



Child Protection Policy

Rationale:

Blenheim Early Childhood Centres Inc. recognises the family/whānau primary role in caring and protecting tamariki should be valued and maintained. We recognise safety and wellbeing as a priority.

Objective:

- To ensure children are protected from physical, emotional, sexual abuse and exposure to family violence. If child abuse is suspected, all staff will respond in an attempt to keep the child safe and report to the Centre Manager who is the designated person.
- To ensure staff feel safe to participate fully in this process, without concerns about confidentiality, respect, time or any other constraint.
- To involve and reassure parents, if appropriate.
- Respond to any allegations regarding members of staff or volunteers.

Policy

Preschool Practice:

1. BECC encourage regular professional support and learning to enable staff awareness in relation to child protection practice.
2. Child Protection Policy will be available on the BECC website to show our commitment to protect Tamariki from abuse and neglect.
3. BECC safely recruit staff and volunteers.
4. Head Teachers are the designated persons. There is more than one designated person within BECC, they can seek appropriate professional support from one another. Discussion and reflection are essential when there are child protection concerns.
5. Maintaining visibility within the preschool environment protects both children and staff. Ideally toilets should have open or half doors and window view.
6. Toileting duties will be carried out in accordance with the Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy.
7. Opportunities for staff and other adults to be alone with tamariki are kept to a minimum. If tamariki need to be showered, a second staff member must be within the vicinity.
8. Excursions will be carried out in accordance with the Education and Excursions Outside the Preschool Policy.
9. Visitors in the centre must sign in and out on the visitor's form which will include their name, reason for visit, time in and time out.
10. Parents have the right to know the identity of visitors within the centre. Centres will have a process to ensure this happens.
11. The Head Teacher (or person responsible) can at their discretion refuse entry to preschool.
12. Periodic detention workers are not permitted to be at the Preschool when there are children present.
13. When contractors are on site they must not have unsupervised access to tamariki.
14. All employees and volunteers must be fully vaccinated as in accordance with any Ministry of Health Mandate.
15. Police vet will be the responsibility of the Privacy Officer.
16. Any concerns returned with a police vet or risk assessment may result in the person's employment being delayed/ process halted or terminated. Board of Trustees members are not eligible to stand or hold a Board position if a police vet identifies a reason to halt their membership on Board.
17. Employees who do not hold a current Teaching Council registration must have a police vet and risk assessment completed before starting their employment.
18. Teachers who hold a current Teaching Council registration will have a risk assessment completed before starting their employment.
19. Board of trustee members who do not hold a current Teaching Council Registration must have a police vet and risk assessment completed before being elected/voted onto the Board.

20. Board of trustee members who hold a current Teaching Council Registration must have a risk assessment completed before being elected/voted onto the Board.
21. Before a student teacher is approved at the centres the Privacy Officer will have received documentation from their study provider confirming they have been screened and vetted under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
22. Police vets will be completed every 2 years (although legally it is 3 years).
23. The Privacy Officer at any time can request an employee to complete vetting forms.
24. All practical steps are taken to protect Tamariki from exposure of inappropriate material as in accordance with the Cyber Safe Policy.
25. Any person who believes that a child or young person has been, or likely to be, armed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), neglected, or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person, may report the matter directly to Oranga Tamariki or the police. *Legislation Act 2017.*

