

Child Protection Policy

Statement of Commitment: All staff at Country Kids are committed to the prevention of abuse and neglect and are committed to always act in the best interest and the well-being of all children.

Policy Principals -

- The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- We recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- 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.
- 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 are consistent and high quality.
- We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- 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.
- We are committed to promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- Country Kids supports the sharing of information provided all appropriate steps have been taken.

Purpose Statement:

- We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care and are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority when investigating suspected or alleged abuse.
- We support the roles of the New Zealand Police (the Police) and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.
- We support families/whānau to protect their children.
- We provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.

Related Documents:

1, Country Kids child protection policy is to be used in conjunction with the following existing policies and documents which are in the Operations Manual Policy which is at Reception:

Cyber safe and Cyber Secure Policy

Recruitment Policy

Excursions Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Privacy Policy

Communications Policy

2. This child protection policy adheres to the following Acts:

Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989

Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Amendment Act 2010

Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

The Privacy Act 1993

Employment Relations Act 2000

Human Rights Act 1993

The Child Protection Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Ministry of Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008

The Treaty of Waitangi

Scope of the Policy:

This Policy applies to all children who are enrolled or attending Country Kids and all other children who staff may come into contact with during the course of their work. This policy applies to staff, teachers, management, Board members, students and volunteers.

Definitions:

Child means a child or young person under the age of 18. The term Child within this policy refers to any child Country Kids comes into contact with through the course of our work.

Staff is defined as those who are employed directly by or volunteer for Country Kids as well as staff and volunteers who are working with children in the care and supervision of our Centres.

'Designated Person for Child Protection' DPCP – A person assigned by Country Kids who holds the responsibility for Child Protection.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Designated person for Child Protection (DPCP) for Country Kids is:

Nickie Hodgkinson Centre Manager and in

her absence

Margaret Honey Curriculum Leader will be (DPCP).

The Designated Person for Child Protection's responsibilities include:

1. DPCP will be available for immediate advice and support for staff who may have child protection concerns. If immediate contact is not available but required then the person concerned should contact Oranga Tamariki 0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774). If immediate advice is not required then the DPCP will respond as soon as possible.
2. Ensure that the Policy is read and reviewed and signed by all staff members annually, and comprises part of the induction of all new employees.

3. Ensure that the Policy is available for the members of our society to read and review annually.
4. Ensuring required staff have received child protection training annually and that this is recorded. Staff are kept informed up to date with current legislation and relevant documentation.
5. Maintaining a good working relationship with Oranga Tamariki, local Police, and other local external agencies involved in child protection.
6. Maintain updated phone numbers for Oranga Tamariki, Police and other community agencies that may assist children and families Ensuring that the list of contacts for child protection advice and support are kept up to date.
7. Be available to staff to discuss concerns about a child
8. Together with the relevant staff member, record concerns on a Report Concern form and ensure a review of these concerns occurs on a weekly basis at the weekly staff meeting.
9. Ensure that relevant resources and information relating to child abuse, neglect, protection issues and children's physical and emotional wellbeing are available within the centre for staff and parents/whānau.
10. Maintain a confidential file in the centre to record all concerns regarding safety of children. This information will be kept for seven (7) years following the end of the child's enrolment.
11. Follow up any reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki within 3 days of the referral date if no response has been received from them.

Important Contacts:

Designated Person for Child Protection:

Nickie Hodgkinson 0278826909 nickie@countrykids.org.nz

Margaret Honey 0276819808 marg@countrykids.org.nz

Child, Youth and Family

0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774) *Specific phone line for Education Sector*

0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)

Fax 09 9141221

Email cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz

Police 111

Motueka 03 528 1220

Richmond 03 543 9500
Child Protection Team 03 5463840

See Appendix First Aid for Families

Definition of Child Abuse:

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Act, 1994, section 2, defines child abuse as;

"...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".

Below are some indicators of abuse, these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

a) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorizing a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others which includes a child experiencing domestic violence.

b) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

c) Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example , rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

d) Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: to action, emotion or basic needs.

e) Intimate Partner Violence

This refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. Such behaviour includes:

- Acts of physical aggression - such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating.
- Psychological abuse - such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating.
- Forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion.
- Various controlling behaviours - such as isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting their access to information or assistance.

