

Mangawhai Nature Education Child Safeguarding Policy

Summary

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse or maltreatment, is a paramount goal of this organisation. This policy provides guidance to staff on how to identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child, including possible abuse or neglect.

The interests of the child will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect. This organisation commits to support the statutory agencies Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and the New Zealand Police to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy.

Our Designated Person for Child Protection, **Melissa Hambly**, will be responsible for the maintenance and annual review of this policy, in addition to carrying out the responsibilities outlined in this policy. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training.

This policy was authorised by Melissa Hambly on 14/8/23.

A digital copy can be found on our google drive at [Child Safeguarding Policy v1 26/6/23](#)

The policy is due to be reviewed annually - next review- August 2024.

It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.

When our website goes live we will make a copy available online.

Purpose, scope and principles

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 Child, Youth and Family 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.

Definitions

Child abuse: Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential or

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effect of serious harm to the child. This document supports the Identification of possible abuse or neglect:

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Support-for-families/Support-programmes/Working-together-seminars/Working-together-guide-2021.pdf>

This resource produced by Child, Youth and Family is for people in social service agencies, schools, healthcare organisations, community and other groups who have close contact with children and families/whānau. It includes useful information about identifying possible child abuse and an assessment framework.

Responsibility

All staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children and to maintain this behaviour. • Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff will be taken seriously and reported to {Melissa} who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined in this policy.

- Any concern of abuse of a child will follow the Child Protection Procedures outlined in this Child Protection Policy page 3. In the event of an allegation of abuse by a staff member, a report of concern will be made to the Police and Oranga Tamariki.

- M Hambly must immediately assess risk before allowing contact with the person making the allegation. A risk assessment must be undertaken to determine what level of access that person should have, if any, to members of the public in their capacity as a member of staff of Mangawhai Nature Education

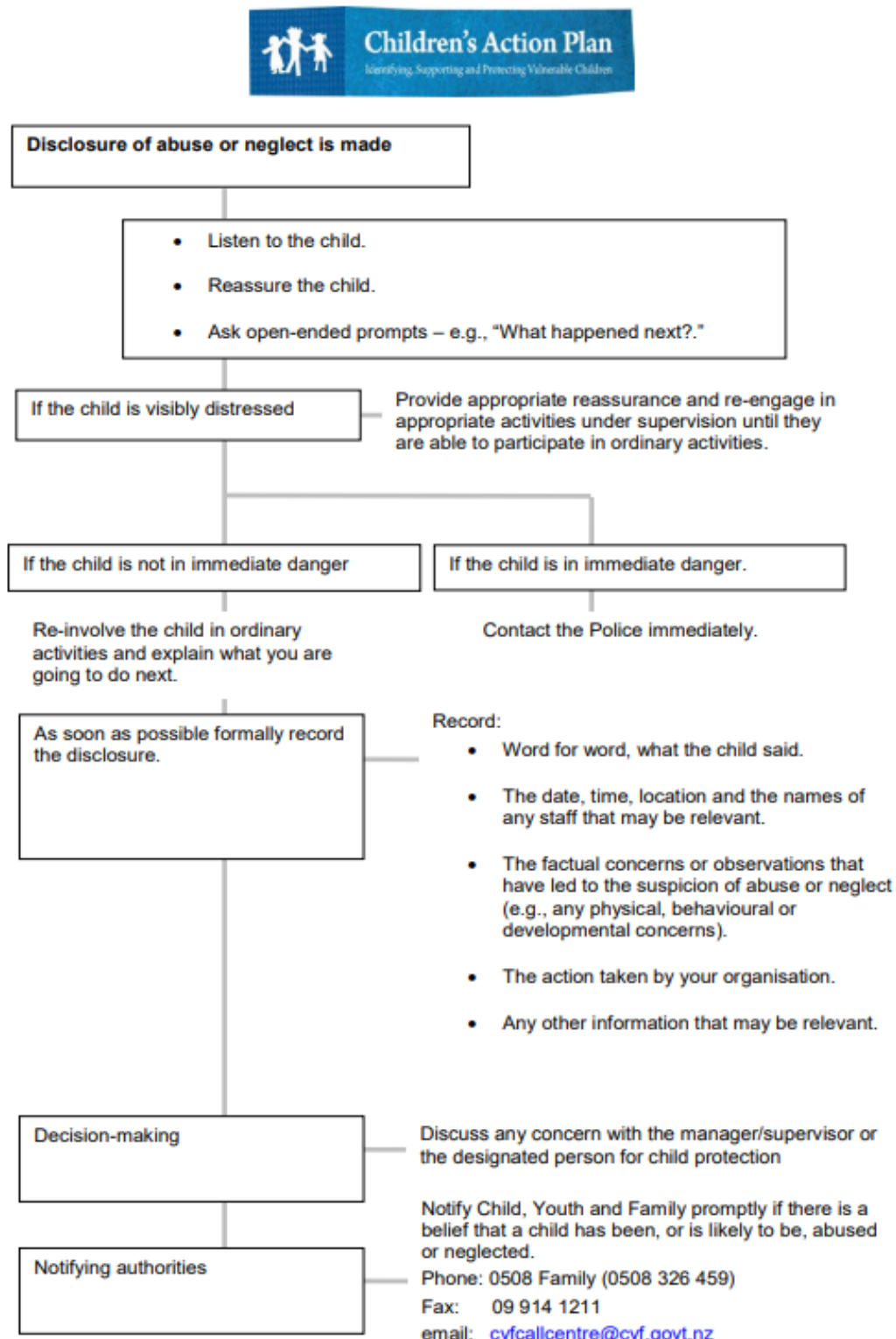
- In all child protection cases Mangawhai Nature Education will cooperate fully with both Oranga Tamariki and the Police in their investigations and assessments.

