

# Child Protection Policy



## Policy Summary

### Purpose Statement:

Belmont Intermediate School Board of Trustees (BOT), Principal and staff are committed to protecting the safety and promote the wellbeing of every child that attends or visits Belmont Intermediate School (BIS).

### Policy Scope:

This policy applies to all staff at Belmont Intermediate School and should be used wherever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.

### Policy Principles

- Our first and paramount concern is always the rights, welfare and safety of the child / tamariki.
- Every aspect of the education and wellbeing programmes provided by Belmont Intermediate School contributes to the nurturing and protection of the students and advocate for them.
- Every aspect of the education and wellbeing programmes provided by Belmont Intermediate School for the care and protection of the children are built on a bicultural partnership in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi.
- All children are assessed and managed within a culturally safe environment.
- Maori children / tamariki are assessed and managed within a culturally safe environment.
- Wherever possible the family / whanau, hapu and iwi participate in making decisions affecting that child / tamariki.
- All staff recognise and will be sensitive to other cultures.
- Staff will receive training and regular updates to enable them to remain competent in identification and management of actual or potential abuse and/or neglect through the Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Policy.

## Organisational Commitment to Child Protection

### Our leadership team will ensure

- The Belmont Intermediate School-wide policies affect appropriate response to and management of any suspicion or concern about child abuse and neglect.
- That the BIS child protection policy and procedures comply with legislative requirements, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and best practice standards.
- Belmont Intermediate School-wide procedures exist to provide appropriate, adequate support for, and supervision of, staff affected by child abuse and neglect.

### All employees at Belmont Intermediate School have responsibility for the safe management of identified and suspected child abuse and neglect. Those responsibilities include:

1. Being fully conversant with the Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Policy and related procedures.
2. Understanding the statutory referral processes and management of identified or suspected abuse and neglect.
3. Attend initial training, refresher training and regular updates, as appropriate.
4. Actively seek immediate advice of the identified Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Coordinator (BISCPC), if there is any suspicion of neglect or abuse.

### Deputy Principal is the designated Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Coordinator (on behalf of the Belmont Intermediate Board of Trustees) and has responsibilities which include:

1. Review of Child Protection Policy and procedures as required.
2. Coordinate a school-wide response to child abuse and neglect.
3. Develop and initiate a working training plan and ensure refresher and advanced training of staff is available cyclically.
4. Ensure documentation tools are in place and accessible to staff for the recording of care and protection concerns through the student management system (Assembly).

5. Ensure audit and evaluation tools are in place to assess the BIS Child Protection Policy, processes and practice.
6. Ensure regular audits and reflections of incidents when there has been use of the BIS child protection policy and updates are regularly included in the BOT Principal's Reports and leadership team.
7. Access and provide resources to support the programme and make these available to the BOT, staff, students and parents as appropriate.
8. Develop functional internal and external relationships with agencies, government or independent, for the protection and support of students who may require support, whatever the reason (e.g. School Counsellor, Strengthening Families, New Zealand Police, mentoring agencies, CYF's, Marinoto, ACC, etc). Provide support and advice to staff regarding child abuse and neglect.

The classrooms, staffroom, library, website, school google site and resource room all have information about accessing support and interventions for concerns about child abuse and or neglect.

This information will be available in the languages of our staff, students, family, and community to recognise our diversity.

### **Definitions:**

**Child abuse** refers to the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or serious deprivation of any child / tamariki. This includes actual, potential and suspected abuse.

- **Physical abuse** - any acts that may result in physical harm to a child or young person.
- **Sexual Abuse** - any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including sexual exploitation, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
- **Emotional abuse** - any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.
- **Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

**Child Youth and Family** - the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care to children found to be in need.

**The New Zealand Police** - the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in imminent danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

### **Identifying and Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect:**

Through training all Belmont Intermediate staff are aware of the indicators of:

- Physical signs
- Developmental delays
- Physical neglect
- Medical neglect
- Behavioral concerns
- Disclosure - child talking about things that may indicate abuse
- Neglectful supervision

It should be recognised that every situation is different, and it is vital that full consideration be given to all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. The School's Child Protection Coordinator should be the one to balance all this data before next step taken.

### **Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect:**

In ALL cases where a member of staff has a concern about a child / tamariki being or likely to be abused or neglected by an adult or another child / tamariki , they will report this to the The Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Coordinator, who will work with the staff member to make a plan for the next steps to address the care and protection of the child. Referral to Child, Youth and Family can be made at any time.

