

## SUSPECTED ABUSE POLICY FOR CHILDREN

### PURPOSE:

1. To provide guidelines for staff when dealing with cases of suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse of any student.
2. To ensure that any student who may be suffering abuse receives help at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. To ensure that cases of suspected abuse are referred to the Children and Young Person's Service at the earliest opportunity.
4. To offer ongoing support to any student who may have suffered abuse.
5. To educate staff on a regular basis with respect to the recognition and referral of child abuse.

### GUIDELINES:

The following procedure is to be followed, should a staff member suspect or be told of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any student.

1. If a student confides to a staff member that he/she is being or has been abused the staff member must explain that assistance must be sought and that every effort will be made to help. Any suspicions must be recorded in writing by the staff member. There must be no questioning or counselling of the child by any staff member at any time.
2. Where a staff member suspects abuse through observation of the student's behaviour he/she will record these observations.
3. When a staff member has documented these suspicions he/she must report immediately to the Principal. The Principal will refer to the matter directly to a named Supervisor at the Children and Young Person's Service who will then take responsibility for further management of that student.
4. It is important that reporting should be made through the proper channels as outlined and that confidentiality should be maintained. In this way there is protection of the staff member as well as for the student and family
5. Action should be taken in all cases where there is suspicion of abuse, absolute proof is not required. It is not the staff or Principal's role to carry out an investigation; this is the role of the Children and Young Person's Service.
6. The school recognises the power of the Children and Young Person's Service to remove a child for interviewing.
7. Staff will be trained on a regular basis, by an appropriate agency on how to recognise Child Abuse. This would include participating in "Keeping Ourselves Safe" programme. Such training will be arranged by the Principal at regular intervals or sooner if requested by any staff member.