- If the Police decide to undertake a criminal investigation then the member of staff may be suspended. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence is gathered that might prejudice the criminal, or Oranga Tamariki, investigation.

- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then an internal disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken subject to internal disciplinary procedures.

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Responding to suspected abuse or neglect



Te Whai Community House: 09 431 3459 or
027 220 0889

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Allegation against a member of staff

Will follow the same process and ensure the child is kept safe, management may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law. We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

Disclosure/allegation of child abuse by a staff member

- Employee will be advised of their right to seek support/advice from a union or other appropriate representatives.
- Management to contemplate removal of employee from the programme environment, subject to the employment contract.
- Management to maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki or the Police.

Recruitment

Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. This will include:

- a police vet;
- Identity verification.
- If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.
- References collected

Code of Conduct

Media

Consent from parents / guardians will be gained for photographs, or videos. These will be shared with others within the group.

Permission must be obtained to share publicly in promotional material.

Storage and sharing of images:

- Photographs or recordings of children and young people must be kept secure and not shared unless for the purpose the image was taken in accordance with the signed parental consent form.
- Photographs and recordings must only be shared with approved staff members, e.g. the person responsible for marketing, social media or newsletters.

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- Photographs and recordings must not be stored on personal computers, laptops. Teachers forward images to Melissa Hambly and parent guardians. Then remove images from personal devices.
- In situations when parental consent is not given, it must be respected and communicated with staff members to ensure the rights of the child are safeguarded and protected.
- We will remind students they can say no to having their photographs taken and to let their teacher know at the time.

Contact - Social media and physical contact

- Do not communicate with children and young people outside of the school setting, contact their parents or caregivers.
- If you come across a child or young person out of your work setting, apply the same Code of Conduct to protect yourself and the child or young person.
- Always work within the view and hearing distance of others. Never spend one on one time with a young person.
- Never leave children and young people waiting to be collected alone, or with people who are not an approved staff member or volunteer. Ensure the child leaves with a guardian / parent. Check with parents if a friend has come to pick them up, or a family member we have not met before.
- Do not use any unnecessary, unwanted or inappropriate physical contact. Unless they come to you and need comforting? Always in front of others.
Such as:
 - tickling
 - grabbing
 - intimate care (when the child or young person can care for themselves)
 - unnecessary cuddling

Staff Members may have access to confidential information about children in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. This may be highly sensitive and private information about them or their family and whānau. Care and consideration must be taken with the sharing of information. It is important that if a child is at risk of, or suffering, abuse then that information is passed to the appropriate person to take action.

- To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets).
- Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times. Visitors should be monitored at all times by staff. Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it. Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from our organisation's premises, or from the programme we provide, without parental consent.

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Staff Training

Name	Signature	Date

References	
Code of conduct	https://sportnz.org.nz/media/3603/policy-5-code-of-conduct.pdf
Safer organisations Safer children Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations	https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/
Child protection policies for organisations - Oranga tamariki	https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-act-requirements/child-protection-policies/