A child who experiences intimate partner violence between parents/caregivers is being emotionally abused and is also more likely to be directly abused.

d) Cumulative harm

Cumulative harm refers to the effects of patterns of circumstances and events in a child or young person's life which diminishes their sense of safety, stability and wellbeing.

Cumulative harm is compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or layers of neglect. Constant daily impact on the child or young person can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of their life.

Child Protection Procedures:

***If a child is in immediate danger contact the Police 111
immediately***

Any issue of suspected child abuse must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the Childs safety is paramount.

The DPCP is responsible for ensuring that the procedure for reporting child abuse is effective and timely.

This section guides staff what to do if there is a concern about a child, if a child discloses abuse or neglect or if a child is in immediate danger.

In a situation where there is a concern for a child or a child discloses abuse or neglect:

1. Staff will not work alone in situations where there is a concern for a child.
2. If there is a concern for a child/ a child discloses, staff must act to ensure the child's safety.
3. If the child is in immediate danger call the police on 111 and follow their advice.
4. If a child discloses abuse it is important that staff listen and reassure the child. Do not question excessively or promise confidentiality. Further information can be found in the Child Protection folder.
5. Record immediately the concern or disclosure in the child's own words, using fact and observations, not opinions. (Complete Record of Issue/concern in Child Protection Folder)
6. Consult immediately with DPCP. If the DPCP is not available, the staff member will consult with a colleague.
7. Concerns or disclosures of child abuse and neglect must be recorded on a Record of Concern (see Child Protection Folder) and stored in the Register of Concerns.
8. The DPCP working with the staff member, will contact Oranga Tamariki for advice, if required, on EDU-ASSIST 0508 332774, or main call centre on 0508326459. The advice of Oranga Tamariki will be followed and all actions recorded on the Record of concerns. If CYF say no record of concerns is needed and you still think one should be sent the DPCP will send one anyway.
9. If a Report of concern to Oranga Tamariki is required, the DPCP will complete the referral together with the relevant staff member. All paperwork, advice and actions will be recorded on the Record of Concerns.
10. Reports of Concern to Oranag Tamariki will be faxed or e-mailed to 09 9141211 or cfycallcentre@cyf.govt.nz

11. If the matter does not require a referral to Oranaga Tamariki, the situation will be monitored, information analysed and reviewed on a weekly basis by the relevant staff member and the DPCP at the weekly staff meeting, and all reviews and actions recorded in the register of concerns.
12. If appropriate, referrals to community agencies will be completed by the DPCP and relevant staff member.
13. Unless it poses a risk to the child, parents and caregivers will be informed of all decisions and concerns.
14. Any staff member can make a Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki and Family at any time if they have concerns about a child that they feel are not being adequately managed under this policy

(Please refer to Quick Reference for responding to child abuse which in the Child Protection Folder)

Guidelines for informing parents:

1. Parents will be informed of concerns except where the child's welfare is likely to be threatened. Situations where you would not inform the parent: Parent is the perpetrator, evidence maybe destroyed or Child will face further violence.
2. At all-time staff will maintain honesty and openness and clarity about how the child is being effected.
3. Country Kids staff will act upon advice given by Oranga Tamariki, or other support organisations.
4. Keeping in mind that the child's welfare is paramount, parents may be consulted at any time about changes in the child's behaviour at Country Kids. The main reason is to ascertain causes, and to support the child through periods of change in family circumstances etc.
5. Staff will have available for parents known referral pathways in the community of Motueka and Richmond. The DPCP will keep well networked and connected with these pathways.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

1. Country Kids supports the sharing of information provided all appropriate steps have been taken.
2. Information received about a child will be treated in a discreet and confidential manner.
3. Country Kids recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements of the Privacy Act, Oranag Tamariki Act and other statutes.
4. The Privacy Act 1993 and the Oranga Tamariki Act allow information to be shared to keep children safe when there are concerns about a child.
5. Section 15 and 16 of Oranga Tamariki Act, states any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to a Social Worker or the Police. Provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
6. Where another organisation is asking for information regarding a child/family attending Country Kids, the request will be passed onto the DPCP who will give information to organisations if it is in the best interest of the child. (See Privacy Policy).

