

Child Protection Policy

Rationale:

Coastlands Preschool is committed to the prevention of child abuse, to the protection of our tamariki. This commitment means that the interest and wellbeing of our tamariki is our prime consideration when any decision is made about suspected child abuse. This policy provides guidance on our shared responsibilities and how to identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child at Coastlands Preschool, including possible abuse or neglect. Everyone at Coastlands Preschool has a role to play in protecting our tamariki and keeping them safe.

Objective:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a safe environment - free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse
- Proactively prevent child abuse and neglect in our centre community
- Give confidence in identifying and addressing any concerns of child abuse and neglect
- To comply with legislation in place for the protection of tamariki, education and early childhood services regulations, health and safety legislation and other applicable legislation

Te Whāriki 2017

Well-being - Goal 4: Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm

Procedures:

- **All staff will complete a child protection course every three years.**
- Establish and maintain relationships with agencies in the community who specialise in the support and counselling of families and will refer on, tamariki who are suspected to be victims of abuse.
- Centre to include Child Protection workshops in their Professional Development. for all employees
- Early Childhood Services Regulations state 1:5 kaiako child ratios for tamariki 0-2 and 1:10 kaiako child ratio for tamariki aged 2-5. Coastlands Preschool maintains higher kaiako/child ratios than those specified by the 2008 Regulations.
- New kaiako will undergo required safety checks that comply with the Children's Act Oranga Tamariki (2014).
- Our premises are designed to ensure children can be readily observed by supervising kaiako.
- Parents at Coastlands Preschool are encouraged to visit at any time during the day. Parents settling tamariki into the centre are encouraged to observe and take part in our programme until such time as they feel secure enough to leave.
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are able to collect tamariki from the centre.
- If a child is to be collected by someone other than the persons on their enrolment form, parents/legal guardians are required to give written or verbal permission and photo evidence of the adult to the teaching team stating their relationship to the child.
- Written permission from parents is required for their child(ren) to participate in centre outings.
- Information regarding a child will be shared to both parents unless there are any custodial arrangements in place which will limit this.
- A complaints procedure ensures issues of concern are dealt with appropriately.
- Parents are encouraged to express their feelings and concerns so that the operation of Coastlands Preschool can be constantly improved.
- Visiting students are not allowed to change or toilet any child unsupervised and are not to be left alone with any child or group of tamariki.
- Regular relievers will be allowed to change or toilet tamariki and can be left alone with groups at the discretion of the centre manager or team leader.
- Parents will be notified of the presence of any student kaiako
- Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern kaiako may note about a child. Full, relevant, contextual factors are recorded in our confidential 'concern book'
- We realise and accept our own limitations in dealing with issues of abuse. Professional agencies such as the Police and the Oranga Tamariki - Ministry of Children will be involved in suspected cases of abuse. These agencies are sought for their specialised knowledge.
- If a team member believes a child to be in immediate danger, the police will be phoned
- If any team members see a child being abused, observe signs of abuse/neglect, or a child reports being abused or neglected, we will follow the reporting process for child abuse, as detailed at the conclusion of this policy

Identifying possible abuse or neglect

Child Abuse is defined in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child’s emotional, psychological or social well-being and sense of worth is continually battered. This includes confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment that may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. We also include exposure to Family Violence in this category.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning/development. It is a failure to provide for a child’s basic needs.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be caused from smacking, punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family, and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose. There are two different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

- **Contact abuse** involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes: sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not; rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus; forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity; making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.
- **Non-contact abuse** involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing. It includes: encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts; not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others; meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them; online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images; allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images; showing pornography to a child; sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation).

Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

It is essential to continue to maintain a confidential record, including observations of the child’s behaviour for some time following an allegation or incident. The process for responding to child abuse is given in the ‘Reporting Process for Child Abuse’ on page 32 of this document.

An incident report template is also provided on page 33 and 34 of this document. All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Person in Charge as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the child(ren) and record the report.

If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the Person in Charge shall notify Oranga Tamariki: 0508 326 459. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 111.

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies (i.e., Oranga Tamariki or the Police), this child protection policy will also help staff to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern. In many of these cases the involvement of statutory agencies would be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families/whānau. Throughout New Zealand statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services and it is important for our organisation to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau in a manner proportionate to the level of need and risk.

Staff members will discuss suspicions with a senior staff member. Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.

- The following measures will be taken by all kaiako regarding suspected abuse or neglect:
 - All allegations of child abuse/neglect will be taken seriously.
 - No kaiako will act alone regarding suspected child abuse/neglect. Notify the manager immediately
 - Record in writing, the exact details of behaviour or language used by the child.
 - Date and sign the records, identifying the child by initials and birth date only. Manager and staff member to co-sign.
 - Keep details confidential to the manager and staff member involved, or on a “need to know” basis.
 - If appropriate, record further observations to build up a clear impression of the situation.
 - If the centre manager suspects a child is unsafe, she/he will report it to the Ministry of Children, Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT) - 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)
 - If not appropriate to approach parent/caregiver/guardian, the supervisor will ensure the parent/caregiver/guardian is informed by the appropriate person(s).
 - Support will be given to the family in any way possible.
 - Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by law.
 - If there are any allegations of abuse by a Coastlands Preschool employee, the authorities will be informed immediately and the employee will be suspended while the matter is investigated.

