

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – NAG 5

Hagley Community College accepts that children have a fundamental right to have their needs met in an environment safe from abuse and neglect.

The college accepts its responsibility under the legislation for engaging in safe employment practices and playing a role in the prevention and identification of child abuse and neglect.

### **Purpose**

The college is committed to providing a safe environment for all, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse

The college recognises the important role and responsibility all staff have in identifying and responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child including suspected child abuse and neglect.

The college is committed to working with other agencies to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children

The college's Board of Trustees, in accordance with the requirements of Part 2, Section 18 (a), (b), (c), and (d) of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 will:

- a) Adopt this child protection policy
- b) Ensure the policy is available on the school website and from reception on request
- c) Ensure all agencies, contracts or funding arrangements fulfil the requirements of this policy
- d) Assign a child protection co-ordinator
- e) Review the policy every three years

**This will be achieved by leaders within the college working together with other agencies such as Police, Child Youth and Family and Social workers etc to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children by:**

1. Protecting them from abuse and neglect
2. Improving their physical, mental, cultural and emotional wellbeing
3. Improving their educational outcomes and participation in co-curricular activities
4. Strengthening their connection with family, whānau or other culturally recognised family groups
5. Improving their social and economic wellbeing
6. Utilising the Special Needs Committee structure to discuss students who may be showing signs of abuse and/or neglect

The Principal will ensure that there are procedures in place to identify and respond to allegations of abuse and neglect

The Principal will ensure that there are procedures in place to deal with the possibility of an allegation involving a staff member

## **Definitions**

**Child Abuse:** Child abuse is a broad term which includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential to cause or effect serious harm to a child

**Child Neglect:** Child neglect is the failure or omission to care for a child. This failure or omission to care can be physical, emotional, medical or educational or involve a lack of supervision

**Core worker:** Core worker means a children's worker whose work in, or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with the child or children in the course of that work, the person is either:

The only person present; or

Is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over the child or children present

**Non core worker:** means a children's worker who is not a core worker

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (CYFP) 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

## **Recruitment and Employment**

1. The Principal will ensure that safe recruitment practices in line with the Vulnerable Children Act of 2014 and Section 78C and 78CA of the Education Act are in place. The College is required to police vet all core and non-core workers, including contractors and their employers if they are likely to have unsupervised access to students at the school during normal hours
2. In addition to a Police vet, core and non - core workers will also be subject to identity verification, references and an interview. If there is any risk that an applicant might pose a risk to a child that applicant will not be employed.
3. If core children's workers e.g Public Health Nurses or Youth workers who have been safety checked by their own employer have unsupervised access to students, the school will not proceed with a police vet but will seek an assurance from their employer by letter that this has been done.

## **Child Protection Co-ordinator**

The College will appoint a Child Protection Coordinator whose responsibilities include

- Coordinating the review of the Child Protection Policy and procedures as required
- Meet weekly with the Special Needs Committee around suspected abuse and neglect where applicable and appropriate
- Coordinating the schools response to child abuse and neglect
- Develop a plan to train staff in identification and prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Ensure training of staff is available cyclically
- Ensuring documentation tools are in place and accessible to staff for the recording of care and protection concerns
- Ensure regular audits of child protection occurs
- Apply for an access resources required to support the programme
- Provide support and advice to staff regarding child abuse

## **Identifying signs of abuse and neglect**

The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below may indicate abuse or neglect. However they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child or young persons situation.

### **Recognise disclosure as a sign of abuse**

***Physical Symptoms may include*** – Injuries such as welts, bruises, cuts, abrasions, scalds, burns, head injuries, fractures. Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and genital injuries. Other physical symptoms may include inadequate hygiene and clothing, malnutrition and dehydration.

***Developmental signs may include*** – Global developmental delay, specific delays such as speech, social, motor skill and cognitive. Unusual developmental patterns may be noticed.

***Parent/Caregiver or family signs*** – Exposure to family violence, unrealistic expectations, isolating, dependency, flight, humiliating and closure

Family may have experience of addictions, mental health, CYF involvement, disability, attachment and the age of the parents may provide information.

***Behavioural signs in the young person*** – Aggression, withdrawal, anxiety, sadness, overly responsible, obsessions and substance abuse

