



# Responding to Abuse Allegations Against Team Members Policy



"They listened to me and investigated my concerns."

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## Intent

We respond promptly and fairly to complaints and allegations of abuse against paid and unpaid kaimahi. We prioritise the safety of a complainant and treat the kaimahi concerned fairly and in accord with the law and our policies.

A disclosure of serious wrongdoing is a "protected disclosure" and the person who alleges wrongdoing is protected under the [Public Interest Disclosures Act 2000](#).

## Responsibilities

**The board** must ensure that any allegation of abuse concerning management or a board member is followed up in accord with law and this policy.

**Management** must ensure:

- any allegation of abuse against a board member or kaimahi is followed up in accordance with the law and our policies



- support kaimahi and volunteers to engage in safe practice
- support a culture of openness about raising and reporting concerns about behaviour and abuse.

**Kaimahi and volunteers** must:

- adhere to professional boundaries
- understand what constitutes illegal, unacceptable, and concerning behaviour
- cooperate in the investigation of abuse concerns
- raise concerns with management if they are worried about the behaviour of colleagues.

## Requirements

### **Record and escalate if necessary**

Concerns and allegations of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer must be recorded and reported to management. If they do not respond, concerns should be escalated to the next level.

### **Protect complainants**

On receipt of an allegation, steps will be taken to protect the complainant and others who could be impacted by abuse. Consideration must be given to:

- the complainant's safety needs and how to protect others at risk
- the option of a safety plan or referral for this purpose
- the complainant's wishes and views
- the views of the legal guardian or caregiver (where relevant)
- minimising disruption for a child/young person or vulnerable person
- the need to protect the complainant's rights to privacy and to be treated with dignity.



## **Follow up with kaimahi/volunteer**

All allegations of abuse will be investigated.

The staff member's rights will be respected in the investigation including the right to an impartial hearing.

Risks relating to the allegation (for the complainant and others) will be assessed and mitigated while an investigation occurs.

If an allegation is substantiated against the kaimahi, [disciplinary action](#) will be taken.

## **Reporting the allegation**

The New Zealand Police will be contacted if criminal conduct is alleged and Oranga Tamariki, if the allegation relates to a child/ young person.

Management will externally report to relevant bodies (eg funding agency, relevant professional association or regulatory body).

## **Make improvements**

Where an investigation reveals opportunities to improve safeguards for those we're working with, improvements will be made where possible and practicable. These could include:

- kaimahi/volunteer training
- placing the person who was investigated under close supervision
- closer management and monitoring of risks
- progressing a disciplinary response or systemic change.

## **Helpful links**

[Back to Abuse and protection](#)



[Back to Responding to abuse, exploitation and neglect](#)

## Review

Date: March 2021

Next review: by February 2023