Ongoing care for vulnerable children

Ensure the child's immediate safety - do not alert the suspected abuser.

- If a child tells of abuse; listen; have a conversation - don't interrogate them.
- Say you're glad they told you and you're sorry it happened
- Let them know it's not their fault and that you'll do your best to help
- Do not ask further questions
- Do not put words in the child's mouth
- Allow them to tell only as much as they want
- Continue to support the child
- Ignore or distract negative behaviour

If a child's behaviour affects other children's health and well-being at the Centre, a parent meeting will be called by the manager to discuss the situation. The final decision of future action will be made by Management and the Child Safety Team, with consideration to the fact that the manager has the right to exclude any child if his/her behaviour poses a significant danger to others.

The Basic Principles for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse

- Believe what children tell you and what you see.
- Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This may mean contacting the Oranga Tamariki or the police if you think there is an immediate risk of the child being abused again.
- Record clear concerns and observations, factual statements with dates The priorities in responding to any suspicion of child abuse are:
 - 1. Reassure the child that it was all right for them to talk to you. Have a conversation but do not interview the child
 - 2. Share the information with someone you trust that also knows the child (centre supervisor)
 - 3. Protect the child's privacy by limiting the number of people who will be involved in discussions
 - 4. Immediately write up the incident or what was said in a confidential record We recommend that you do not make decisions alone. Consult with someone experienced. If there is no short-term risk, take time to consult thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision.
- Act on your concerns. Don't leave it to someone else or hope it won't happen again. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.
- Seek support for yourself. The tasks and situation will be stressful.
- Where abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the family, do not initially inform the family, but ensure that the appropriate person informs them at the appropriate time under guidance from Oranga Tamariki.

Staff Selection

- The Centre will employ staff only after an interview and thorough checking on the applicant's work history. This will include making contact both with referees and past employers. This will be done with the applicant's consent.
- All employees will have been passed through a 7 Point Safety Check including
 1. Verification of identity (including previous identities)
 2. An interview
 3. Information about work history
 4. Referee information
 5. Information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body
 6. A New Zealand Police Vet will be carried out every three years (carried out as part of registration renewal for registered kaiako)
 7. A risk assessment
- All staff not holding current registration with the NZ Teaching Council will have a Police Vet Check every three years.
- Management will ensure when selecting staff that they have the skills and attributes to ensure children's safety.
- When employing staff, the applicant's referees will be contacted prior to employment.
- All staff, including volunteers, will be required to read and abide by the Child Protection Policy.

Parent Involvement

- The Centre has an open door policy where parents/whānau are welcome to visit at any time and to be involved as much as possible within the centre.
- Parents and visitors are not permitted to undertake any caregiving routines with other people's children or be alone with them.
- If any teacher is concerned that a parent/adult collecting a child may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs they will seek support from another staff member and:
 - Ask the parent/adult if anyone can be contacted to take them home or a taxi fare offered.
 - In the case of parents/adults where the above is not satisfactory and the safety of children and staff is at risk, the Police will be informed.
- Children cannot leave the centre without written permission from parents, except in an emergency. If a non-custodial parent/guardian wishes to collect a child from the Centre the custodial parent will be informed before the child leaves the Centre.

Professionalism Procedures

- Management will encourage staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.
- At least once each year, the Child Protection Policy will be discussed at a staff meeting to ensure staff are familiar with the policy and are continually reminded of their responsibilities.
- The management team is committed to ensuring staff are familiar with this policy, and is aware of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse. All new staff will familiarise themselves with this policy during their induction process.
- If parents have concerns about the treatment of a child by our staff, they are encouraged to make this known to the Manager/Supervisor/Head Teacher, who will ensure that the matter is investigated and acted on immediately as per the Complaints Procedure.

Preventative Education

- All kaiako follow the Adult Conduct Policy and Positive Guidance Policy which promotes positive guidance of children's behaviour and keeping children safe
- Staff work as a team to ensure they can support each other in managing children's challenging behaviours. If a teacher is feeling stressed by the behaviour of a child/ren they should immediately communicate this to another member of the teaching team
- This policy will be discussed every year in a staff meeting
- At the above meeting, the manager or assistant manager will run a session on child protection for staff
- Information is provided on the prevention and recognition of child abuse and procedures on how to respond in the event of allegations or recognition of abuse as set in Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children guidelines.
- Education of children and parents/whānau is important in the prevention of child abuse. We encourage parents to make use of education programmes organised by agencies in the community

Guidelines for Prevention of Child Abuse

Clear guidelines will be given for protecting tamariki from abusive situations, and for protecting staff from unfounded accusations of abuse:

These will include:

1. Children will be encouraged to perform their own hygiene and toileting routines as age and independence permit
2. Educators will endeavour to be visible at all times while interacting with tamariki
3. Doors will be left open during toileting and changing routines
4. Children will be accompanied by more than one adult on all walks and excursions
5. Child abuse policies and pamphlets will be available to parents/caregivers/guardians
6. Books and songs about personal safety will be used regularly with tamariki
7. Visitors to the centre, including contractors, will not be left alone with tamariki.

