



## **WESLEY COLLEGE TRUST BOARD**

### **Abuse, Harassment or Neglect of Boarders Policy**

#### **RATIONALE**

The Wesley College Trust Board wishes to establish proper procedures to be followed if there is a report of child abuse or suspected child abuse, harassment or serious neglect, or any form of harm, including those arising through social media and cyberbullying.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the implementation of Regulation 58 of the Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005 and to ensure that boarders are safeguarded from all forms of abuse, harassment, or neglect, whether in person or online.

#### **POLICY GUIDELINES**

##### **Principle of Child Safety**

1. Any report or suspicion that a boarder is experiencing abuse must be taken seriously, and subsequent action must prioritise the paramount principle that the interests of the Child come first.

##### **Reporting Concerns**

2. Any concern in relation to abuse, including cyberbullying, should immediately be advised to the Director of Boarding or directly to the Principal.
3. Where advice is given to a Hostel Parent, the Hostel Parent will notify the Director of Boarding and the Principal at the earliest opportunity.

##### **Procedures for Disclosure**

4. The Principal will then make a procedural decision in relation to the disclosure, based on “a belief on reasonable grounds”, after considering the source of the information and any relevant physical, behavioural or circumstantial evidence available at the time.
5. The Principal will advise the person whose actions have led to the disclosure of the allegation and request a response within a reasonable period of time.
6. If necessary, the Principal may:
  - a. take immediate steps to ensure the safety of all boarders by requiring the person (whether a staff member, boarder, or other individual) suspected of

abuse, harassment, or neglect to remain off hostel premises if deemed necessary.

#### Mandatory Reporting

7. Where the Principal forms the belief that abuse, harassment, serious neglect of a boarder or harmful digital communication has taken place, ~~then~~ written notice of this must be given within 24 hours to at least one of the following:
  - a. the parents or guardians of the boarder concerned.
  - b. Oranga Tamariki.
  - c. the New Zealand Police.

#### Social Media and Cyberbullying

8. Any incidents of cyberbullying or harmful digital communications involving boarders will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
9. The Trust Board will work alongside the Wesley College Board of Trustees to:
  - a. educate boarders about appropriate online behaviour and the risks of cyberbullying.
  - b. monitor and address reports of online abuse.
  - c. work with external agencies, such as Netsafe and the Police, when necessary.

#### Guidelines for Staff

10. The Principal will issue guidelines and give direction to hostel staff regarding the application of this policy to ensure consistent and appropriate responses to all incidents.

### RELATED LEGISLATION AND SCHOOL POLICIES

#### 1. Legislation

- Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005
- Vulnerable Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Privacy Act 2020
- Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015
- Employment Relations Act 2000

#### 2. Policies and Procedures

- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

- Hostel Relationships Policy
- Public Statement Policy

This policy was adopted by the Wesley College Trust Board on 20 February 2025. This policy will be reviewed on or before the Wesley College Hostel Council meeting of February 2028.

Jan Tasker

**Chairperson**

20 February 2025