

Child Protection Policy

Overview:

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse or maltreatment, is a paramount goal of CCW.

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 process for responding to a concern about a child is in the appendices of this policy.

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

CCW Designated Persons for Child Protection, Judi Rendall (Strengthening Families Coordinator), Glenda Seville (SuperGrans/BFC), 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. CCW commits to ensure staff have access to the training they need.

Purpose, scope and principles

CCW child protection policy supports our staff to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect. It is our organisation's commitment to protect children from abuse and to recognise the important roles all of our staff have in protecting children.

This policy provides a broad framework and expectations to protect children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect. It applies to all staff, including volunteers and part-time or temporary roles and contractors. It is intended to protect all children that staff may encounter, including siblings, the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff as they provide their service.

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies – i.e., Oranga Tamariki and the Police – this policy will also help our staff to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern.

CCW recognise that 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. Contact details for agencies and services in our community are provided as an appendix to this policy.

To ensure that CCW demonstrates continual improvement in child protection practice, we will work to maintain a good working relationship with child protection agencies and support our staff to protect children from abuse by consulting with experts with specialist knowledge and providing the necessary training options.

CCW also commit to explore opportunities to work with other providers, including from other sectors, to develop a network of child protection practice in our community.

This policy applies to all CCW staff, including contractors and volunteers.

Definitions

- **Child** – any child or young person aged under 17 years and who is not married or in a civil union.
- **Child protection** – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Designated person for child protection** – the General Manager or Designated Person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy.
- **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Oranga Tamariki** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- **New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
- **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
 - Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
 - Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
- **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:
 - Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
 - Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.

Neglect – neglect is the most common form of abuse and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

Safer Recruitment

- CCW ensures that all staff working with children, both paid and voluntary, have been appropriately safety checked through robust screening and vetting processes. These are set out in an appendix to this policy.
- Any person who is not a registered teacher (or holder of a limited authority to teach) but has unsupervised access to children on behalf of CCW, including contractors and employees of contractors, must be vetted by the Police before they have, or are likely to have, unsupervised access to children as part of their role on behalf of CCW.
- CCW must apply for Police vetting, and it must be done so no later than two weeks after the person begins working for CCW.
- Until the Police vetting is received, the person must not have or be likely to have unsupervised access to children. CCW must apply for new Police vetting every three years for any person who it employs, either in a paid or unpaid capacity.
- CCW will ensure strict confidentiality around any Police vetting they apply for, and must not take any adverse reaction in relation to the outcome of Police vetting until the person in question has either validated the information provided through Police vetting, or at least been given a reasonable opportunity to do so.
- Police vetting forms are included as an appendix to this policy, current copies of the form can also be obtained on line at <http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting> .

Training

CCW are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, both permanent and contract new staff are made aware of the policy on child protection.

Training will include training specific to the services offered and an ongoing training plan is being developed and will be reviewed annually.

Identifying child abuse and neglect

CCW approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- CCW understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

- CCW understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either a colleague, General Manager or the Designated Person for Child Protection – we shouldn't act alone.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.

We recognise the signs of potential abuse:

Physical signs (e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases).	Behavioural concerns (e.g., age- inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression).
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).
The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure)	

We are aware of the signs of potential neglect:

<i>Physical signs</i> (e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight).	<i>Developmental delays</i> (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
Behavioural concerns (e.g., disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).	<i>Neglectful supervision</i> (e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to). <i>Medical neglect</i> (e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).
<i>Emotional abuse/neglect</i> (e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self harm)	<i>Medical Neglect</i> (e.g. persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues)

Every situation is different and staff will consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

CCW will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Child, Youth and Family and the Police. We will only inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after we have discussed this with these agencies.

When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour we write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. This is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled.

Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. We will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

Confidentiality and information sharing

CCW will seek advice from Child, Youth and Family and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service General Manager or Designated Person. Staff should be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles – i.e., the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Child, Youth and Family under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

Child safe practice guidelines

CCW's Child Protection Policy and the School Holiday Programme Practice Guidelines are available online at www.connectingcommunities.org.nz and we advise anyone using our services to be aware of these.

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible 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 and volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff.

If activities require one to one physical contact (i.e., classes in swimming, gymnastics etc.) parents and caregivers will be advised by the registration form and the programmes offered.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies (in education such as the Ministry of Education's Special Education group) to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.

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 written parental consent.