New and Existing Employees risk assessment

What must be done	New Employee	Existing Employee
Confirm their identity	The following will need to be checked as part of the candidate's application: • an original primary identity document (e.g. passport) and • a secondary identity document (e.g. driver's licence) If neither of these contain a photograph, use an identity referee. There is a requirement under the Act to check your early learning service's records to make sure the identity has not been claimed by anyone else.	Ask the employee to provide you with the following for checking: • an original primary identity document (e.g. passport) and • a secondary identity document (e.g. driver's licence) If neither of these contain a photograph, use an identity referee. There is a requirement under the Act to double check your early learning service's records to make sure the identity has not been claimed by anyone else.
Do an interview	Interview the candidate and ask specific questions to allow them to talk about their own attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.	Not required
Ask for work history	Ensure the candidate provides you with their work history ideally for the last five years. This should be contained in the candidate's C.V. or on the candidate's employment application form.	Not required
Check at least two referees	A referee cannot be related to the candidate or part of the candidate's extended family. Confirm with the referee that the information in the candidate's C.V. is correct. Ask the referee if they have any concerns regarding the candidate's suitability to work with children.	Not required
Get more information	Seek information from any relevant professional organisation or registration authority to confirm if the candidate is a current member, registered or certificated by the authority. For teachers you must do this by confirming with the Education Council that they have a current practising certificate.	Seek information from any relevant professional organisation or registration authority to confirm if the candidate is a current member, registered or certificated by the authority. For teachers you must do this by confirming with the Education Council that they have a current practising certificate.
Do a Police Vet	Police vet all employees however if the candidate is a teacher who holds a current practising certificate their Police vet will already have been done. If	Police vet all employees you have not vetted within the last three years (unqualified 2 years). If the employee is a teacher who holds a current practising certificate their Police vet will already

	required, allow up to 20 working days for a Police vet to be completed	have been done. If required, allow up to 20 working days for a Police vet to be
Assess the risk and make your decision	Evaluate all the information you have gathered to assess the risk the candidate would pose to the safety of children if employed or engaged. Is the person safe to work with children? Will they actively contribute to a culture of child protection, make the safety of children a priority, support your child protection policy etc? Make a decision based on your assessment.	Evaluate all the information you have gathered to assess the risk the candidate would pose to the safety of children if employed or engaged. Is the person safe to work with children? Will they actively contribute to a culture of child protection, make the safety of children a priority, support your child protection policy etc? Make a decision based on your assessment.

Keep a record of the information you gathered, when you gathered it and the date when safety checks need to be carried out again Attach this to the employee’s personnel file and ensure it is securely stored. Ensure obligations are met under the Privacy Act when retaining and disposing of employment records.

Handling Disclosures

When a tamariki discloses abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously.

1. Don’t panic.
2. Remember the safety and well-being of our tamariki comes before the interests of any other person.
3. Listen and accept what they say.
4. Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
5. Don’t seek help while the child is talking to you.
6. Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
7. Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
8. Let them know you need to tell someone else.
9. Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
10. Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
11. Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
12. Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure.
13. Tell your Head Teacher/designated person as soon as possible.

Documentation

The designated person will record child protection concerns. Information we hold relating to child abuse or concerns for child welfare are stored securely for historical purposes.

1. Read back to previous documentation to identify patterns and repeated concerns.
2. Record as soon as possible.
3. Record all details and communications of suspected child abuse or neglect. Include the outcomes of each case and advice sought from: Your Designated Person/Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
4. Record your observations and concerns including the use of a body map.
5. Retain a copy of any referrals or Report of Concern and outcomes.
6. Record your efforts to share information including emails and unsuccessful attempts.
7. Record facts not opinions.
8. Record to justify decisions made. For example, the reason why you decided not to inform whānau or caregiver about a report of concern you are submitting.
9. Record so that other staff members can understand your concerns, actions taken and outcomes.
10. Record to identify patterns of concerns which may indicate child abuse.
11. As long as requesting information or sharing of information is about wellbeing or safety of tamariki and the service/agency is on the list of regulated services <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM6006325.html> the designated person can, provide or request information from another service/agency to gather pieces of the jigsaw that can help you understand the risks or needs of the tamariki.
12. Information can be shared with another service or agency. Oranga Tamariki has a dedicated phone line and email address: 0508 332 774 or if you don’t get an immediate response email edassist@ot.govt.nz

Working with whānau in a culturally responsive way

Culturally responsive pedagogy involves Kaiako adapting and transforming their practice as a result of a deep engagement with and understanding of the culture of tamariki and whānau.

When working with whānau from different cultures, it is important that you seek to understand their practices, perspectives and beliefs. Developing sensitive, long-term relationships and connections help you learn about whānau. That said, protecting tamariki from abuse or neglect shouldn't be avoided, or let go because of the culture a whānau is from or their cultural norms.

