

11.1 Purpose

This policy provides Whaiora with a framework to identify and manage actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect.

It recognises the important role and responsibilities that employees of Whaiora have in the accurate detection of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. It ensures that any service provided or actions taken in respect of child abuse, neglect, or potential child abuse situations are guided by this organisation's Child Protection Policy.

Whaiora is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children and young people. This commitment means that:

The child's safety is paramount and the interest and welfare of the child or young person is the primary consideration when abuse or neglect of the child is suspected or alleged.

Children are central to our work with whanau & community thus there is no doubt that we will come across difficult situations in the course of our work in which you believe that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived. As professionals and members of our community we are the ones who work with children and young people, know them and their families, and play an important part of keeping them safe.

There's an expectation for staff to be competent in working with children and knowledgeable about how to follow safe practices when dealing with child abuse, neglect, or potential child abuse situations.

Whaiora supports the roles of statutory agencies (the Police and the Department of Child, Youth & Family Services) in the investigation of abuse. Where there are serious concerns about children's safety we will report to the appropriate statutory agency where we believe that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived.

Reference: Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989), Section 14 and working together – An inter-agency guide to keep children and young people safe. Published by CYF.

Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Families Act 1989, Section 15.

11.2 Scope

This policy is required under legislation for those who provide services to children/young people and services to adults in respect of children/young people.

This policy outlines the steps this organisation will undertake to ensure children and young people under 17 years of age are safe. It applies to actions by management and employees, and includes students and people working under contract for this organisation.

11.3 Identification

Child protection concerns can arise either by disclosure, injury suspicion, behaviour of child or parent/caregiver or when children failing to thrive. Recognition of abuse relating to children or young persons receiving services from Whaiora or a child or young person in the same household who may not receive services from our organisation..

Physical Abuse	All physical mistreatment which may or may not result in obvious injury.
Sexual Abuse	Contacts or interactions between a child and an adult in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. Sexual abuse may also be committed by a person under the age of 18 when the person is either significantly older than the victim or is in a position of power or control over another child
Neglect	Serious deprivation of necessities such as food, shelter, safety, essential physical and medical care, and supervision appropriate to a child's age.
Emotional Abuse	Negative attitudes and behaviours by adults which impact on children's emotional, mental and physical development.
Domestic Violence	Witnessing Family Violence and conflict in the context of the child's home living environment.
<i>Reference: Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989), Section 14 and working together – An inter-agency guide to keep children and young people safe. Published by CYF</i>	

11.4 Definitions of child abuse

RULES ABOUT TOUCH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Touch is OK	The care of children involves physical contact. This is normal, natural and desirable. Some adults are anxious about how their contact of children may be interpreted. It is natural to touch children, to show them affection, to comfort them, to reassure them and to give them praise, as well as taking care of some of their physical needs.
Touch is Within Limits	Adults are guided by the principle that they will make physical contact only to meet the child's and young person's physical or emotional needs. Touching must never be initiated to gratify adult needs - children and young people should not be expected or asked to take care of adult needs, physical or otherwise.
Touch is Appropriate to the Child's or Young Person's Needs	If a child seeks affection, reassurance or comfort through physical contact, it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child's or young person's developmental stage and needs. Unwanted affection or touching must never be forced on a child
Touch as Part of Personal Care	Physical contact during changing or cleansing is for the purpose of that task only. Children are encouraged to take care of themselves to the limits of their ability.
Inappropriate Touch by Children	Inappropriate touching by children is sensitive and clearly discouraged. Any such incident is documented and reported to the Line Manager. Workers are aware that sexually abused children or young people may be sensitised.

11.5 Safe practice

1	Whaiora revisit this policy to ensure that Whaiora premise/s is safe and child friendly and comply with Health and Safety and Building regulations.
2	Staff are familiar with information and resources about personal safety for children via SharePoint or other any other form of electronic information.
3	Staff keep their personal and professional lives separate. Close personal relationships and/or caretaking with children and their families outside the work environment is never appropriate. It is recognised that some staff may be regarded by some clients as part of their extended family. In such circumstances staff must be very clear about their role and the supervision and monitoring of such a relationship is mandatory.
4	Staff take regular breaks (rest/meal breaks, annual leave) from this work and keep their case load realistic based on experience and whānau need.
5	In child protection cases, workers ensure they do not work in isolation, i.e. using on-going consultation with managers or team leaders, internal supervision and EAP.
6	Any work with children out of agency premises and where the parent / caregiver is not present must clearly relate to supervised casework plans and a clear purpose.
7	When children/young people are taken on outings: Parental approval in writing must be obtained for each occasion; Children must use seatbelts and, where appropriate, booster seats when travelling in Whaiora or Whaiora leased transport; There must be one adult per four pre-school children and one adult per six primary age children.

