



Child Protection Policy

Purpose:

To ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children at Kidiwise Preschool and Childcare, including prevention of child abuse, neglect and protection.

Principles:

This Centre is committed to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children. This commitment means that the interests and welfare of the child are considered paramount above all other people involved.

This Centre supports the roles of the Police, the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service, Ministry of Health, Education, Justice and Social Development in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected abuse to these agencies.

This Centre has a responsibility under legislation (Vulnerable Children's Act 2015) and in society to provide a safe environment that ensures all children are treated with dignity and respect, are free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and are entitled to physical and emotional well-being.

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise, and respond to abuse. As part of their induction, new staff will familiarise themselves with the Centre's policies about child protection and will be encouraged to read the resource material available, including *Safer Organisations*, *Safer Children* (found in office). Staff, parents, caregivers and whānau are encouraged to be aware of personal safety and not place themselves in any compromising situation that could be misinterpreted.

This Centre's employment procedures include a thorough checking of applicants' work histories and making personal contact with both referees and some past employers. This is done with the applicant's consent. Our prime considerations in choosing staff are ensuring that they have skills and attributes which contribute to the children's safety, and to their healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

This Centre encourages staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate. It discourages close personal relationships and or care-taking activities with children and families outside the work environment.

We are proud of the warm and gentle relationships we have with the children who attend this Centre and are happy to be observed doing our work. Parents, caregivers and whānau are welcome to visit freely and be involved as much as possible. All policies relating to the children in our care are freely available to all existing and prospective parents.

The Centre aims to build self-esteem and self-awareness in children, encouraging the development of assertiveness skills to assist children in dealing with uncomfortable or potentially unsafe situations.

Reviewed: 27.04.2018

Definition:

Child abuse is defined as physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect, which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.

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—

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

For example, teacher, learning support worker or van driver

Non-Core Worker means a children's worker who has regular, but limited, child contact. For example, the kitchen person or administration only.

Child Safe Practice and Guidelines:

1. It is the expectation of this Centre that no adult, be they staff member, trainee, parent or visitor; shall by their act or failure to act, collude in or cause any instance of child abuse.
2. It is the duty of all staff, trainees, and other adults at the Centre to take all steps necessary to prevent any instance of child abuse at the Centre.
3. It is the duty of all staff, trainees and other adults to IMMEDIATELY report to the Team Leader or Licensee (as appropriate) if they have good cause to suspect or believe that child abuse is occurring, or has occurred or might occur to any enrolled child at the Centre.
4. **CONFIDENTIALITY**
Following the requirements of the Privacy Principles all matters related to individual cases or reported abuse are CONFIDENTIAL to those directly involved and should under no circumstances be discussed with other staff, other parents, children or any other person in or outside the Centre. Failure of staff to comply with this policy is regarded as a serious offence against the rules of the Centre.
5. Full and detailed written records are to be kept (as directed by the Team Leader) of every related discussion, act or incident which involves a parent, child, accused person or staff member from the first instance child abuse is suspected. These records must also meet Privacy Principle requirements, i.e. the information must be collected directly from the person concerned, the reasons for collecting this information must be transparent, as must be what it is going to be used for, where it will be held, what is compulsory/volunteer, and that people concerned have the right to access and correct collected information.
6. Staff must not assume responsibility for action or advice beyond the level of their own expertise.
7. **DESIGN:**
During any further planning or renovation of the Centre environment, care will be taken to ensure the risk of adults (with a child or small group) being left unobserved will be minimal.
8. **PROGRAMME & SUPERVISION PRINCIPLES:**

All children in play areas are to be within sight of the staff member responsible for them at all times and where practical all staff are to be observable by other staff members at all times. All parts of the toilet/bathroom area where children can go shall be able to be observed by staff supervising.

9. OUTINGS:

No child may be taken from the Centre by any staff member or adult (except in emergencies) without permission of the parent and with the specific knowledge of the Team Leader. Outside visits are to be recorded on an excursion form (who, duration and purpose) and ideally should be with not less than 2 children. Unless otherwise agreed with the children's parents there should always be two staff in attendance on any outing. If there are more than 3 children present for transport two adults must be present. Trip notices and permission slips will be kept for future reference.

