



H&S

Child Protection Policy

The purpose of this operational policy is to ensure all possible actions are taken to protect and where possible, prevent children from abuse and neglect; which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult, and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.

Child abuse and neglect is not acceptable. Children need our protection. Where protection is not adequately provided by the adults responsible for the child, others need to step in to ensure the child receives adequate protection.

This centre is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. Our organisation recognises that there is increasing awareness that abuse and neglect of children can and does happen and we are determined to make a positive difference to this problem. The safety and wellbeing of the child will always be given priority when investigating suspected or alleged abuse.

We support the roles of the Police and the Ministry for Children Oranga Tamariki, in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies. This policy is in line with their guidance and any future revisions will be checked for consistency with these agencies.

We support families to protect their children.

We provide a safe environment, free from neglect, physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.

This policy details our organisation’s commitment to protect vulnerable children from abuse and neglect through its actions, activities and staff. It also provides our organisation with a broad framework and expectations to protect vulnerable children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse or neglect.

Our policy recognises the important role and responsibility of all of our staff in the protection of children by identifying and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect and appropriately responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child. This includes all children we come into contact with, whether they be enrolled in our service or not such as siblings of those attending, staff children or other.

This policy is a living document and is regularly reviewed by all staff, at least annually. A digital version is kept in Teams for easy access.

Links with Other Policies: Human Resources- Staff Recruitment and Human Resources- Staff Conduct policies – police checks and careful employment of temporary staff, casual staff, friends of friends, volunteers

- ***Outings and excursions policy***

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- **Information & Complaints policy.**
- **Cybersafety Policy**
- **All other relevant Health and Safety Policies, including Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy, Sleep Policy, Accident, Illness and Incident policy etc and all such policies that meet the needs and welfare of the children in our care.**

Definitions of Abuse:

Child – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.

Child Abuse is defined in the Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children (Children’s and Young People’s Well-Being Act “means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person

Neglect -the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love)
- Medical - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child
- Abandonment - leaving a child young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning
- Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision
- Refusal to assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child.”
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

From Child Matters website:childmatters.org.nz and safer organisations, safer children document

Other Forms of Abuse Are:

- Physical abuse** — any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
- Sexual abuse** — any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery,

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inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

- c. **Emotional abuse** — any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:

Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others.
Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.

Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.

- d. **Verbal abuse** — verbal abuse is any language or behavior that seeks to coerce its victim to doubt their perceptions or their abilities and subjugate themselves to the abuser.

Given the link between family violence, intimate partner violence and child abuse, it is also important to understand these terms:

a. **Family violence** has been defined by the NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse as violence and abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with. This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013).

b. **Family violence** is also defined in Te Rito, the NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, as covering a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature that typically involve fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation. It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and Child Protection Policies v 2.3 Feb 2015 Page 23 of 55 children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family. Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:

- * Spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners).
- * Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult).
- * Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust).
- * Parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent); sibling abuse (violence among siblings), (Te Rito – NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, Ministry of Social Development, 2002).

c. **A legal definition of family violence** is provided in Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act 1995.

d. **Intimate partner violence** is a subset of family violence. The NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse states that intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013).

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Policy Principles

1. The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions. The safety and wellbeing of children is the primary concern, with the child/ren at the centre of all decision-making.
2. We hold a commitment to open and transparent relationships with clients/service users, including being willing to share concerns about child safety issues with the family/whānau unless this would result in an escalation of risk.
3. We recognise the rights of family/Whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
4. We recognise the rights of the child to participate, in age-appropriate ways, in decision-making about themselves.
5. We are committed to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues or the person in charge.
6. The designated person in each centre in charge of child protection who can offer advice and support and will take any necessary next steps for ensuring all information is gathered and reported is the Centre Manager. This person will be responsible for taking further action where necessary. This may involve the family of the child where appropriate and agencies such as NZ police and Oranga Tamariki.
7. We hold a commitment to develop and maintain links with iwi, Pasifika and other cultural and community groups and to ensure that important cultural concepts (e.g., whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice.
8. In order for children to be safe from abuse and or neglect, both parents and teachers (including contractors and volunteers), need a shared understanding of what abuse is and how it can be prevented.
9. We have a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response. In this we provide regular training and ensure staff receive regular opportunities to learn about recognising and where possible, preventing child abuse. This is undertaken within the centre and also with external agencies.
10. We are committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies and practices are consistent and high quality.
11. We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
12. We are committed to promote a culture where all staff or volunteers or contractors feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal. This is in line with the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.
13. We recognise the importance of early intervention and the principle of applying the least intrusive intervention necessary to protect vulnerable children. We consider the overall wellbeing and risk of harm to the child in all actions.

(N.B. The detail in implementing and providing information in this policy consists of 20 pages. You are welcome to read this in our policy folder onsite)

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