



Child Protection Policy



"I feel safe and know who to tell if I don't feel safe."

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea.

I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea.

Our intent

Safety and protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect is central to our kaupapa and is everyone's business. When a young person is being hurt, at risk of harm or where they are hurting someone else, inaction is not an option.

When dealing with child protection concerns we will implement our practice principles, this and related policies and support families appropriately.

See [here](#) for more about our child protection approach at Tutaki Youth.

Definitions

"Abuse" refers to [child abuse](#).

"Settlement agreement" refers to an agreement that allows a kaimahi to resign without disciplinary action being taken.

Responsibilities



Management will:

- ensure team members who work with rangatahi are trained to implement this policy (eg trained in signs of abuse, reporting and process for responding to child protection concerns)
- follow up on abuse concerns
- address systemic deficits that could contribute to abuse or non-detection of abuse
- lead an organisational culture that:
 - models respect for dignity and rights to safety and equality
 - promotes zero tolerance for abuse
 - promotes early intervention and reporting of abuse by young people, staff and volunteers.
- designate a staff member, who is experienced and skilled in child protection, as our Child Protection Champion.

Staff/kaimahi and volunteers/kaiawhina will:

- understand and comply with this policy and related procedural requirements in service delivery
- act professionally at all times and desist from any abusive or harmful action against rangatahi
- communicate this policy to rangatahi and their supports
- report abuse concerns and any deficit in knowledge, systems or processes that could contribute to abuse or prevent detection of abuse.

The Child Protection Champion will:

- advise and support staff to implement this policy
- ensure they maintain their knowledge and skills in child protection
- fulfill such other responsibilities as is agreed with management.

Practice Principles

These principles must be applied in our practice:



- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child/rangatahi affected by or at risk of child abuse must be prioritised.
- Young people have a right to participate in decisions that concern them unless this is unsafe or impracticable.
- Reporting serious harm and risk to a child or young person to Oranga Tamariki and Police is more important than maintaining confidentiality about it. Disclosure to other authorised persons may also be justified in certain circumstances.
- Those who are abused, neglected or exploited are not responsible for perpetrators' behaviour.
- Age-related vulnerability to abuse and risk may be compounded by communicative and other disabilities and/or circumstances like detention. Particular care should be taken to ensure the safety of rangatahi in these circumstances.
- Prevention and response strategies must be sensitive to developmental stage and age, disability, culture, gender and sexuality preferences.
- Concerns about harm including allegations against kaimahi and volunteers will be taken seriously and appropriately followed up.
- We do not act alone when responding to a child or young person who has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Requirements

Safety in staffing

Kaimahi/volunteers will be trained in identifying and responding to common signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.

Kaimahi/volunteers understand there will be disciplinary consequences, including dismissal, for child abuse.

Kaimahi/kaiawhina will be police vetted/ child safety checked if working regularly with rangatahi.

Kaimahi/volunteers will use safe practices in interactions with children/rangatahi.



Provide information

Information will be provided to rangatahi/whānau to assist prevention and early detection of abuse, as necessary. The information must be given in an accessible way and assist their understanding of:

- the different types of abuse
- how to recognise the signs
- how to report abuse, neglect and exploitation
- how and who to access for support internally and externally if abuse occurs
- [information sharing about abuse](#)
- our obligation to prevent and [report abuse](#)
- attitudes and social and cultural inequalities that contribute to abuse.

Early intervention/support

Children will not be physically punished, disciplined or treated in any way that is degrading, humiliating or likely to cause fear or anxiety. Alternative methods will be used to manage behaviour eg [behaviour supports](#).

Where appropriate, whānau will be provided with information about child abuse and alternative discipline strategies, i.e. posters and where appropriate, supported to access parenting support services/programmes.

Verbal abuse directed against a person in our organisation will not be tolerated. This will be communicated and addressed with rangatahi and team members.

Reporting



The [Reporting concerns about child, young person](#) policy will be implemented when abuse or risk of abuse to a young person is indicated through assessment or disclosed.

System issues

Policies and practices will be periodically reviewed to identify and check for gaps, which may contribute to or mean risks of child abuse are undetected. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as necessary.

Allegations against kaimahi

The [Responding to allegations of abuse against team members policy](#) will be implemented by:

- management when allegations of abuse are received against a member of our team
- the board for an allegation against management.

Accountability

"Settlement agreements" will not be used if an abuse allegation is substantiated against a team member and the agreement would be contrary to protecting tamariki from abuse.

Support and protect

In accordance with [Reporting concern about child/young person](#), kaimahi will support a child/rangatahi affected by abuse or at risk of abuse to access support for their needs (eg refer for counselling or specialist family harm or sexual harm service).

Immediate risks to the child, rangatahi and others will be assessed and addressed eg:

- a kaimahi remains with the child/rangatahi until Police and/or Oranga Tamariki arrive
- medical assistance is arranged for injuries



- safety planning.

Recordkeeping

A record must be kept of any disclosure or incident of child abuse and/or signs of abuse covering:

- who noticed the abuse/behaviour
- what was disclosed
- who reported the abuse/behaviour and their relationship to the child/rangatahi
- signs and symptoms, for example physical, emotional, sexual, behavioural
- particular incidents, with times and dates if possible
- action taken, including any medical attention and proposed plan of action.

Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Level 2, Community wellbeing 1.0-4.0; Client services & programmes 1.0-3.0, Health & Safety, 2.0

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights 1.5

Children's Act 2014

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Family Violence Act 2018

Helpful links

[Sharing information without consent](#)

[Best interests of child, young person](#)

[Responding to rangatahi perpetrating abuse](#)



[Responding to allegations against team members](#)

[Vulnerable persons](#)

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

[Working together to support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau](#)

[Whistleblowing](#)

[Let's talk videos](#)

[Tutaki Child Protection Approach](#)

Review

Date: March 2021

Next review: by February 2023