Appendix:

Flow Charts:

Responding to Disclosures by a child or young person

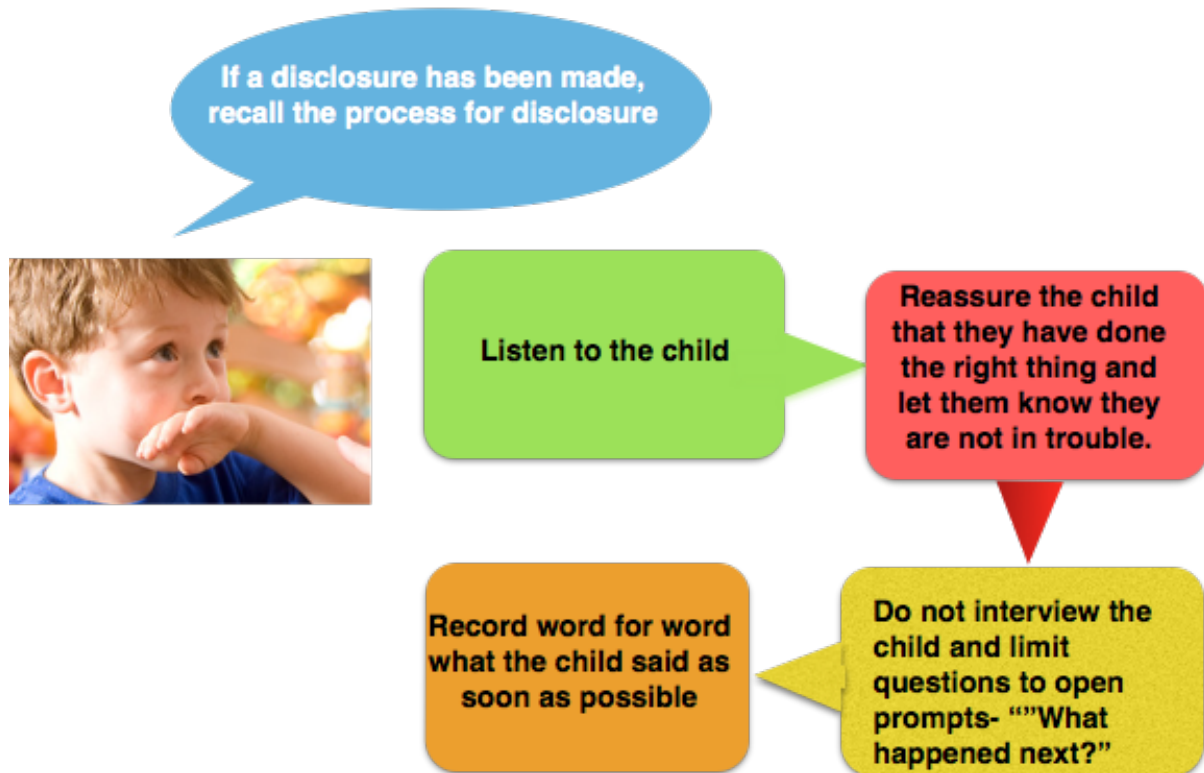
Signs of abuse or neglect

Disclosure of abuse or neglect

Allegation of child abuse by a staff member

Recording and notifying suspected child abuse or neglect

Responding to disclosure by a child or young person



Things to think about

If the child is not in immediate danger, re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.

If the child is in visible distress, provide them with appropriate reassurance and re-engage them with appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities

The Child talking about things that may indicate abuse (allegations or disclosures)

It is critical to respond appropriately to disclosures by children. The child must be supported, but any subsequent evidential interviews by the Police and/or CYF can be compromised by inappropriate responses or questionin. The following guidelins should be followed:

Overview

- Listen to the child
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing
- Provide comfort to the child and let them know they are not in trouble
- Do not interview the child and limit questions to open prompts – “What happened next?”
- Record, word for word , what the child said as soon as possible.

How to react

- Don’t panic – the child will be observant of your reaction and is in a position of vulnerability
- If the child believes you cannot handle the situation, they may cease disclosure.

Listening

- Listen to the child, allowing the child to tell you only as much as they want to disclose
- Ask as few questions as possible – do not interview the child, the disclosure is sufficient to engage social services and Police
- Ensure that questions are not leading, or presuppose a response, or invite the child to reflect a statement back – e.g., never ask, “Did mummy do this to you?”, instead ask, “What happened?”

Supporting the child

- Ensure the child is supported – tell them they have done the right thing by telling. Do not make promises you cannot keep- e.g., “this won’t happen again”, “you’ll be safe now”.
- Respect the child – tell them what will happen next. Let them know what has to happen and what they will have choices about. Where possible, empower the child by giving them genuine choices.
- Tell the child that you will be going to get help
- Recording – document, word for word, in quotation marks, what the child says. Clearly differentiate your speculations or suspicions from documentation of reported speech.