CHILD AND YOUTH EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

All external activities/camps are risk assessed by kaimahi in charge of such activities before they commence. If risks were identified, a risk mitigation plan should be in place.

- Permission to transport children form is completed by a parent or guardian
- All camp staff have been subject to Vulnerable Action Police Vetting prior to event
- First aid certified staff will be present and on-site during all camp activities
- All medications and distribution will be the responsibility of a designated first aid officer
- Any allergies, special food requirements will be documented and health plan established.
- All relevant staff will be advised of Health plan and associated risk mitigated.
- Camp and excursion proposal is completed. Identifying potential risk, emergency evacuation processes to Line Manager or GM for final approval.
- For these activities the child safe assessment must be completed beforehand and shared with all relevant staff.

WHEN CHILDREN TALK ABOUT ABUSE

A child may try to find different ways to tell you that they are suffering from abuse and neglect.

They may try to say things that is tentative, vague or uses people's names or places, sometimes they'll say things very quietly or simply make hints or acts out with dolls or toys, or use words that they are not expected to know at their ages.

It is important to listen to what they are trying to say, be understanding and take what they say seriously.

It is unusual for children or young people to make up situations of abuse if a child tells you about abuse, here are some guidelines to follow:

Listen and reassuring

It is really important to make a child feel safe in telling you. Listen with an open mind and be reassuring.

Accept what they have to say and make sure you **don't say anything critical** like, 'Why didn't you tell me sooner?'

Let them know its good they told you about it.

Let them know it's not their fault.

Let them know it's **not** ok for things like this to happen to kids.

Tell them that you will get help.

It is best practice not to question them about their experience, just listen and be reassuring. The best response might be "thank you for telling me about that, now I need to talk to someone so we can make sure that you're safe".

Write it down

As soon as possible, write down what the child tells you, using the same words they say, and how you responded.

Don't question or interview the child.

Make sure that you don't question the child further, as this may interfere with the information they've given.

Communication

Maintain confidentiality – Only those directly involved – no wider

Call Child, Youth and Family on **0508 (Family) (0508 326 459)** or the **Police on 111 or 370 0300 (local)** as soon as possible. You can ask for whatever advice, assistance and support you need.

Inform parents / carers of referral with care and if safe to do so.

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Keep the child safe

Make sure the child knows they are safe, and have done the right thing in telling you.

Don't let anyone who may be involved in the abuse know the child has said anything to you.

You can talk to Child, Youth and Family about how to manage this.

Reference: An Interagency guide - Working together to keep children and young people safe. Published by CYF.

11.5 Obligations

Section 19 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (VCA)

It is a requirement that Whaiora reduce the risk of harm to children by requiring people employed or engaged in work that involves regular or overnight contact with children to be safety checked. This includes core workers or non-core workers.

Core worker means a children's worker whose work in or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with a child or children in the course of that work, the person—

- is the only children's worker present; or
- is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present

Whaiora consider core workers to include:

- Nurses
- Doctors
- Social Workers
- Community Health workers
- Students on placement

Non-Core worker means a children worker who is not a Core worker

Whaiora will not hire applicants conditional on reference checking where it is unlikely to come through before the start date. However, should Whaiora require an applicant's service prior to the safety checks being completed to fulfil contract requirement, then a risk assessment will be completed.

From 1 July 2015 all new Core workers, Non-core workers including Social work and Nursing students will be Police checked as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Police checks will need to be completed two yearly and the VCA policy three yearly of the previous one.

Workforce Restriction: Any employee/prospective employee with a serious conviction (as specified in Schedule 2 of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014) can only be employed if they have been granted a Core Worker Exemption i.e. Employment either new or ongoing is prohibited unless a core worker exemption is held.

11.6 Suspected child abuse by a staff member

Practice

- Safety of children and young people is paramount.
- Staff members suspecting child abuse by a colleague must immediately notify their Line Manager or, if unavailable, the General Manager.
- Concerns must be recorded in writing.
- Within 24 hours of being notified of a case of suspected abuse, the Line Manager notifies the General Manager. All disciplinary action taken must be in accordance with the HR Policies and only taken after consultation with the General Manager and a Human Resource Advisor.
- The staff member concerned must be informed in writing that an allegation has been made of behaviour that might constitute serious misconduct and the person may need to be suspended while an investigation takes place.
- The meeting to discuss the allegation and possible suspension should be held as soon as possible, with the staff member able to have a support person present. The staff member's views on suspension must be sought and considered before a decision to suspend is made. The decision to suspend has to be reviewed and authorised by the General Manager or their designated manager.
- If a decision is made to suspend, the staff member must be given a letter advising of this before he/she leaves the site.
- Whether or not suspension occurs, contact with the child will cease immediately until the matter is resolved and only be resumed if it is in the child's best interests
- If the investigation establishes that there are reasonable grounds for believing child abuse has occurred, the General Manager will report the matter to the Police
- If a case of child abuse is established, it will constitute serious misconduct and the employee will be called in to a meeting to inform them of their immediate dismissal without notice. This will be followed up with a formal letter.

11.7 Basic rules of child protection protocol

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The child's safety is paramount• Consult with your line manager when you suspect potential risk or risk of child abuse• Refer to Police or Child Youth and Family following a debrief with your line manager if there is still serious concerns of risk or harm to a child• Ensure personal safety• Always seek support for yourself, i.e. debrief, supervision• Do not make decisions in isolation unless there is an immediate risk of injury or death to child; Contact police immediately on 111
2	<p>Record of Allegation</p> <p>Record all allegations, information, observations and communications about clients within 24 hours of receiving or identifying it.</p> <p>Ensure the record is factual and objective.</p> <p>Ensure record is written in either the Family Start or MedTech database; this will ensure that the time, date and name of kaimahi is recorded factually. Note this case note must be referred to your relevant Line Manager immediately.</p> <p>Recording will include completing Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Assessment form and register.</p> <p>Recording will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose of the visit and the setting in which it took place• Type of abuse/neglect suspected/Issues• Who noticed the abuse and their relationship to the client• Who reported the alleged abuse and their relationship to the client• Physical, behavioural and emotional signs• Action taken once a disclosure is made including any medical attention• A proposed plan of action and networks involved• If a report of concern is made a CYF a copy of acknowledgement letter from CYF will be placed on the child/children's file by the Kaimahi.• A record of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Assessment Form and Register will be kept in a safe place in the office.

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11.8 Documents

TEMPLATES	REF	LOCATION
Report of Concern	Form	http://sharepoint/OrganisationResources/Organisation%20Resources/Report%20of%20Concern%20CYFS.pdf (
Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Assessment form	Form	http://sharepoint/OrganisationResources/Organisation Resources/Suspected Child Abuse Assessment Form.docx
Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Register	Form	http://sharepoint/OrganisationResources/Organisation Resources/Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Register.docx
Permission to transport Children and young persons	Form	http://sharepoint/OrganisationResources/Organisation Resources/Permission to Transport Children and Young Persons.docx
Police vetting	Form	http://sharepoint/OrganisationResources/Organisation%20Resources/NZ%20Police%20Vetting%20Form.doc

11.9 Version Control

DATE	VERSION	STATUS	APPROVED BY
Jan 2004	Vs 1	Approved	T Towns G Manager
May 2008	Vs 2	Approved (reformat)	K Ruhe Business Unit
May 2009	Vs 3	Approved (reformat/rebrand)	K Ruhe – Kaitātaki Te Papa Puawai
March 2013	Vs4	Approved	Adam Bain – Senior Social Worker
May 2014	Vs5	Approved	Adam Bain – Senior Social Worker
February 2015	Vs6	Approved	Adam Bain – Senior Social Worker
August 2015	Vs7	Reviewed and Approved	Whaiora Board
May 2016	Vs8	Reviewed and Approved (updated section 11.5 Workforce Restriction)	TKT Hui 17/05/2016

NB: ALL PRINTED VERSIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED. THE ELECTRONIC VERSION WILL BE THE MOST CURRENT AND UP-TO-DATE