Communication works best where it is understood that everyone brings with them knowledge, ways of knowing, and experiences and values to share.

Cultural relationships require trust, respect, time and commitment. Once developed, strong relationships and connections can then be used where necessary to enable Kaiako to have open discussions with whānau if there are concerns about the wellbeing of their tamariki.

Responding to suspected child abuse inside the Centre

1. If a staff member is in a situation where they are or could be about to abuse a child then their fellow workers must intervene immediately and remove the child.
2. If the Head Teacher (or person responsible) has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children they will ensure that the person is excluded from the preschool and does not enter or remain on the premises.
3. If the Head Teacher (or person responsible) has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee is in a state of physical or mental health that presents risk of danger to children they will ensure that the person is excluded from the preschool and does not enter or remain on the premises.
4. Upon notification of concern for the safety of the child/children involving staff, the General Manager in consultation with the executive of the Board of Trustees may suspend the staff member while a full investigation takes place. Refer Complaints Policy and Rules and Disciplinary Policy.

Recognise vulnerability and child abuse

Vulnerability factors

Some tamariki are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect due to their particular needs, characteristics or the environment in which they are raised. These are called **Vulnerability Factors** and should be viewed as indicators for an increased risk.

Recognising and responding to vulnerability factors offers the best chance to intervene early to prevent child abuse. When you are working with tamariki and whānau you may become aware of situations that indicate the whānau are struggling or not meeting the needs of their tamariki. You may become aware of these indicators as the result of conversations with tamariki or whānau or your insight into their home life.

Early intervention always produces the best outcomes for pēpi, tamariki and whānau.

Under 5's are more vulnerable. The following table lists six key areas to be taken into consideration.

Dependency	Totally dependent on the adults around them.
Visibility	May be seen by few people and injuries can be hidden from view.
Attachment	Secure attachment is crucial for brain development and the consistent response of the primary caregiver to a tamariki is a positive protective factor.
Brain Development	The impact of abuse and neglect on the first 1000 days and beyond.
Communication	Pre-verbal stages and difficulty in communicating needs or distress.
Cumulative Harm/Toxic Stress	When risk factors accumulate, tamariki's capacity to survive rapidly diminishes. Researchers use the term 'toxic stress' to describe severe prolonged stress.

Additional considerations for tamariki with a disability (including deafness)

High Needs	Can result in caregiver exhaustion, stress and frustration.
------------	---

Tamariki with a disability may receive personal care beyond their age-related developmental stage making them more vulnerable to people who seek to abuse tamariki sexually.

Indicators for Vulnerability Factors

Recognition and response to vulnerability factors can result in early intervention that can prevent abuse or neglect from occurring. Early intervention always produces the best outcomes for pēpi, tamariki and whānau. Vulnerability factors may include:

- 1) Financial difficulties
- 2) Unemployment
- 3) Housing struggles/overcrowding
- 4) A child with special needs
- 5) Substance abuse
- 6) Parents with learning disabilities
- 7) Isolated from friends, family and whānau
- 8) Family violence
- 9) Mental illness that is untreated or unmanaged
- 10) Parents separating
- 11) Transient families

Recognise

Recognising abuse or neglect will involve awareness of signs, symptoms, indicators and behaviours:

- 1) Signs - Something observed by you such as an injury, smell or decayed teeth.
- 2) Symptoms - Something the child experiences such as pain or hunger.
- 3) Behaviours - How a tamariki or adult acts.
- 4) Indicators - "Red Flags" e.g., incidents that lead you to have concerns about the wellbeing of tamariki.

Be Alert for repeated concerns for a tamariki. Tamariki who are "always" experiencing something may be vulnerable: "always smelly", "always tired", "always seem frightened of that person"

Child abuse falls into categories:

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet the needs of tamariki. This is in contrast to other forms of abuse that are seen as doing something to the tamariki. Neglect is not doing the things a tamariki needs to stay safe, be healthy and thrive.

