

Child Protection & Disclosure of Abuse Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy is implemented pursuant to part 2 of the Children's Act 2014 for the purpose of setting out provisions on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

2. The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

- 2.1. In New Zealand there is no legal obligation to report suspected child abuse to the Police, however we have our own expectations regarding the reporting of suspected or disclosed child abuse as set out in this policy.
- 2.2. Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989:
 - a) When dealing with matters of suspected child abuse, the well-being of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
 - b) Any person who believes a child or young person has been or is likely to be abused may report the matter to the Police. The person making the report, provided it is made in good faith, is protected from any civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings related to the report.

3. Identifying Child Abuse

- 3.1. *Physical Abuse*
Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm.
- 3.2. *Emotional Abuse*
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child having a severe adverse effect on the child's emotional development.
- 3.3. *Sexual Abuse*
Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including non-contact acts.
- 3.4. *Neglect*
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, causing long term harm to the child's health or development.

4. Reporting Expectations

- 4.1. All staff (and volunteers) are responsible for identifying and responding to concerns. Any issues of suspected child abuse must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner – the first and paramount consideration is the safety of the child.
- 4.2. Should a staff member or volunteer suspect that a child is being abused, or a child discloses abuse to a staff member or volunteer, the suspicion or disclosure must be documented and reported as soon as practicable to your manager.

- 4.3. The manager will assess the matter (in consultation with others as appropriate, including the board) to determine whether it is appropriate to report the matter to the Police and OT. If it is appropriate to do so the matter will be reported.
- 4.4. Although parents or caregivers of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:
 - a) the parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator;
 - b) it is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence; or
 - c) there is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed.
- 4.5. If it is an emergency and you suspect a child is at serious risk, or a crime against a child has been committed, this must be reported directly to the Police as soon as possible.

5. Managing allegations against staff

- 5.1. Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way towards a child must be taken seriously; the safety of the child will be the first and paramount consideration. The board will be notified without delay where an allegation is made, and we will refer suspected situations of child abuse by staff to the Police or Child Youth and Family, and OT.
- 5.2. Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration.