



Child Protection Policy

Our Child Protection policy, along with supporting policies and procedures, applies to any student at Cambridge High School who is defined as a child under the Children's Act 2014 (Part 1, s. 5). Where this policy refers to "students" to maintain consistency with other school documentation, child protection requirements apply, with the exception of those outside the Children's Act definition. Concerns about students who are 18 years and over are directed to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, or the New Zealand Police. The Children's Act defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. This definition is expanded in certain contexts of the Act in terms of age and the child's relationship with care agencies.

In Part 1 of the Children's Act 2014, unless the context otherwise requires, child means any of the following:

- (a) a person who is under the age of 18 years:
- (b) a person who is under the age of 21 years and has been in care (as defined in this subsection):
- (c) a person who is under the age of 25 years and is receiving transition support from the department under Part 7 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

Children's Act 2014 (Part 1, s. 5)

Child protection framework

As required by the Children's Act 2014 (s. 14), we have adopted this Child Protection policy as our framework for student safety at Cambridge High School. This policy contains provisions for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Guidance provided by Cambridge High School for the safety and wellbeing of students aligns with the principles of partnership/mahi tahi, protection/kaitiakitanga, and participation/whai wāhi; and the rights and responsibilities of all members of our school community as outlined by te Tiriti o Waitangi. We recognise the importance of involving family/whānau in decision-making, and we involve students in decision-making about themselves in age-appropriate ways. Recognising the importance of this policy, Cambridge High School staff are made aware of this policy in the first half of term 1 each year. Our child protection policy, along with supporting documentation, ensures we maintain student welfare as our primary concern, and keep the student at the centre of decision-making. We aim to safeguard our students from abuse and neglect by encouraging concerns to be recognised and shared, and having systems to respond when concerns are raised.

Supporting student safety and responding to concerns

We support the wellbeing/hauora of our students by establishing positive learning environments and promoting respectful relationships between students and staff. We have a designated child protection person, who is the primary point of contact for concerns about students, including concerns about abuse or neglect. At Cambridge High School, this person is the principal, or principal's delegated authority. In situations of concern, we aim to work together and intervene early to support student safety and wellbeing.

We foster a safe atmosphere for our students to speak up if they feel that something is wrong or that they are being mistreated. We may use programmes to help students identify healthy and unhealthy relationships. They should talk to our guidance counsellors.

- If a wellbeing concern is raised, or staff think that a student may require extra support, we follow our set procedures for Responding to Student Wellbeing Concerns.
- If there is a concern or disclosure of abuse or neglect, we follow our procedures for Abuse Recognition and Reporting.

Concern response overview

For information specific to the situations listed above, see the corresponding topic. Our response overview is provided here.

If there is immediate danger:

- Phone the police on 111.
- If possible, protect the immediate safety of the student.
- Following the incident, inform the designated child protection person.
- Record any actions taken.

If there is no immediate danger:

- Record a factual account of any concerns that have come up, or any disclosures that are made.
- For any concerns, consult the designated child protection person, who works with relevant school staff and external agencies as necessary.
- The designated child protection person may consult with the principal and board to decide whether to share information externally.
- Where a concern does not warrant notifying Oranga Tamariki, the school may partner with social service providers to identify and address the needs of the student.
- If necessary, Oranga Tamariki investigates and advises relevant staff about any action that should be taken to support students.
- Decisions about informing parents or caregivers about suspected or actual child abuse or neglect are made after consultation between the school and Oranga Tamariki.
- All decisions are recorded in writing and kept in a secure child protection file, with any decision-making processes explained.

Child protection roles and responsibilities

The board is responsible for ensuring all children's workers (core and non-core) employed or engaged by the school are safety checked before their appointment. Existing children's workers are safety checked every three years after the last safety check was completed.

The Children's Act 2014 defines a **children's worker** as a person who works in, or provides, a regulated service that may involve regular or overnight access to a child/children (excluding those who are co-workers), and takes place without a parent/guardian present.

- **Core workers** are workers who are in sole charge, or have primary responsibility or authority over a child/children in their care.
- **Non-core workers** have regular but limited contact and are never alone with children.

Children's Act 2014, s. 23 (1)

If the school employs a staff member that is not considered a children's worker, they are police vetted if their role includes unsupervised access to students.

Staff have a professional responsibility to report any concerns about student wellbeing and safety, particularly in regard to abuse, neglect, or professional misconduct of other staff to the designated child protection person.

Cambridge High School has a designated person responsible for child protection policies. Our designated person is the principal, or principal's delegated authority, and is the primary point of contact for concerns about a child, including concerns about abuse or neglect.

Referral notes (for reports of concern to outside agencies) are centrally stored with the principal. This assists with all staff being protected, and ensuring the principal has knowledge of the report.

Recognising the importance of this policy, Cambridge High School staff are made aware of this in the first half of term one each year.

Child protection partnerships

Staff members work with relevant contacts within the school to best support students, and seek guidance from external agencies as appropriate. Unless there is immediate danger, staff members do not act alone on their concerns.

Cambridge High School 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 if it is in the best interests of a student, as per information sharing provisions. In all circumstances, Cambridge High School is carefully guided by these provisions as well as privacy considerations.

External agency interviews

If an external agency such as the police or Oranga Tamariki asks to interview a student on school grounds, the school ensures the rights of the student are upheld. If Oranga Tamariki contacts the school to interview a student, that student has the right to a support person if they wish. This support person (e.g. member of support staff, teacher, or principal) focuses on the safety and wellbeing of the student.

The police may contact the school to question a student. Students in this situation have the right to remain silent, and the right to a lawyer. If a student who is under 18 is interviewed by police, a nominated adult can support them. See Youth Law: Rights with the Police.

Child protection review

We acknowledge that child protection is everyone's responsibility, and we share and review our Child Protection policy and procedures with our wider school community.

Child protection topics are reviewed at least once every three years as part of the Board's policy review schedule. Our designated child protection person and any other relevant staff are involved in reviewing policies and procedures related to child protection.