

NORTHERN SOUTHLAND COLLEGE

Protection of Students Policy



Rationale:	Northern Southland College has a clear responsibility to provide a safe physical and emotional environment. The College's aim is to protect its students, as far as is humanly possible, from any form of abuse.
Reference:	Ministry of Education – National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) Vulnerable Children Act 2014
Purpose:	When necessary Northern Southland College will refer, in confidence, any allegations to the agency best able to investigate and to act in the student's best interests, whether those persons are the parents, the police or social workers. Northern Southland College will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that this responsibility is exercised in an objective and professional manner. ● provide guidance on the reporting of the abuse of students ● ensure that all students are treated with dignity and respect and have their needs met in a safe environment. ● ensure that the safety, welfare and interests of our students is paramount. In respect of this the normal procedures relating to confidentiality may not be appropriate. ● ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and actioned appropriately.
Procedures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The safety and well-being of school students is the priority. 2. If the safety of a student is at risk, the Guidance Counsellor or SLT member must ensure their removal to a place of safety. 3. The school Guidance Counsellor will act as an advocate for student safety. 4. Staff members should avoid dealing with incidents of suspected, alleged or actual abuse without support from the Guidance Counsellor. 5. Incidents of suspected, alleged or actual abuse (including self-harm) in all circumstances must be referred to the Guidance Counsellor immediately. In their absence, to the Principal, Acting Principal or other SLT member: other staff members should not be involved in interviewing the student at risk. In all circumstances staff can directly report to NZ Police or Ministry for Vulnerable Children. 6. Once designated, staff speaking to students about suspected or actual abuse should seek only the minimum amount of information such as dates, times of incidents and the names of those involved. They must accurately document the disclosure and ensure all documentation is maintained securely. 7. The Guidance Counsellor will inform the Principal prior to consultation with outside agencies

Date Last Reviewed:	09.08.2017	Page 1 of 4	Protection of Students Policy
Draft Circulated:	10.08.2017	Updated by: Self-Review Committee	
Date for next Review:	01.09.2020	Approved by: BOT	Date: 16.08.2017

- 8. Thereafter they must report the matters to the Police immediately, as further questioning from college staff might prejudice subsequent Police investigations.
- 9. Incidents of suspected, alleged or actual abuse shall be dealt with sensitively and with staff aware of the need to maintain confidentiality and the privacy of those involved.
- 10. The Guidance Counsellor will consult with an appropriate SLT member and/or outside agencies in determining responsibility for informing the student’s family/caregivers.
- 11. If outside agencies are to interview the student at school:
 - Parents should be informed and they may choose to be present. (the only exception is in circumstances of custodial issues or the parent/s are the accused party)
 - The Guidance Counsellor or SLT member must be present in the interview.
 - Prior to the interview the Guidance Counsellor or SLT member must ID check the interviewer and phone check if necessary.
- 12. The Guidance Counsellor may escort the student to any interview with an outside agency.

- Safety Checking:**
- 1. Police Vetting <http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/vetting-process> is to be carried out for all prospective staff and volunteers other than registered teachers as required by the relevant legislation and MoE [Circulars](#), as applicable.
 - a. This includes:
 - i. support staff
 - ii. regular contractors/tradespeople
 - iii. contractors/tradespeople with long-term programmes of work at the school
 - iv. where these people are those people likely to have unsupervised access to students at school during normal school hours
 - v. those people with unsupervised access to students outside school hours, such as external sports coaches
 - vi. those people providing care and protection of students such as homestay families and staff or volunteers on trips and camps. (any volunteer who has more than 2 hours contact with students that is unsupervised by a teacher)
 - 2. If you are eligible under the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004, your conviction history will not be released unless:
 - Section 19(3) of the Clean Slate Act applies to the vetting request (exception to the Clean Slate regime)
 - Section 31(3) of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 applies to the vetting request (safety checks of core children’s workers) **This means all schools**
 - 3. Any employee refusing to carry out a police vet or to supply information to allow the vetting process to proceed shall be

Date Last Reviewed:	09.08.2017	Page 2 of 4	Protection of Students Policy
Draft Circulated:	10.08.2017	Updated by: Self-Review Committee	
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	<p>subject to disciplinary action which may lead to their suspension from duties, summary dismissal, reduction in scope of their role and salary and/or other sanctions as described in the Disciplinary Process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Vetting must be carried out by Northern Southland College- it is not possible to 'carry across' results from other organisations, even if the vetting was done there within the three year window. This is in accordance with advice from the NZ Police Vetting Service. 5. Vetting results will assist the school in deciding when to employ or to allow a volunteer to work with students and the Board of Trustees and SLT will consider the following when making decisions about potential employees, employees or volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● type of offence and its relevance to employment ● length of time since the crime was committed ● age and maturity now as compared to when the crime was committed ● seriousness of the crime ● circumstances at the time of any violent behaviour ● pattern of crime; for example a short spate may indicate a 'phase' but a regular pattern may indicate continuing inappropriate behaviour ● proximity of the person undergoing vetting to any children, older people or people with special needs. For example are they likely to have unsupervised access to these vulnerable people? ● any explanations the vetted person makes in discussions about the vetting information. 4. Police vets will be carried out for each staff member at least every three years or as and when information comes to the attention of the Board which might affect an individual's suitability to work with school-age students or as a member of staff. 5. Police vetting will be carried out in accordance with the requirements stipulated by NZ Police and agreed by the school in the signed Memorandum of Understanding. 6. Vetting and appointments of staff <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers must be Education Council (EDUCANZ) registered (see below) prior to starting work at the school, as registration includes police vetting.
Teachers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers are police vetted through their registration with the Education Council. 2. The EDUCANZ vetting is performed under the Clean Slate system https://www.justice.govt.nz/criminal-records/clean-slate/ and therefore if a teacher is to carry out a different role which requires Exception vetting (e.g. involving the care and protection of a student or group on a field trip, camp or as a homestay host) then the teacher must complete the Exception vetting process.

Date Last Reviewed:	09.08.2017	Page 3 of 4	Protection of Students Policy
Draft Circulated:	10.08.2017	Updated by: Self-Review Committee	
Date for next Review:	01.09.2020	Approved by: BOT	Date: 16.08.2017

ADOPTION OF POLICY

The Adoption of Northern Southland College **Protection of Students Policy** was minuted during the Board Meeting held on **16 August 2017**.

Signed: _____



BOT Chair



Principal

Date Last Reviewed:	09.08.2017	Page 4 of 4	Protection of Students Policy
Draft Circulated:	10.08.2017	Updated by: Self-Review Committee	
Date for next Review:	01.09.2020	Approved by: BOT	Date: 16.08.2017