Seek support

Implement this Child Protection Policy – Responding to abuse or neglect.

Signs of abuse and neglect

The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below, may indicate abuse or neglect. However they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the or young person's situation.



REPORTING PROCESS FOR CHILD ABUSE

You see a child being abused, OR you observe signs of abuse in a child OR a child discloses being abused

RESPOND TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS

- Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. Call the police if the child is in immediate danger.
- Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child – take to hospital if appropriate

Are you a
staff
member?

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR GENERAL MANAGER/DESIGNATED PERSON

If the suspected abuser is your General Manager inform CCW Trust Chair OR Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 459 OR Police Child Abuse Team.

PREPARE WRITTEN RECORD

- Date, time and place of observation/reporting of abuse
- Names of anyone present
- What the child says – exactly
- Any physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

GIVE THIS TO YOUR GENERAL
MANAGER/DESIGNATED PERSON

Are you in
charge?

CALL THE
POLICE IF THE
CHILD IS IN
IMMEDIATE
DANGER

PERSON IN CHARGE

GATHER INFORMATION

Ensure you have a full report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support. Get them to sign the report. Tell them what actions you will take. Ring Oranga Tamariki 058 326 459 or Police (06 370 0300 and discuss your concerns. You will be advised if you need to do a formal report about your concerns.

REPORT ABUSE

. Ring Oranga Tamariki 058 326 459 or Police (06 370 0300 and tell them:
(if it is an emergency, ring the Police Child Protection Team 06 370 0300)

- Your own name and contact details
- Name of the child/children (also know as/nicknames)
- Date of birth (if known)
- Ethnicity (if known)
- Name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation
- Current legal custodians
- Reasons why it is believed that the child has been abused
- Other significant background information
- Any concerns for your physical safety in making this notification

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – GET TIMEFRAME.

Alleged
abuse by a
person
outside CCW.

Work with
Oranga
Tamariki to
decide how &
when parents
are told

Alleged
abuse by a
person inside
CCW.

OUTSIDE SERVICE

- You are most likely to suspect the abuse is by a caregiver but you cannot assume this. If you are concerned about the child going home, tell Oranga Tamariki or the Police this.
- While the child is in CCW care, ensure the child is not at risk of being further abused

INSIDE SERVICE

- Maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki /the Police and discuss any actions you want to take with them first
- Discuss with Oranga Tamariki /Police who will tell the suspected abuser of the allegation and whether the suspected abuser should remain on/at the premises/service
- Recommend the suspected abuser seeks support from their union or lawyer
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and / or allegations and follow-up action is taken and documented
- Get employment/legal advice where appropriate

ATTEND TO CCW'S BOARD/STAFF/CONTRACTORS NEEDS

If there is disruption to service, negative impacts on CCW services or staff/Board/contractors or media interest contact CCW Board Chair or appropriate Board member.

Notes

If any CCW staff member or contractor knows of alleged abuse and another incident occurs by a staff member/contractor, the CCW Trust/General Manager is liable for failing to provide a safe environment for the child/children.

FINALLY, GET SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

Recording and notifying Oranga Tamariki of suspected child abuse or neglect:

What process to follow:	For example	Key considerations
Recording	Formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything said by the child • The date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant • The factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (e.g. any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns). • The action taken by CCW • Any other information that may be relevant 	Relevant information can inform any future actions
Decision-making	Discuss concerns with the designated person(s), or General Manager/Supervisor.	No decisions should be made in isolation
Notifying authorities	Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected. A phone call to the National Contact Centre is the preferred initial contact with the Oranga Tamariki as this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options. Phone 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) Fax 09 914 1211 Email: otcallcentre@ot.govt.nz	Oranga Tamariki will <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the decision to inform parents or caregivers, in consultation with CCW 2. Advise what, if any immediate action maybe appropriate, including referring the concerns to the Police.
Following advice of Oranga Tamariki	Oranga Tamariki advice will include what, if any immediate action maybe appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police	Oranga Tamariki is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether CCW needs to work with family/whanau or put them in touch with people in their community who can help.

Storing relevant information	<p>Securely store:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record of concern • A record of any related discussions (including copies of correspondence where appropriate) • A record of any advice received • The action CCW took including rationale • This concern with any earlier concerns, if notification is based on a accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident. 	Records assist in identifying patterns.
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