Management Practices

1. There is no smacking or hitting of tamariki by staff members
2. No child is to be put in solitary confinement, immobilised or deprived of food as punishment
3. Positive reinforcement and guidance should be implemented at all times and any blaming, harsh language, belittling and degrading by staff members avoided
4. Children deserve the respect to be listened to by staff members when they have something to say
5. Any conflict between tamariki should be dealt with by: redirecting and letting each child have his/her say while the other listens without interruption, as age and independence permits.
6. All staff undertake professional development in relation to identifying and responding to vulnerability and child abuse, or other child protection courses

Allegations or concerns about staff

If a staff member is seen using inappropriate physical contact with a child, or there is reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the service, or any other person:

- has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children; or
- in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection.

The Manager or Assistant Manager will:

- stand the staff member involved down immediately until an investigation has been carried out. This means the person involved is excluded from coming into contact with the children participating in the service
- contact Oranga Tamariki and the police immediately
- Report the incident to the Ministry of Education immediately
- Inform the Teaching Council if the person involved is a registered teacher
- The Manager/Supervisor will undertake to implement the requirements of **Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008** to ensure children are protected from ill-treatment and their health and safety is maintained.

Protection of Staff

Coastlands Preschool is committed to providing a safe working environment for all our staff and ensuring that employee privacy is protected. We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff safety. The centre will not disclose personal information (including personal address, phone numbers and personal circumstances) of any employee, to any child, parent or member of the public. Information will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the office and only employees with specific authority will be permitted access to confidential employee information.

We require staff to be observant. If you have a concern regarding a child (ie observation of an unusual behaviour, evidence of injury etc) then you must document this concern and pass it onto your Supervisor. We recommend that staff report any such observations immediately to the Centre Supervisor who will help them determine the appropriate course of action. We recommend that you don't act alone. Your written observation/statement will be retained by the centre as confidential information and kept on file for our records.

We recommend that you consult with other team members and the manager to make a final decision whether it is appropriate to report your observation to an external agency (guidelines throughout this policy). Your statement/identity

will not be revealed by the centre to any third party (except any agencies required to support the centre) and only in consultation with you or as required by law.

For the protection of staff who, through the course of their work, are caring for children's bodily needs the following should be noted. All details of care given in respect to children's genital areas must be recorded with date, time and action taken, as soon as possible after the event. This includes: washing genitals (toileting sheet), applying medication to genitals (medicine book), inspection of genital areas if soreness, itching or injury is suspected (accident book). Children under two years old have this information recorded on their daily record sheet. Teachers are not to be left alone with children where a situation could arise where allegations of sexual abuse could be made.

Never photograph a child's ano-genital area, even as a record of your concern.

Child Safety Team

A Child Safety Team of at least two staff members is responsible for ensuring the reviewing and implementing the policy of the Centre. These staff members are given initial training in child abuse and are to attend refresher meetings as they become available, or organised by the Manager. The team is to ensure that policy and implementation of policy is culturally sensitive and appropriate. Any member of the team can call a meeting at any time.

Advice

Any member of the Child Safety Team may talk unofficially to any appropriate health professional in confidence before the referral procedures are implemented.

Visitors to the Centre

Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that visitors to the centre know what adult behaviour is deemed appropriate.

Inappropriate touching for visitors is: hugs, kisses, tickling, stroking, sitting child on knee, carrying children, changing children's clothes.

Appropriate touching is: holding hands (e.g. taking children inside), helping children in or out of a swing, physical removal from potentially dangerous situations.

Team Leaders arrange with kaiako to inform visiting students of our policy, and speak personally to the students where possible before any students arrive. Visitors, trainees etc. never toilet or change nappies.

Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

	Indicators of potential abuse may include	Indicators of potential neglect may include
Physical signs	e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.	e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight.
Developmental delays	e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills.	
Emotional abuse/neglect	e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm.	
Behavioural concerns	e.g., age- inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression, sudden change in behaviour.	e.g., disengagement/ neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression.

The child talking about things that indicate abuse	Sometimes called an allegation or disclosure.	
Neglectful supervision		e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to
Medical neglect		e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues.

Inappropriate Material

All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material. This includes:

- Checking magazines that are brought into the centre for inappropriate content
- Ensuring children do not have access to the internet, unless with a kaiako present
- Ensuring that conversations that are not appropriate for children to hear take place where no children are present (e.g. staffroom)

(Criterion HS31)/ Reg. 46

HS32

To be reviewed every three years

Date November 2019

Review Date June 2022

Discuss September 2020, June 2021

Reporting Process for Child Abuse