Types of neglect: **Nutritional, Emotional, Physical, Lack of supervision and guidance, Medical neglect, Neglect in pregnancy**

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force against tamariki that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, risk to the tamariki's life, health and wellbeing.

Signs of possible physical abuse:

- 1) Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body.
- 2) Multiple bruises, in clusters often on the upper arm or the outside of the thigh. Finger mark bruises could indicate the tamariki has been gripped tightly. These are of particular concern when presenting on a tamariki's trunk, as it may indicate the tamariki has been gripped in order to shake them.
- 3) Injuries to the mouth, such as bruising to both sides of the mouth or cheeks or injuries inside the mouth may be a sign of non-accidental injury through force feeding. This is of particular concern with bottle fed pēpi.
- 4) Marks on pre-mobile pēpi or tamariki who are not yet crawling or walking.
- 5) Human bite marks.
- 6) Scalds with upward splash marks.
- 7) Cigarette burns or multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.
- 8) Multiple injuries (for example, bruising fractures) inflicted at different times. It is particularly concerning if parents/carers are unable to explain these injuries and it is not clear whether they took the tamariki to receive medical treatment at the time of the injury.
- 9) Injuries on both sides of the body. Imagine if you fell over or off your bike. You would land on one side of the body or the other, not both at the same time.
- 10) Failing or delaying taking the tamariki to an Emergency Department with injuries.

Accidental



Non-accidental



THE 4 Rs

- **Recognise** - signs of abuse and neglect
- **Respond** - to concerns or disclosures
- **Report** - within your organisation and externally
- **Record** - for your records & high-quality referral

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of repeated harm that can break a tamariki's spirit.

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- 1) Self-soothing behaviour.
- 2) A tamariki who looks and acts worried regularly.
- 3) Play developmentally delayed.
- 4) Developmental delays including emotional development.
- 5) Regression of development stage.
- 6) Nightmares.
- 7) Onset of bedwetting.
- 8) Knowledge of and worry about adult issues.
- 9) Fear of making mistakes or getting into trouble.
- 10) Fear of a particular adult.
- 11) Tamariki who withdraw or become clingy.
- 12) Negative statements about self.
- 13) Extreme shyness or passivity.
- 14) Tamariki who are under pressure to perform well academically, musically or in sport.
- 15) Demanding adults attention even with adults they do not know.
- 16) Not mixing well with other tamariki.
- 17) Highly aggressive or cruel to others.
- 18) Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration.
- 19) Sleep or speech disorders.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a tamariki to take part in contact or non-contact sexual activities.

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

- 1) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects.
- 2) Knowledge of sex beyond their developmental age.
- 3) Secrets.
- 4) Nightmares or sleeping problems.
- 5) Becoming withdrawn, clingy or secretive.
- 6) Sudden unexplained personality changes, mood swings and seeming insecure.
- 7) Regressing to younger behaviours. For example, bedwetting.
- 8) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source.
- 9) Unexplained soreness, bleeding or bruising around genitals or mouth.
- 10) Not wanting to be alone with a person.

Exposure to family violence

Definitions of childhood exposure to family violence vary but usually include seeing, hearing, getting caught up in or experiencing the results of physical or sexual assaults between their caregivers. Importantly, tamariki do not have to see the violence occurring to be harmed by it. Awareness of violence, living in the atmosphere afterwards or potential violence that might occur at any moment significantly contributes to harm.

