

Child Protection & Wellbeing Policy

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Child Protection and Wellbeing Policy is to set a clear protocol of action and a framework for our responsibilities and legal duties in relation to each child's vulnerability and protection. This policy will ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of any concern for a child's welfare, and to support any child or young person.

This policy applies to all volunteers and staff who are expected to be familiar with the policy and associated procedures. These should be used wherever:

- Abuse,
- Neglect or
- Self-harm and/or suicide risk of children participating in our programmes, or an associated community member is suspected or identified

Policy Principles

- Our first and paramount consideration is the rights, welfare and safety of the child/Tamariki, young person/rangatahi
- To protect the safety and promote the wellbeing of children and young persons aged up to the age of 18 years while they are in our care
- Our care and programme delivery contribute to the nurturing and protection of children and advocate for them
- We have an obligation to respond to allegations of situations that raise concern about the safety of all children, whether they be in our care, participants in our programmes or associated community members
- Wherever possible the family/whanau participate in the making of decisions affecting that child/Tamariki, young person/rangatahi
- All volunteers and staff recognise, accommodate and are sensitive to other cultures
- The organisation has volunteers and staff who are competent in the identification and management of actual and potential abuse and/or neglect and risk of self-harm/suicide through the organisation's policy and procedures and development programme.

Organisational commitment to child protection and prevention of self harm/suicide

Our Board and Coordinator will ensure that:

- There are organisation wide procedures for the appropriate response to and management of child abuse and neglect, prevention of self-harm and management of suicide risk
- The child protection policy and procedures comply with legislative requirements, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and best practice.
- Organisation-wide procedures exist to provide appropriate, adequate support for, and supervision of, those affected by child abuse and neglect or at risk of self-harm or suicide.

Volunteers and staff working with children and volunteers of our organisation have responsibility for the safety of children in our care and for the appropriate management of identified and suspected child abuse and/or neglect, self-harm and/or suicide risk factor. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Being aware of situations which may present risks and manage these appropriately.
- Limiting opportunities to be alone and/or out of sight with children and youth
- Ensuring any physical contact always takes place in an open or public environment and does not take place in secret or out of sight of others

- Being guided, when making any physical contact with children and youth, by the principle that they will do so only in order to meet the child/youth's physical or emotional needs. Touching must not be initiated to gratify the needs of the adult helper. If a child/youth initiates physical contact in the seeking of affection, reassurance or comfort, it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child/youth's development stage and needs
- Ensuring that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Being conversant with our Policy on Child Protection and Wellbeing and related procedures and abiding by them.
- Understanding the statutory referral processes and management of identified or suspected abuse and neglect
- Understanding our obligation under Section 15 of the Children's Act 2014 to report allegations or situations that raise concern about the safety of all children, whether they be in our care, participants in our programmes or associated community members
- Understanding available self-harm and suicide prevention support services and how to refer
- Attending initial training, refresher training and regular updates as appropriate for their area of work
- Seeking advice when child abuse or other risk factors are suspected or identified.
- Complying at all times with minimum adult to child ratios as per Te Hā o Mātauranga policies
- Keeping up to date with changing pressures on young people including things such as gender identity and social media risks.

The Coordinator has in addition the designated responsibilities relating to child protection for:

- Reviewing the Child Protection and Wellbeing Policy and procedures as required
- Co-ordinating a system wide response to child abuse and neglect
- Providing support and advice to personnel regarding disclosures and child abuse and neglect
- The providing of relevant and accessible training

Relevant Procedures:

You can request a copy of any of the following documents:

- Definitions and Identification of abuse
- Process for responding to, and recording, disclosure of suspected/observed abuse
- Child Abuse Recording Form
- Allegations or concerns about staff including confidentiality/info sharing
- Custody of and Access to Children
- Behaviour Management
- Staff support and training
- Transporting children
- Transport volunteer agreement
- Overnight stays/camps
- Technology
 - Responsible use
 - Staff responsible use
- Visitor and Contractor Sign in
 - Visitors on site
 - Contractor induction

Relevant Legislation

Children's Act 2014

Care of Children Act 2004

Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989

Domestic Violence Act 1995

Privacy Act 2020

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)

Date of Policy: 26 April 2019

Last reviewed: 2 August 2022

Due for review: 2 August 2023