Responding to an Allegation against a staff member:

1. The Manager or Chairperson will respond to suspicions and allegations of child abuse by a member of staff in a manner which best ensures children's immediate and long-term safety and will treat suspicions or allegations against a staff member with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person.
2. The Manager or Chairperson will not act alone, and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to Police or Child, Youth and Family. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organisation will collude to protect an adult or organisation.
3. The allegation will be dealt with by 2 people - one will act on behalf of the child and one will act on behalf of the staff member.

4. 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;
5. The Manager or Chair person must ensure that the suspected individual is immediately suspended without prejudice, as a precautionary measure.
6. When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both staff and children's rights are to be attended to. This means the safety of the child is of first concern, and that the staff member must have access to legal and professional advice.
7. The person managing the child abuse issue will not be the same person that is managing the employment issue. *(See flow Chart - Quick Reference for responding to child abuse in The Child Protection Policy).*
8. The Manager or Chairperson will adhere to the principles of the Employment Contract's Act and give the staff member all information regarding their rights.
9. The Manager or Chairperson recognises the added stress to fellow staff in such a situation, and will ensure support is available.
10. The Manager or Chairperson will liaise with Child, Youth and Family and the Police regarding the process and progress of the investigation.
11. If the Manager or Chairperson is aware that a member of staff is has placed on precautionary suspension also works with children for another organisation, either as an employee or a volunteer, it should ensure that the other organisation is informed of the suspension and the subsequent outcome. Consultation with Oranga Tamariki or the Police will determine how this information is conveyed.
12. If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff, which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.
13. Records will be kept of any comments, complaints or allegations by the complainant and any follow-up action taken.

14. The Manager or Chairperson is advised to ensure records are kept of any comments by the child complaints and /or allegations, and follow-up action.

15. Allegations of suspected abuse against an employee of the Centre will always be notified to:

- a. Oranga Tamariki
- b. New Zealand Police
- c. Ministry of Education Local Office

The Manager or chairperson will continue to consult with them for the duration of the allegation and subsequent process.

16. When it has been determined the Manager or Chairperson should pursue the matter as an employer, they should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. It is vital that the employer should refer to the relevant employee contract and it is advisable to seek legal support in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action. The accused employee/volunteer is to be immediately suspended to protect all children at the service and the employee concerned.

17. The Manager or Chairperson should take care to ensure actions taken by the Centre do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by any external agency.

17. The Manager maintain a close liaison with OT and the police to achieve this.

(Please refer to Quick Reference for allegations of child abuse against a staff member).

Collection of Children and Access Arrangements:

- Parents are to be reminded that they need to keep their child's collection details up to date on their enrolment form.
- Parents to notify the teachers of any changes to their child's collection routines.
- If there is no legal access order, staff cannot lawfully withhold any child from their parent.

- In the event of a person attempting to uplift a child without parental consent the police will be rung immediately, and staff will ensure the safety of the child.
- If there is an access agreement, staff will use their best efforts to protect a child without endangering other children or staff members.
- When centre staff are informed of a child being the subject of a custody arrangement or dispute, they will explain this section of the policy to the parent and ensure they have completed the Custodial Statement section of the child's enrolment form and a copy of the court order is held on the child's file.
- All staff will be informed and the child's name and contact details clearly displayed on the office notice board. At no time will a child who is the subject of an access order be left in the building with only one staff member.

Recruitment and Employment

Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with Vulnerable Children Act 2014. This will include the 7 step safety check: police vet, identity verification, risk assessment, contacting Education Council, references and interview. A work history will be sought and previous employers will be contacted. Please see our Safe Recruitment and Employment Policy.

QUICK REFERENCE FOR RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

ABUSE SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED

Child abuse or potential child abuse is suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed.

Is an immediate response required to ensure the child's safety?
(If unsure consult immediately)

NO

Record details of the disclosure or concern on a ***"Record of Concern"*** form

Inform the designated person for Child Protection

Nickie Hodgkinson 0278826909
or
Marg Honey 0276819808

Decision whether to notify Child Youth and Family

No

1. Record Actions Taken
2. Review of Concern by Designated Person for Child Protection
3. Record Actions Taken



YES

Ensure the immediate safety of the child and contact
Immediately
Police 111
Or CYF 0508326459

Inform the Designated person for Child Protection
Nickie Hodgkinson 0278826909
or
Marg Honey 0276819808

Record Actions Taken

Yes

1. Report of Concern made to Child Youth and Family
2. Record Actions Taken
3. Review of Concern by Designated Person for Child Protection
4. Record Actions Taken