

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES IN SCHOOL PROCEDURE



At St Joseph's School we acknowledge that Catholic Education, centred on a daily encounter with Jesus, is part of a life-long process leading to a full and rewarding life.

This procedure is made on the basis that all children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment. When allegations are made that threaten that safety, school management will act on those allegations while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

PURPOSE

To ensure and/or provide –

- the safety of the child or young person is the first consideration
- that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively
- that in the case of a complaint against an employee, action is guided by the applicable Employment Agreement and/or principles of natural justice
- clear guidance for management and employee in respect of any allegations received concerning children or young persons within the school environment
- clear guidance as to procedures to follow when an accusation is made against the Principal.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

The following procedures are presented on the understanding that any person who suspects a case of child abuse must report it to the appropriate authority.

The recommended procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. The child or young person must be adequately protected.

(Refer to Flowchart)

Please note there are two procedures to be followed here –

- the reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person
- the procedure for dealing with the employee.

In all cases it is suggested that no one person should have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues.

A. These steps are to be followed when dealing with an employee

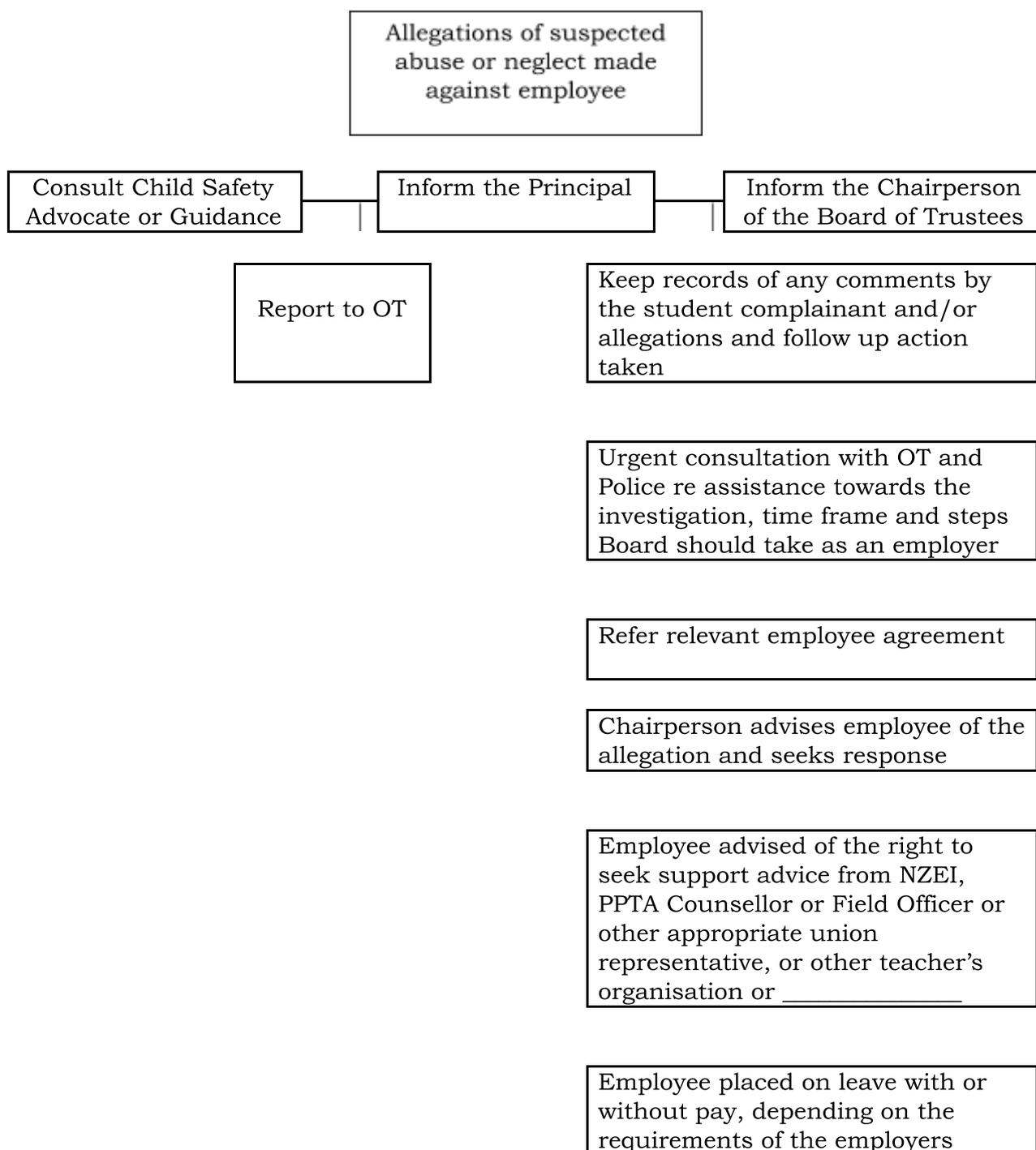
1. The Principal should consult with the child advocate or counsellor to ensure implementation of procedure regarding reporting.
2. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees should be informed as soon as possible.
3. The Principal is advised to ensure records are kept of any comments by the student, complaints and/or allegations, and follow-up action taken.
4. The decision to follow up an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee of the school should be made in consultation with the following -
 - * Oranga Tamariki
 - * New Zealand Police
 - * Chairperson of Board of Trustees
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 employee. As mentioned above it is strongly recommended that an immediate consultation is 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 -
 - * determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation
 - * 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
 - * consider the employer role of the Board in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee agreements.
6. When it has been determined, the Board should pursue the matter as an employer. The Board should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. It is vital that the employer should refer to the relevant employee agreement in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action.

7. The employee complained against should be advised of their right to seek support/advice from -
 - * NZEI, PPTA counsellor or field officer, or other appropriate union/representative
 - * other relevant teachers organisation if applicable.
 8. Under no circumstances should 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 agreement.
 9. All actions of the Board must be consistent and applicable with the collective employment agreement or individual employment agreement.
 10. Boards 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 the Oranga Tamariki and the police to achieve this.
 11. The Board will inform the Teachers' Council if the allegation is proven.
- B. The following steps are to be followed when the Principal has been accused
1. The role normally taken by the Principal will be taken up by the Board of Trustees Chairperson.
 2. An "outside agent" will be appointed to conduct an initial inquiry into the case and make recommendations of further action to the Board e.g. School Support Team, NZSTA.
 3. The Board Chairperson will refer the Principal to available help and advice e.g. Principal's Support Panel.
 4. The Chairperson is advised to ensure records are kept of the complaint or allegation and follow up taken.
- 5-10 The remaining steps are the same as for Part A above.

Reviewed: 2020

Next Review Date: 2023

Schools Flowchart of Action



Note

- All actions of the Board must be consistent and in line with the Collective Employment Agreement or Individual Employment Agreement.
- Boards should take care to ensure action taken by the school does not undermine or frustrate any investigation being conducted by any agency.
- It is strongly recommended that the Board maintains a close liaison with OT and the Police.