of abuse is a critical moment. The student will be monitoring your reaction. If you are judged as being unable to cope with the situation, the student may withdraw.
- 8. Assure the student that you want to help**
Praise them for having the courage to tell you. Assure them that whatever has happened is not their fault and that you know someone who can help.
- 9. If the student insists on having a friend along**
Check out how much the friend knows of the situation before you begin the discussion. Continue to check out intermittently if it is still acceptable to have the friend there. Be aware that the friend may need some follow-up support.
- 10. If a student has been physically injured**
And wants to show you, then allow her/him to do so. Do not press the student to remove clothing. If you fear that there is physical injury contact Guidance. Explain to the student why you are doing this.

11. Do what you can to ensure the student's immediate safety

Do not alert the alleged abuser.

12. Keep a record of what has been discussed

Record as accurately as possible, the time, date, place of the discussion and the details of its content, including your own questions and responses. Do this as soon after the interview as possible, as accuracy is vital if you are later required to give evidence in Court. All documentation should be filed in a secure place known to the Principal.

13. If the abuse happened some time ago,

Ensure that the student knows where to go for continuing support and help.

As early as possible, discuss the matter with Guidance and/or Principal, so that a decision on the future course of action can be made.

14. Find Support for Yourself

Dealing with abuse is difficult. It may bring some of your own emotional issues to the surface.

Don't allow personal feelings to prevent you from acting.

15. Seven Basic Rules

- Believe what they say
- Say you're glad they told you
- Say you're sorry it happened
- Let them know it's not their fault
- Let them know you'll help
- Ensure they are safe
- Avoid taking hasty action - consult.

What you can do to avoid putting yourself at risk

- Avoid one-on-one situations with students with the door closed – better to have two students, one staff.
- If you are going to touch a student tell them, e.g. I am just going to adjust his climbing harness on you, is that okay? or, e.g. I am going to fit this uniform on you, do you mind if I put a pin in the waistband at the back?
- Encourage students to do as much as possible themselves or do they want help?
- Seek advice from Guidance if students make comments/advances to you.
- Do not sit in the staffroom or your classroom in the weekend/night with doors unlocked. Avoid going across to classroom blocks at night by yourself.
- While it may be necessary on occasions to enter boys/girls dressing room/toilets – call out, knock etc before doing so. If possible get a boy/girl to go before you.

CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT

It is particularly helpful if the student can remain in a familiar and supportive environment, and continue to be accepted as one of the crowd. Routines and rules should apply as they would under normal circumstances, unless otherwise indicated.

Following intervention, the student will need:

- To have negative behaviour ignored where possible
- To rebuild a positive self-image
- Support and care from friends
- Sincere, specific praise
- To be reassured that the abuse was not her/his fault
(However, reassurance should be given only if the student initiates a discussion of the abuse.)
- To grieve and express anger
- To build positive relationships
- To be reassured that she/he is "normal"
- Opportunities to discuss what has happened, with someone in confidence. Make general enquiries about her/his well-being in discreet moments.

VETTING GUIDELINES

All employees of the school are, by definition, children's workers and subject to safety checks including police vetting.

CORE WORKERS

Teacher
Teacher Aide
Library manager
Laboratory technician
Computer network manager
Workshop technician
Administrative/clerical staff
Kiosk staff
Caretaker
Property staff

NON-CORE WORKERS

All volunteers in the school or on school activities must undergo police vetting, including identity checks. This would include parents or other adults –

- Helping with school camps
- Coaching/managing school sports teams
- Providing transport for school trips
- Helping with, for example, students with special education needs
- Providing voluntary tuition
- Youth Workers
- Part time programme providers (eg Healing Specialists @ Guidance)

STUDENT ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF PROCEDURE

These steps are to be followed when dealing with an employee:

1. The Principal should consult with the child advocate to ensure implementation of procedures regarding reporting.
2. The Board Chairperson should be informed as soon as possible.
3. The Principal will ensure records are kept of any comments by the student, complaints and/or allegations, and follow-up action taken.
4. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee of the school will be made in consultation with the following; Child Youth and Family, the New Zealand Police and the Board Chairperson.
5. The Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the employer. An immediate consultation will be sought with the agencies involved. The purpose of this consultation is to enable the Principal and the Board Chair to discuss the concern or allegation and to:
 - a. Determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation.
 - b. Consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Board may take as an employer and possible police intervention.
 - c. Consider the employer role of the board in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee contracts.
6. When it has been determined the Board should pursue the matter as an employer, the Board shall advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. The employer will refer to the relevant employee contract in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.
7. The employee complained against will be advised of their right to seek support/advice from: NZEI, PPTA counsellor or field officer, or other appropriate union/representative or other relevant teachers' organisations if applicable.
8. Under no circumstances will the child or young person raising the concern or making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the Board to contemplate removal of the employee from the school environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employee contract.
9. All actions of the Board must be consistent and applicable with the collective employment contract or individual employment contract.
10. The Board should take care to ensure actions taken by the school do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by any external agency. It is strongly recommended that the Board maintain a close liaison with Child Youth and Family and the police to achieve this.