# Rodney College Child Protection Policy

## **Outcome statement**

Students at Rodney College thrive, belong and achieve to the best of their ability. Rodney College is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children.

## **Scoping**

This policy covers all staff of Rodney College who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by Rodney College, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Rodney College. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

This policy covers the Board of Trustees and their responsibilities in the safety and wellbeing of children.

In line with Section 15 of the [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM149467.html), any person in Rodney College who believes that any child or young person has been or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived must follow school procedures and may also report the matter to a social worker or the local Police.

## **Delegations**

## Rodney College recognises that all staff and Trustees have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm. Overall responsibility, implementation and review of this policy rests with the Principal of Rodney College.

## All services provided by Rodney College for the safety and wellbeing of children adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Responsibilities**

The principal must:

* ensure the needs and rights of students come first i.e. safety and wellbeing of each young person attending the college is paramount.
* develop appropriate procedures to meet student safety requirements as required and appropriate to Rodney College.
* comply with relevant legislative requirements and responsibilities
* ensure that all allegations or complaints are managed appropriately
* recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision making about their children unless it would be considered unsafe to do so
* ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and deal with disclosures by students and allegations against staff members, and are able to take appropriate action in response
* delegate to the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) consisting of the Guidance Counsellor/School based Nurse/SLT/Deans and SenCo, the right to consult and determine appropriate action and responsibilities, as concerns are raised. Within that team there will be two Designated Staff for Child Protection – the Guidance Counsellor and the School Based Nurse
* be informed of any referrals made by Designated Staff for Child Protection
* ensure designated staff work in accordance with this policy with partner agencies and organisations
* make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy
* ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

**It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators or neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.**

Each member of staff must:

* be aware of, and alert to, potential indicators of abuse or neglect
* record a factual account of any concerns they have or that are brought to their attention and report this to a member of the MDT to investigate further and take appropriate action

The Designated Staff for Child Protection (Guidance Counsellor/School Based Nurse) must:

* ensure the needs and rights of the young people attending the college come first i.e. the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount
* ensure and safeguard clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection cases. These must contain all available information relating to the cause for concern and any subsequent action taken, including when it has been decided not to make a notification to Ministry for Vulnerable Children – Oranga Tamariki or the police. These records will be kept separate from student’s records for the purpose of confidentiality
* establish a close link with the relevant local agencies to ensure clear and effective communication and be a recognised contact within Rodney College for agencies to contact regarding concerns
* work closely and effectively with the Wellsford School Social Worker, ensuring information is appropriately shared to effectively safeguard the childensure that all staff are supported appropriately when dealing with child protection concerns
* maintain a current awareness of the students identified on the MDT Risk Register and communicate as is appropriate to staff.
* consult with the Principal regarding all child protection concerns

The role of the Board of Trustees is to:

* ensure the needs and rights of children come first i.e. safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount
* support the Principal to ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately.
* support the Principal to ensure that allegations or complaints against staff are appropriately referred to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (EDUCANZ
* inform the Principal immediately should any member of the Board of Trustees be aware of a concern for the wellbeing and safety of a child who attends Rodney College
* ensure that the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be directly informed of any allegations of abuse against the Principal

## **Procedures and Supporting documentation**

## **Child Protection Procedures**

## All Staff will respond to concerns of child abuse by following the identified procedures, consulting appropriately and collaborating with external agencies.

## The procedures set out below will help staff with:

## The identification of abuse

## Handling disclosures, whether verbal or behavioural, from a young person

## Reporting procedures

## **Identification of abuse**

## If the Designated Staff for Child Protection is unavailable for advice and guidance then staff should consult a member of SLT. At any time staff may seek advice from Ministry for Vulnerable Children – Oranga Tamariki (0508 FAMILY) regarding child protection concerns.

## Further information regarding signs and indicators of abuse is included in the Procedures

## **Handling disclosures from a child**

## If a young person makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff it is important that they take what the young person says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the member of staff’s own opinion on what the child is saying.

## **Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. Any incidents, concerns or suspicions must be reported following the procedures set out below**.

## **Reporting Procedures**

## All concerns of potential, suspected or alleged abuse must be brought to the attention of the Designated Staff for Child Protection. If the Designated Staff for Child Protection is unavailable then consultation should occur with SLT or the Principal. A decision will be made as to whether to seek further advice or notify Ministry for Vulnerable Children – Oranga Tamariki.

## When reporting an incident staff should:

## Inform the Designated Staff for Child Protection as soon as possible

## Record in writing all conversations and actions taken

## Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must include the following:

## Record of facts, including observations, with time and date

## What was said and by whom, using the person’s words

## What action has been taken, by whom and when

## **Keeping the young person’s family informed and involved**

## Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:

## The parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator

## It is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence

## There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed

## The child does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision

## **Sharing Information and Confidentiality**

## The safety of a child is paramount. At times a child is unable to speak for or protect themselves. Therefore, Rodney College has a greater responsibility to know when and how to share appropriate information with external agencies to protect the safety and wellbeing of children.

## The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, 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.

## Under these Acts, giving information to protect children is not a breach of confidentiality or the Privacy Act As stated in principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 1993, ‘disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat’.

## Should Rodney College be contacted with a request for information or access to interview a student then the following procedure will be followed:

## confirm identity and credentials of person requesting information and gain permission to act

## notify the Principal /SLT and/or Designated Staff for Child Protection

## identify specific information required and purpose

## check information held - does Rodney College have the information requested

## depending on the reason for the request, and risk to children as judged case by case, inform the family that information has been requested, by whom and seek permission. If this is a child protection issue, permission from the family is not required

## Document all steps in process. Ensure that all documentation is placed on the child’s protection file.

## **Legislative compliance**

## Education Act 1989

## Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989

## Employment Relations Act

## Human Rights Act

<http://www.education.govt.nz/>

Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014

[Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children](https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-teams) – further information and sample child protection templates

# Signed for the Board of Trustees: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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