



St Margaret's College

Child Protection Policy

At St Margaret's College, we are committed to safeguarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people. To support this commitment, and as required by the Children's Act 2014, we have adopted a child protection policy. We create and maintain a culture that supports child protection, and have clear procedures for safety checking and police vetting, and identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

Our child protection policy below, and its supporting policies and procedures, applies to all school staff and volunteers. It also applies to contractors who provide children's services to the school, unless they have adopted their own child protection policy. It covers any student at the school who is defined as a child under the Children's Act 2014.

Our child protection policy and supporting policies and procedures are reviewed at least once every three years as part of the SchoolDocs review cycle.

Supporting and associated policies and procedures

This child protection policy must be read with its supporting policies and procedures:

- Safety Checking and Police Vetting
- Identifying and Responding to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

Other associated policies include, but are not limited to:

- Student Wellbeing and Safety
- Responding to Student Wellbeing Concerns
- Digital Technology and Online Safety
- Bullying and Harassment
- Sexual Behaviour in Students and Responding to Student Sexual Behaviour Concerns and Incidents
- Responding to Student Self-harm and Responding to Risk of Student Suicide
- Minimising Physical Restraint
- Sharing Student Personal Information with External Agencies
- Concerns and Complaints Policy and Protected Disclosure
- Health Education
- Managing Traumatic Incidents

Principles

Our approach is guided by the principles of partnership (mahi tahi), protection (kaitiakitanga), and participation (whai wāhi), and reflects our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

- We prioritise the safety, welfare, and mana of each child, keeping students at the centre of all decision-making.

- We act early to support positive outcomes and reduce harm.
- We promote a culture where concerns can be raised safely and without fear of retaliation.
- We ensure child protection responses are culturally safe and uphold culturally responsive practice.
- We actively partner with whānau where safe and appropriate.
- We collaborate with local iwi, hapū, and community partners to find solutions that respect mātauranga Māori and uphold mana tamaiti.
- Students are involved in decision-making in ways that are meaningful and age-appropriate, affirming each child's right to be heard and supported.
- Staff (and relevant volunteers and contractors) remain alert to changes in student wellbeing or behaviour, identify possible signs of abuse or neglect, and respond promptly through established procedures.
- All actions and decisions are recorded in writing and stored securely.age-appropriate ways.

Child protection roles and responsibilities

We acknowledge that everyone in the school community shares responsibility for safeguarding children from abuse.

Trust Board

The trust board is responsible for ensuring that:

- the school has an appropriate written child protection policy that includes provisions on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- the child protection policy is publicly available
- the child protection policy is reviewed every three years
- staff, and others as needed (e.g. volunteers and contractors), are appropriately safety checked and police vetted
- staff are trained to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect and potential or actual abuse, and report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse immediately in accordance with the school policy
- contractors providing children's services have adopted a child protection policy and review it every three years
- contractors who are not providing children's services but who may have unsupervised access to students during normal hours are police vetted as required by the Education and Training Act.

The trust board has delegated its responsibilities for implementing child protection requirements to the executive principal, and receives annual assurances that the school is meeting its obligations in relation to child protection.

Designated child protection lead(s)

We have a designated child protection lead or leads. They are the primary point of contact for any concerns about suspected child abuse or neglect. If they are not available or the concern involves them, staff should share their concern(s) with an appropriate senior staff member.

Our designated child protection lead is the executive principal or a member of the senior leadership team as delegated by the executive principal. The designated child protection lead is available to all staff, and has experience and training in responding to child protection concerns.

Staff

All staff are expected to:

- be familiar with, and implement, our Child Protection policy and supporting Identifying and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect policy and procedure
- meet school conduct expectations, including:
 - treating all children with respect, fairness, and dignity
 - taking any concerns about the wellbeing of a child seriously
 - maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in all interactions
 - avoiding any behaviour that is inappropriate or could be misinterpreted
- participate in child protection training and professional development as required.

Teaching staff are required to maintain ethical and professional relationships with students that respect appropriate professional boundaries. In accordance with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand's Ngā Tikanga Matatika | The Code of Professional Responsibility, teachers have a professional responsibility to promote the wellbeing of students and protect them from harm. This responsibility includes remaining vigilant to concerns about student wellbeing and safety, and promptly reporting any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of abuse, neglect, or professional misconduct involving a student to the designated child protection lead(s).

Anyone with concerns about the immediate safety of a child should phone the police on 111. Everyone has the legal right to seek advice from, or report a concern about the safety of a child to Oranga Tamariki or the police at any time. Internal procedures do not limit this legal right.

All staff are trained and supported by the school to uphold their responsibilities for child protection. SMC staff should refer to the Operational Documents & Flowcharts folder in the Staff shared drive.

Volunteers and contractors

School volunteers, and school contractors providing children's services that have adopted the school Child Protection policy, are supported by the school to uphold their responsibilities for child protection. They are expected to:

- be familiar with, and implement, the school Child Protection policy and supporting Identifying and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect policy and procedure
 - meet school conduct expectations, including:
 - treating all children with respect, fairness, and dignity
 - taking any concerns about the wellbeing of a child seriously
 - maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in all interactions
 - avoiding any behaviour that is inappropriate or could be misinterpreted.

School contractors providing children's services that have adopted their own Child Protection policy are expected to follow the policy and review it every three years.

Volunteers and contractors are trained and supported by the school to uphold their responsibilities for child protection – see Identifying and Responding to Suspect Abuse and Neglect.

Also see:

- Volunteer Involvement
- Contractors Working at School
- EOTC Supervision

Students

Students are at the heart of our child protection policy and supporting policies and procedures.

- We foster a safe and supportive environment for our students to talk to a staff member if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or that they or another student are being harmed, abused, or neglected (including online).
- Students are involved in decision-making about child protection matters in ways that are meaningful and age-appropriate, affirming each child's right to be heard and supported.
- Students receive age-appropriate personal safety and relationships education that helps them to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Also see:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Responding to Student Wellbeing Concerns
- Sexual Behaviour in Students and Responding to Student Sexual Behaviour Concerns and Incidents
- Responding to Digital Incidents.

Parents, caregivers, and the school community

Parents, caregivers, and the wider school community have access to our child protection policy and its supporting policies and procedures. If anyone in the school community has concerns about the suspected abuse or neglect of a child they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the child protection lead(s).

External agencies

The school works with external agencies where necessary to protect children from harm and support early intervention. Where concerns about possible abuse or neglect arise, the school may seek advice from, consult with, or make reports to appropriate agencies, including Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand Police, health providers, social service organisations, kaupapa Māori providers, and other relevant community organisations.

We share relevant information with appropriate agencies where doing so is necessary to support child safety or wellbeing. Information sharing is undertaken in line with legislation and guidance, including the information sharing provisions of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

When collecting or sharing personal information, we usually notify the student and their parents/guardians. At all times, the safety and wellbeing of a child overrides privacy concerns. We may collect or share information without parental knowledge or consent where this is necessary to protect a child from harm. Information shared in good faith to protect a child from harm is permitted under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

Further information is in the Sharing Student Personal Information with External Agencies policy.

Legislation

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017
- Privacy Act 2020
- Education and Training Act 2020

Resources

- Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
[Child protection in schools](#)
[School child protection policy](#)
[Children's Act 2014: A practical guide for early childhood services, Ngā Kōhanga Reo, playgroups, schools and kura](#)
- Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children

[Worried about a child?](#)
Safer Organisations Safer Children

- New Zealand Police | Nga Pirihimana o Aotearoa
[Child protection guidelines](#)
- Ministry of Social Development | Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora
[Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2027](#)
- United Nations Human Rights: [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

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