



## **Child Abuse Policy**

### **Rationale:**

All students have the right to be safe and to have their emotional, physical and social needs met. The safety of all of our students is of utmost concern to all staff at Kauri Flats School. This policy will provide staff with a clear set of guidelines.

### **Purposes**

- Assist in identifying students who are 'at risk' and suspected of suffering abuse
- Ensure a uniform reporting procedure is adhered to

### **Guidelines**

1. The students welfare must be paramount
2. Health programmes in the school will include Keeping Ourselves Safe, Life Education and the promotion of high levels of self esteem and values at all times
3. All staff will be receptive and sensitive to students so they feel listened to and believed
4. The attached procedures will be adhered to when any evidence of abuse is apparent
5. The Principal will set up a support team annually to whom staff with concerns must refer to
6. All information discussed will be strictly confidential to the staff members involved
7. Data will be stored safely to protect against unauthorised access

## **Supporting Documents**

### **Definition of Child Abuse**

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

### **Children who have been abused need:**

- Support and care from those around them
- To talk about what happened
- Someone who will listen to and try to understand their circumstances and feelings without offending judgment, criticism or blame
- To be reassured that it was not their fault
- To grieve and feel angry for a variety of reasons

- To rebuild a positive image of themselves, to feel comfortable with others and to build relationships

### **Indicators of abuse**

- Lack of normal growth/development
- Lack of energy/listlessness
- Poor hygiene/recurring infections
- Skin pallor
- Quiet, inhibited
- Seeking food/hungry
- Showing cautious watchfulness
- Attention/approval seeking
- Dishonesty
- Bruising, welts, burns, hand marks etc
- Aggressive behaviour
- Impaired/sudden change in school performance
- Sudden change in school behaviour
- Displays anxiety
- Self mutilation
- Over achievement
- Frequent toileting
- Soiling or urinating
- Reluctance to go home
- Running away
- Heightened sexual awareness/promiscuity
- Use of explicit sexual or abusive language/gestures/movements
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Unusual, offensive odours
- Torn or bloodied underclothing
- Recoiling from touch
- Obsessive behaviours – washing etc
- Recurring throat infections
- Deterioration in peer relationships
- Psychosomatic complaints

### **Suspected Abuse**

- Cases of suspected abuse will be brought to the support team that includes the Principal, Deputy Principal: Learning and Teaching, Deputy Principal: Professional Learning Leader. The school team meets to consider referrals and to provide feedback on continuing cases. In all cases where a decision is made to refer a child to a support agency, an action plan will be put in place to ensure that the child receives adequate ongoing support.

- If base teachers suspect abuse they must record and date all information. This information must be factual and accurate. Copies of art or written work should also be held. All recorded information will be stored in a safe and secure room with the Principal

### **Disclosure**

- Stay calm
- Believe what they say
- Tell them you are pleased they told you. Express empathy. This might include affirming them for their courage in disclosing abuse
- Validate their feelings
- Tell them it is not their fault.
- Ensure they are safe.
- Never promise confidentiality
- Explain what will happen next
- Explain why it is necessary to seek help from other people
- Never question children – this can prejudice the investigation and outcomes
- Ensure they get the appropriate help they need
- Discuss and refer to Principal
- Remember to get support and supervision for yourself in the way in which you managed the situation