

AVONSIDE GIRLS'
— HIGH SCHOOL —
Te Kura Kohine o Ōtākaro

Tēnā koutou

You will be aware of the Sexual Harassment Survey we commissioned with Shirley Boys' High School recently. Your young person may or may not have taken part.

The results are now in, and they show that the school is not immune to what has become an extremely serious issue across society. The survey report itself is attached for you to see.

A major finding was that the harassment of our students is taking place in multiple locations. Three out of every four cases were outside the school grounds in places like public transport, around town, on social media, and while out socialising.

Another concerning finding was how many girls had changed parts of their lives to avoid being sexually harassed. Some of these included stopping the wearing of revealing clothing, avoiding certain places, not taking buses, and even staying at home for fear of being harassed.

I am so proud of our students who took part, and my heart goes out to everyone who has been sexually harassed or abused. At least we now know what we are dealing with and can start taking action to address it. For example, there is a clear need to stop the apparent code of silence and bring sexual harassment into the open. We also need to create a safe space where our students can get support confidentially.

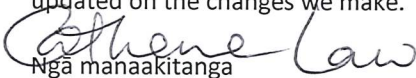
We will take some of these actions as an individual school, and others in conjunction with Shirley Boys' High. That was a big reason why both schools decided to commission the survey together.

Planned release of survey results

Due to the extremely sensitive nature of the survey and the likely interest from different stakeholders, we have carefully planned its release. While you are receiving this now, those who participated will be invited to an optional assembly (one for Juniors and one for Seniors) this morning. There will be school counsellors available to talk to ākongā at the conclusion of each assembly. This may be a good time to start a conversation on the subject with your daughter if you haven't already.

We have also carefully planned the release to media. They will be free to report on the survey from 11am today, after parents, staff and ākongā have all been informed. Two senior students, myself and the Board Chair will be available to speak to reporters. While unlikely, if you or your student are approached by media, feel free to tell them you would rather leave the commenting to the school and refer them to my office.

Thank you for your continued support and please rest assured that we will take action on the results of this survey because the safety and wellbeing of our ākongā is our top priority. That is why we commissioned it in the first place. If you do what to discuss any of this with me, my door is always open. I will also keep you updated on the changes we make.


Ngā manaakitanga
Catherine Law



+64 3 389 7199



principal@avonside.school.nz



209 Travis Road Christchurch
8083, New Zealand

Support Available

As we move through this process, we want to remind all our whānau and our ākongā of the supports that are available to them.

At any time, students can come and see the team in the Hauora centre for support, but they can also see their Kaitiaki or Ako teachers.

To see anyone in Student Services, or in the Hauora Center, students can just come in. If someone is free, they can be seen straight away, or they can make an appointment.

If there is any support or follow up you need, please do not hesitate to contact any of the people below.

Kaitiaki

Cooper	Laura Failing	lfailing@avonside.school.nz
Batten	Kirstin Field	kfield@avonside.school.nz
Mansfield	Pina Lissaman	polissaman@avonside.school.nz
Sheppard	Lesieli Peseta	lpeseta@avonsides.school.nz

Hauora Team

Social Worker	Nardine Schrodernschroder	nardine@avonside.school.nz
Counsellor	Maggie Flanagan	mflanagan@avonside.school.nz
Counsellor	Becs McAllister	rmcallister@avonside.school.nz
Social Worker	Ashleigh McDonald	amcdonald@avonside.school.nz
Māori Liaison	Mary Ann Waitoa	mwaitoa@avonside.school.nz
Pasifika Liaison	Lecia Kiritia	lkiritia@avonside.school.nz

The New Zealand Police offers advice on reporting sexual harrasment and abuse, as well as an explanation of the process involved here: <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/advice-victims/victims-rape-or-sexual-assault>

Safe to Talk is a service that can link you with advice, support and information. It is a service you can use at any time including before deciding to contact the police. This is a 24/7 service with interpreters available for 44 languages. You can reach them here: <https://www.safetotalk.nz/> or by calling 0800 044 334

If you have immediate concerns, a trained counsellor is available any time by calling or texting 1737. We know that one of the hardest times for our young people is late at night/early in the morning when they feel alone, and their support systems are asleep. We would encourage you to encourage your teen to use 1737 at any time.