**It is important to note that this is not a conclusive list and for all individuals signs and symptoms may differ.**

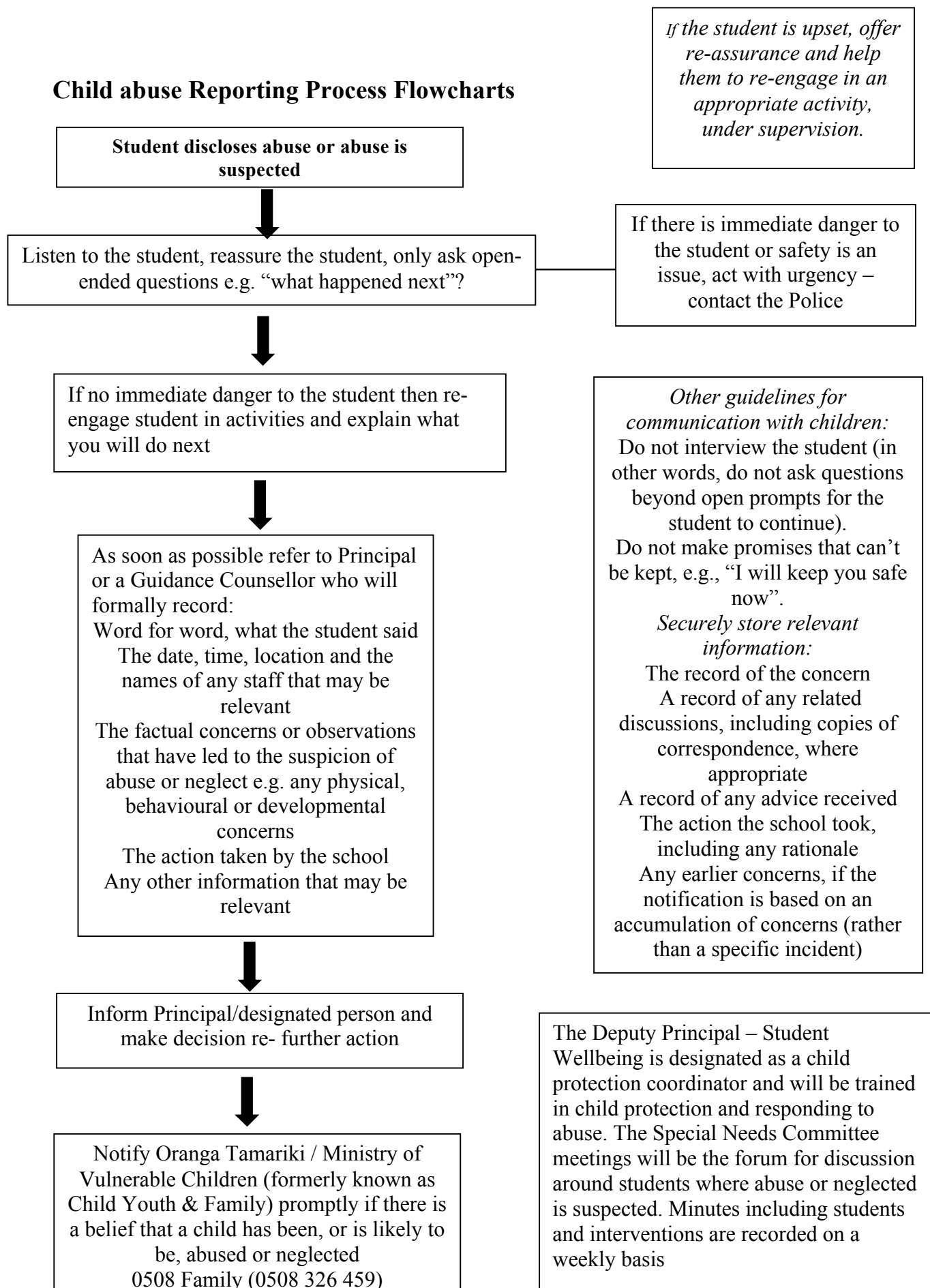
#### **Responding to suspected abuse or neglect**

1. Follow the process when an incident or suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported. See the "Child Abuse Reporting Process" flowchart below
2. All suspicions or reports of incidents will be reported to and discussed with the Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible
3. S/He will make a written report of the incident
4. If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the Child Protection Coordinator will immediately take steps to protect the child and may notify Child, Youth and Family services
5. Sometimes the involvement of statutory agencies will be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families. In these situations, the college will refer the family to an appropriate agency which can provide supportive services to the family and respond to the needs of the vulnerable children in their care. This will be done in a manner appropriate to the level of need and risk

#### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

1. If an allegation of abuse involves a staff member follow the flow chart below titled "When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member" flow chart below
2. If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, the Principal or delegated person will inform Child, Youth and Family or the Police before advising the person concerned and informing them they have the right to seek legal advice. The Principal will provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond
3. The staff member should be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.
4. The College commits to not using settlement agreements where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerns the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