Detailed notes of the cause for concern and actions must be kept in detail along with the effect of each action / intervention. This is the responsibility of The Belmont Intermediate School Child Protection Coordinator.

Belmont Intermediate School recognises that in some cases the involvement of statutory agencies would be inappropriate and potentially harmful to family / whanau.

There are many statutory and non-statutory agencies who help provide a network of support for our vulnerable children - an appendix of contacts for these is at the end of this policy.

### **Steps for responding to a child when the child discloses abuse or neglect:**

Listen to the child. Remain calm and quiet. Try not to react emotionally to what is being said.	Disclosure by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language
Reassure the child. Sit quietly with the child but not in a secluded place.	Let the child know they are not in trouble and have not done anything wrong.
Ask open-ended prompts - eg "what happened next?"	Do not interview the child - offer open prompts. Do not make promises that cannot be kept - like "I will keep you safe now".
If the child is visibly distressed.	Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities until they can participate in ordinary activities.
If the child is not in immediate danger.	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
If the child IS in immediate danger.	After talking to the BIS Child Protection Coordinator if possible and together contact the Police.
As soon a possible afterward, record the disclosure	Record word-for-word what the child said, the date, time, place and who was present.

### **Steps for recording and notifying Child, Youth and Family of suspected child abuse or neglect:**

<b>Process</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Key considerations</b>
Recording	Formally record <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anything said by the child</li><li>• The date, time, location and names of any staff members that may be relevant</li><li>• The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect</li><li>• The action taken</li><li>• Any other relevant information</li></ul>	Relevant information can support and inform any future actions.

Decision making	Discuss any concern with the School Child Protection Coordinator	No decision should be made or action taken in isolation without consultation BISPC.
Notifying authorities	Notify CYF's promptly if there is real belief the child has or is likely to be abused or neglected. This enables a conversation to take place and advise to be given. PHONE 0508 FAMILY (0508326459) E-mail cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz	Record the details of the conversation. They will make decisions about the care of the child and advise actions.
Following the advice of Child, Youth and Family	CYF's advice will include what, if any immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police.	CYF's is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether BIS needs to work with the family / whanau and people in the community to help and support.
Storing relevant information	Securely store <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The record of concern</li> <li>• A record of any related discussions (including copies of any correspondence - written, electronic or transcripts of conversations) with other staff, team leader, School Counsellor etc.</li> <li>• Advice received and from who</li> <li>• The action taken and the rationale behind this</li> <li>• This concern with any earlier ones may support current or future actions / interventions</li> </ul>	

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

- All concerns about staff need to be immediately escalated to School Child Protection Coordinator / Principal.
- To ensure the child is kept safe management may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made - subject to the NZEI Primary collective agreement.
- Management will consult with CYF's and / or the Police before further action is taken.

#### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All observations after investigation will be stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

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

NOTE - any person can report suspected neglect or abuse to CYF's provided the report be made in good faith and NO civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings can be brought against them.

#### **Recruitment and Employment (safety checking)**

- All teachers employed at BIS will be registered and have a current practicing certificate (which requires police vet checking for renewal every 3 years).
- All staff working with the students will be police vet checked.
- All visitors to BIS will sign in and have a label to say they are visiting.
- The Property Manager will endeavour to ensure all maintenance / emergency repair personnel are checked, or he will accompany them while on site.

## **Training Supervision and Support**

The BIS Child Protection Coordinator will advise the senior management team of the requirements for training.

All staff working with children at BIS will undertake CPP training and development within the schools wellbeing programme.

## **Related documents**

[Vulnerable Children's Act 2015](#)

[Children, Young persons and their Families Act 1989](#)

[Care of Children Act 2004](#)

[The Privacy Act 1993](#)

[Domestic Violence Act 1995](#)

[Victims Rights Act 2001](#)

[The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNROC\)](#)

[MoE National Education Guidelines \(NEGS\)](#)

[MoE National Administration Guidelines \(NAGS\)](#)

[The Primary School Collective](#)

## **Links to other BIS Procedures**

Health and Wellbeing - Currently being reviewed and modified

Behaviour Management

Physical, Verbal, Racial or Sexual Harassment

Child Student Protection

Discipline

Attendance

Bullying

Pastoral care

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