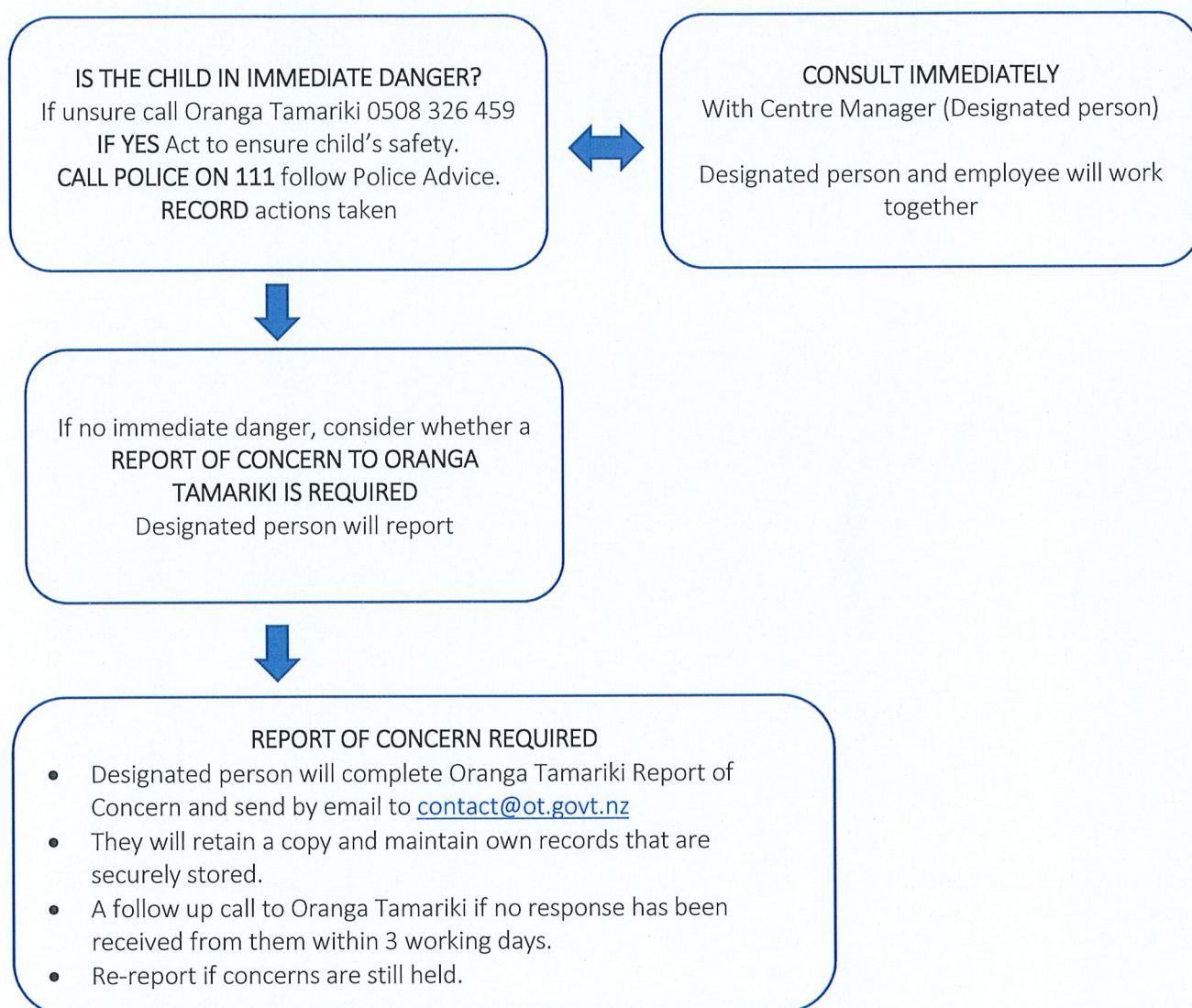
Sites of relevance:

Children's Commissioner: <https://www.occ.org.nz/childrens-rights-and-advice/uncroc/>

Children's Act 2014: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM147088.html>

Culturally Responsive practice <https://tewhariki.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/public/Teaching-strategies-and-resources/Files/He-Mapuna-te-Tamaiti-complete-book.pdf>



Policy Name: Child Protection Policy	
This policy includes a flowchart and indicators of abuse and neglect table.	
Location: Health and Safety Manual	
Consultation	BOT, management, staff, parents
Policy ratified	17 th October 2023
Introduction Date	1 st October 2002
Automatic review date	2024
This policy will need to be reviewed to ensure that it continues to be appropriate and effective. Policy statement should be reviewed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if any roles are amended OR • if any part of the policy becomes ineffective or problematic or • if there are any suggestions for improvement or • the policy is scheduled for automatic review 	

Chairperson 

Date 20.10.2023