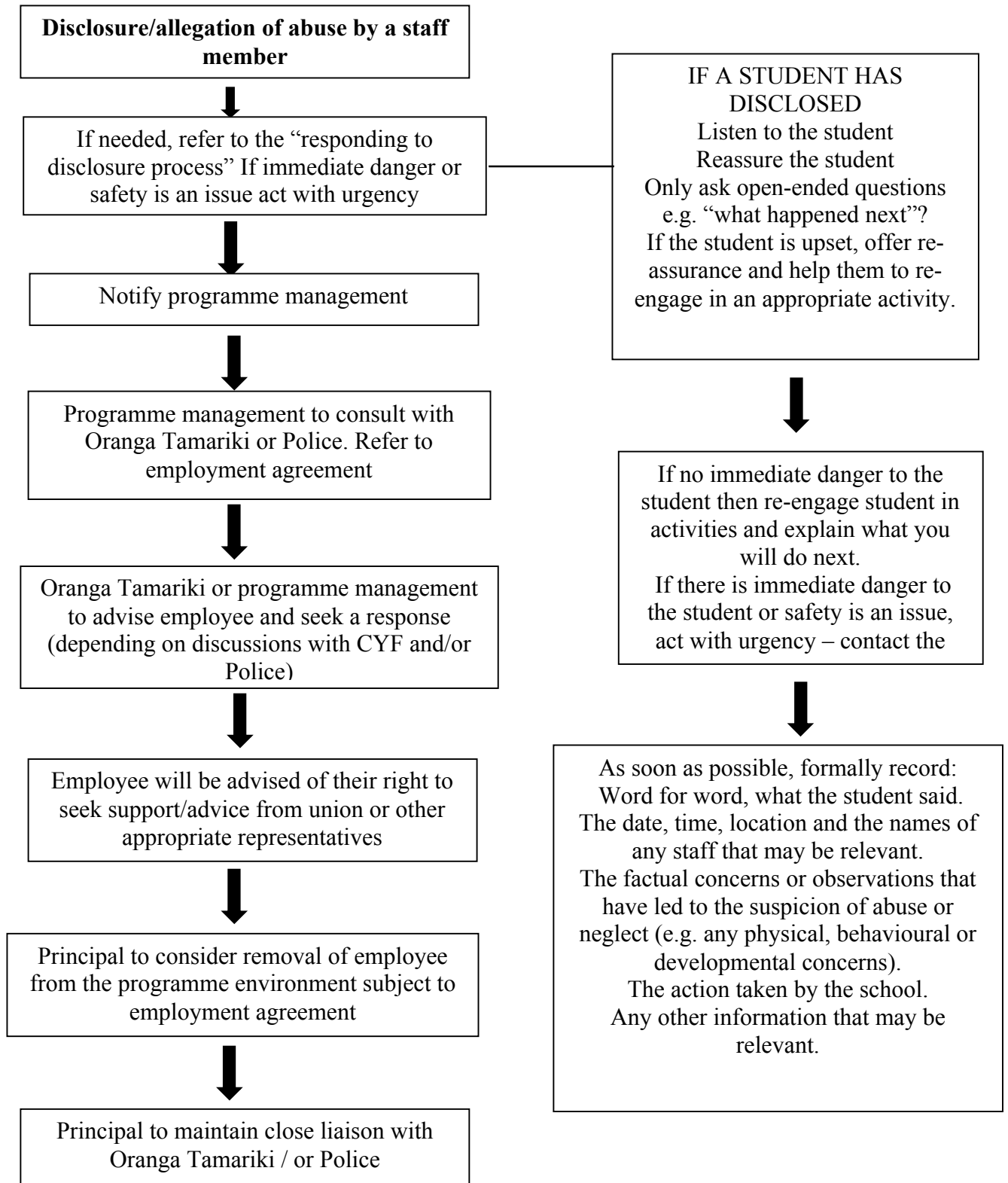
## Child abuse Reporting Process Flowcharts



**When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member**

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid, unpaid or in any school-related role) the matter must be reported promptly to the Principal.

Under no circumstance should the student making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the college to consider removing the staff member from the college environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract. All actions will be undertaken with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality



## **Prevention of possible abuse or neglect**

The college is committed to ensuring that all staff can identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and know how to respond.

The college will provide training, resources and/or advice to enable all staff to carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

Core and non-core workers will attend training, refresher training and regular updates which will ensure that they have the competence to identify and manage actual or potential abuse

Students at risk of neglect in particular will be monitored by the Special Needs Committee and appropriate actions and support will be implemented

## **Training will ensure that staff**

Are conversant with the Child Protection Policy for the college

Understand child abuse and neglect and the key indicators for each

Understand the standard of adult behaviour expected of adults in relation to children

Understand how to minimise the risk of child abuse

Understand their need to seek advice when child abuse or neglect is suspected

Understand the College's process once child abuse or neglect is identified or suspected

Understand their legal obligations and responsibilities with regard to this process

Understand that the College supports the roles of the New Zealand Police and Child Youth and Family in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies

Understand the statutory referral processes and agency management of identified or suspected child abuse or neglect

## **Process for security or storage of information**

Records should be kept separate from the usual system of student records and access to the records should be restricted. They should be held for at least ten years.

## Supporting Procedures

Staff Code of Conduct  
Appointment (recruitment) process  
Online publication of student images and work  
All NAG #5 policies (Health and Safety)

## Supporting Documents

Safer Organisations Safer Children – Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations

Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Health and Safety Reform Bill

Children, Young Persons and their families act 1989

[www.childmatters.org.nz](http://www.childmatters.org.nz)

“Working together to keep children and young people safe” is a resource for helping people recognise when families are vulnerable and how they can help, through to spotting the signs of abuse, who to talk to, how to report their concerns, and what happens when a report of concern comes through to Child Youth and Family

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others/working-together-to-keep-children-and-young-people-safe.html> (Click “Working together to keep children and young people safe”)

Ratified by the Board \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson: Sara Gordon

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: