

	Policy
	Policy Category: Health & Safety
	Date Created 10 th October 2015
	Child Protection

The purpose of this operational policy is to ensure all possible actions are taken to protect children from abuse and neglect. This policy should be read alongside the procedure for responding to allegations of abuse and/or neglect.

Position Statements

This centre is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. 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 Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.

We support families to protect their children.

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

Issue Outline

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.

Definitions

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.”

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

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth
- 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.”

From Child Matters website: childmatters.org.nz

Detail

The Manager will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct.
- Respect the rights of those involved during any investigation.
- Maintain and increase staff and parental awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse, including learning about appropriate touching.
- Immediately investigate and fully and objectively record in writing, any reports of incidents, allegations or suspicions of child abuse. The Manager will, where appropriate, seek the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, Policy and/or other professional agencies in order to conduct a full investigation.
- Report child abuse to the Police or Oranga Tamariki (see *ECC Process for Reporting Child Abuse*)
- Inform parents after discussing the best way to do this with Police or Oranga Tamariki advisors. If a family member or close associate of the family or whānau is suspected of child abuse, the parent(s) may not initially be informed, but the centre will ensure that the information is disclosed by an appropriate person at an appropriate time.
- Suspend a staff member under suspicion until a full investigation can be completed.
- Carry out police vetting checks in accordance with the Education Standards Act 2001 on staff before appointing them.
- Give no persons, other than employed staff over the age of 17 years, tasks that involve nappy changing, toileting or responsibility for the supervision of children.
- Ensure that staff and other adults visiting or working in the centre are well supported and visible in the activities they perform with children. While the centre respects the privacy of our children, staff and visitors, visibility will be given priority to ensure the safety of all concerned.
- Respond appropriately to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection/touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of children must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job.
- Ensure no child is taken from the centre by any staff member or adult, without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency where clearance has been obtained from either the Manager or the Owner.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Ensure the centre's procedures protect staff from unjustified allegations of abuse.
- Ensure the centre has resources for children and adults on child abuse.

Staff will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Familiarise themselves with this centre policy.

- Immediately notify the Manager if they observe signs of child abuse or anyone reports to them any suspicions of child abuse of children at the centre, or a pattern of neglect or concerns is identified.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct.
- Respond appropriately to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection/touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of children must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job.
- Never take a child from the centre without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency where clearance has been obtained from either the Manager or the Owner.

Protected Disclosure

- When a staff member or associate brings a case of child abuse to the attention of the center or the authorities, our centre will not disclose the name of the person without their permission unless it is to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and is necessary to do so in the interests of the child.

Alignment with Other Policies

- Personnel policies – police checks and careful employment of temporary staff, casual staff, friends of friends, volunteers
- Safety Checking of Staff
- Outings and excursions policy
- Information & Complaints policy.

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

Licensing Criteria 2008, Health and Safety, Child Protection documentation required:

- **HS31:** A process for the prevention of child abuse and a procedure for responding to suspected child abuse. Documents are consistent with Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police guidelines.
- **HS32:** all practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).

Vulnerable Children Act 2014

See Ministry of Education child abuse information on:

http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/~media/Educate/Files/Reference%20Downloads/Lead/Files/financial_Protocol_MoECYF2.pdf

Impacts of Policy on Staff, Parents and Children

Information, discussion, trusting relationships and clear procedures will strengthen the ability of staff, parents and children to work together to adequately protect all the children who attend the centre.

Alignment with the Philosophy of Little Einsteins

This policy is aligned with the centre's philosophy.

Implications and/or Risks for Little Einsteins

Failure to protect children will not only lead to lifelong damage for children, it will also seriously damage the reputation of the centre, its staff and the reputation of early childhood centres.

Implementation

We build discussions into enrolment procedures and staff meetings.

Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	Jo Maddison
Date:	10 th October 2019
Review Date:	Term Three 2020 (or when changes occur)
Consultation Undertaken:	Parents and caregivers, staff, local child abuse agencies.