



Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto

Next review: Term 3 2025

Abuse Recognition and Reporting

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, phone the police on 111. If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, or want to discuss, report, or refer a concern, contact Oranga Tamariki on 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) or edassist@ot.govt.nz.

Abuse recognition and reporting processes at Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto are part of our wider **Child Protection** policy, which applies to all school staff, contractors, and volunteers, and is available to our school community. These procedures fulfil our requirements under the Children's Act (s. 14) to provide information on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

We expect staff to be alert to changes in student wellbeing or behaviour, and to recognise signs of neglect and abuse. We acknowledge that recognising, sharing, and responding to these concerns as early as possible is key to improving health outcomes for our students. The principal assures the board each year that staff are aware of indicators of abuse, and are familiar with our procedures for reporting abuse.

At Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto, our designated child protection person is the principal, who is the primary point of contact for concerns about students, including concerns about abuse or neglect. The designated child protection person is available and accessible to all other staff, and has experience and training in responding to child protection concerns.

Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto works with Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police where appropriate, and liaises with partner agencies and community organisations to support early interventions, with the goal of safe and effective abuse response. We share information with appropriate agencies if it is in the best interests of a student and will support their wellbeing or safety.

Overview of abuse response procedures at Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto:

- Maintain awareness of the indicators of abuse.
- Support any person disclosing abuse.
- Ensure student safety. Contact the police if there is immediate danger, or Oranga Tamariki for support.
- Record all available information, including disclosures, observations, and concerns.
- Consult with the designated child protection person or seek support from an external agency. Do not act alone.
- The designated child protection person supports the student through systems within the school or external agencies.
- Any person that identifies abuse or receives a disclosure is also advised to seek support for themselves.

Recognising and responding to concerns

Student safety and welfare is the primary concern of Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto staff. Our staff are trained to be alert to changes in student wellbeing or behaviour, and to recognise

signs of neglect and abuse. Information sharing provisions allow staff to share safety and wellbeing concerns, which includes low-level wellbeing concerns through to observations or disclosures of abuse and neglect. If it is in the best interest of a student, staff members are encouraged to proactively and voluntarily share information with other people or organisations who may be able to help.

We advise staff not to act alone when responding to child abuse concerns. This is to protect our staff members, and to avoid prejudicing any legal action. Unless there is immediate danger to a student, staff should consult with the designated child protection person or contact Oranga Tamariki. The designated child protection person reviews any relevant information and decides how best to support the student. This may include sharing information with external agencies, or making a **report of concern**.

If concerns raised by staff or student disclosures do **not** warrant a report of concern, the designated child protection person reviews any other evidence to see if there are repeated concerns relating to student or their family. The designated child protection person decides if combined evidence meets a higher concern threshold and should be reported. The designated child protection person may organise extra support for the student and/or partner with external agencies to address student needs.

Recognising abuse

Child abuse is defined as harm (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, s. 2). Neglect is the most common form of abuse, and is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

Abuse and neglect are more likely to be recognised through observations of behaviour or physical indicators than through direct disclosures. We ensure that staff are able to identify signs of abuse and neglect, and encourage concerns to be shared with the designated child protection person.

For a guide to definitions and indicators of child abuse, see the documents below. These provide examples in different situations of abuse, but are not a definitive list. For any queries, we recommend sharing concerns with our designated child protection person or Oranga Tamariki.

See **Definitions of Child Abuse** 

See **Indicators of Child Abuse** 

Managing disclosure

While abuse is usually recognised through observation, students may willingly or accidentally disclose abuse. In this situation, we handle disclosure with care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student, and to avoid prejudicing any legal action.

Any person who receives a disclosure is advised to:

- remain calm, and remember that the safety and wellbeing of the student is the primary concern
- offer reassurance, but do not make any promises or commitments that cannot be kept
- write down information about the time, date, location, and any people present during the disclosure
- write down what the student says in their own words, distinguishing between what the student says and any inferences made
- avoid formally interviewing the student
- ask open questions (rather than leading questions that may cause biased answers)

- ensure the student is supported and that there is a responsible adult at the school who is available to them throughout any investigation by external agencies
- inform the designated child protection person as soon as possible
- refer to Oranga Tamariki or the police if necessary.

We encourage staff to seek support for themselves in the event of abuse disclosure, either from a relevant support person at the school or through external support services.

Allegations against staff members

Child abuse concerns involving staff members may come about through observation or disclosure. These may reflect conduct within the school environment, but we also respond to allegations regarding staff behaviour outside of school. Any allegations against staff are taken seriously and dealt with as a matter of urgency. If someone has been accused of abuse, the school may take steps to prevent contact between that person and students at the school.

Any allegations against staff members should be reported to the principal. If a concern involves the principal, it should be reported to the board chair. See **Protected Disclosure** for the procedures that ensure staff feel confident they can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

The school reports allegations of child abuse by staff members to Oranga Tamariki and the police. It is the responsibility of these authorities to assess any evidence and investigate whether child abuse has occurred. The school does not directly investigate allegations.

While student safety is our primary concern, we follow a fair disciplinary process in cases of alleged abuse. We uphold the rights of staff to respond to allegations and seek independent advice. During an investigation by Oranga Tamariki or the police, the school does not conduct its own internal investigations that may prejudice an external decision.

We protect any actual or potential legal action by following the advice of authorities in terms of contact with students, family/whānau, and those facing allegations. If there is insufficient evidence for a criminal prosecution, and following the advice of authorities, the school may conduct its own internal investigation.

Abuse and neglect are classed as a serious breach of the Code of Professional Responsibility | Ngā Tikanga Matatika under the Teaching Council Rules 2016 (Part 3). If we have reason to believe that a teacher has engaged in this type of serious misconduct, we make a mandatory report to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa.

Sharing information and reporting abuse

Under the **information sharing** provisions of the Oranga Tamariki Act, staff may proactively share information with other approved professionals (e.g. relevant members of staff, the board, and social, family, and community services) if it is in the best interests of the student. The decision to share information can be in response to general wellbeing concerns about a student as well as concerns of neglect and abuse.

Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto makes decisions about whether to report concerns to Oranga Tamariki or the police based on all available information. The reporting process may also involve other external agencies to identify and address student needs. The school consults with Oranga Tamariki and the police as required to decide who informs parents and/or caregivers, and when.

For further detail about the information that Beckenham Te Kura o Pūroto is able to share and request, see **Sharing Information**.

Storing information

We record all information in writing and keep this securely in a child protection file. The designated child protection person refers to this information when making decisions based on

further evidence.

We store all information, including records documenting concerns, conversations, advice received, actions taken (including rationale), and any warnings issued, in accordance with our **Privacy** and **School Records Retention and Disposal** procedures.

The principal assures the board each year that staff are aware of indicators of abuse, and are familiar with our procedures for reporting abuse. See **Self-Review and Board Assurances**.










Related topics

- **Child Protection** 
- **Staff Responsibilities for Child Protection** 
- **Supporting Student Wellbeing** 
- **Protected Disclosure** 
- **Privacy** 
- **Sharing Information** 

Legislation

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons, and their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017
- Teaching Council Rules 2016

Resources

- Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children: **Contact Us** 
- Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children: **Identify Abuse** 
- Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga: **Reporting Suspected Abuse** 
- Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora: **Is that child OK?** 
- Safeguarding Children: **Worried About a Child?** 
- Safeguarding Children: **Making an effective report of concern** 
- Child Matters: **Handling Disclosures of Child Abuse** 
- Child Matters: **How can I tell? Recognising child abuse** 
- Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand: **Conduct concerns** 

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