10. APPLICATION SCREENING:

All applicants for positions to be filled at this Centre will undergo Safety checks which meet the *Vulnerable Children's Act 2015*, before they are employed. This process will include:

- An interview by phone, face to face, or through other means of technology.
- Proof of identity (two forms, one photographic)
- Declaration on staff application forms by the applicant that they have not been convicted or accused of any crimes against children, found in the job application form.
- 5 year chronological work history formally in the job application form (Trainees with little or no previous employment record in Early Childhood Centres will be asked to supply character references from responsible persons as to their suitability to supervise and work with young children).
- Proof of Professional Organisations they are members of (where relevant)
- Proof of practicing certificate and/or registration
- Permission to contact at least one reference, not related.
- A police check will be requested through New Zealand Police. All Police vetting forms will be destroyed after a year. All core staff will be police vetted every 3 years.
- An Employment Verification Safety Check List will be filled out throughout the process, the Owner/Manager will then assess the person based on the risk assessment, determining if they are fit to employ as a children's core worker and sign off the Employment Verification Safety Check List if appropriate.

11. TRAINING

As part of our induction, new staff will be made aware of the policy on child protection and will be asked to read *Safer Organisations, Safer Children* (found in office). All staff will be made aware of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse.

Management will ensure that all staff and Team Leaders are aware of their responsibilities with regard to this policy and have sufficient information and skills to implement it. Management shall, each year, consider the options for training, professional development or workshops which will improve the competency of the staff in implementing this policy (as part of individual and Centre professional development programme)

12. VISITOR SUPERVISION LIMITS:

Parents, families and visiting early childhood colleagues are generally welcome to be at the Centre at all times and parents are particularly welcome to participate in the Centre. However, visitors, other than parents, families and other early childhood colleagues are not encouraged,

unless on official business. All unrecognised visitors to the Centre will be asked by the nearest senior staff member (“can I help you?”) to ascertain their business. Visitors without good reason to be on the premises will be asked to leave. The Team Leader and all staff shall ensure visitors and contractors on official business in the Centre shall not be left unsupervised with any children at any time. No persons other than employed staff or trainees shall be given tasks which involve nappy changing, toileting or responsibility for supervision of children. Parents and other visitors may only be given tasks under direct supervision of a staff member.

13. LIMITS ON TOUCHING AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR:

Whilst it is appropriate to respond to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, or who needs reassurance or comfort, it is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection or touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs.

Physical contact of children during changing or cleansing must be for the purpose of that task only and is not to be more than is necessary for that job.

Guidelines for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

These guidelines are designed to use along side the *Working Together with Children and Young People (located in Office)*.

Step 1: Consider the Possibility

Always consider the possibility that abuse or neglect is taking place when a child is injured, appears distressed or depressed without obvious reason, has persistent or new behavioural problems or displays unusual/fearful responses to caregivers.

Step 2: Look for Signs of Abuse

- Look in each of the categories: physical signs, behavioural signs, developmental signs, parent/caregiver signs, disclosure as a sign (these are listed in detail in the *Working Together with Children and Young People (located in Office)*).
- A cluster or pattern of signs will provide more support for a finding of abuse/neglect.
- Some signs are more specific to abuse than others, eg:
 - disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child or young person,
 - age inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge;
 - specific sites or patterns of injuries.
- Development of signs in one or more categories at the same time (e.g. developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs together) indicates a pattern.
- Most signs are non specific to abuse or neglect. They must be examined in the total context of the child or young person’s situation. Consider other possible explanations for signs and whether specialist assessment is required to determine these and to assist with developing an investigation plan.

Step 3: Document all Information

- Obtain as much detail and specific information as possible:
 - Specific times of any incidents
 - Places of any incidents
 - Who was present
 - Word for word recording of disclosures is especially important.
- State who provided the information

- Record accurately your observations and interviews.
- Date, sign and time all information gathered.
- State whether or not you consider the child or young person is in danger, and what action you have taken to ensure the child or young person's safety.

Rules of Safe Handling:

- Don't panic.
- Listen to the child.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child comes before the interests of any other person.
- Write down what the child says.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing.
- Tell them that they will get help.
- Tell the Team Leader or Person Responsible as soon as possible.
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your Team Leader.

Procedures:

WHEN A STAFF MEMBER IS SUSPECTED:

1. An initial report of any incident or accusation must be written down in full as soon as possible, following the guidelines and principles for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Where appropriate the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.
2. Where appropriate the Team Leader or Management will discuss the incident as soon as practicable with the staff member and other possible witnesses. The staff member's version of the incident(s) will be investigated before any decision is made. Until a full and fair investigation is completed those involved in the allegation, investigation or report must not discuss these matters with other staff, nor the person(s) or parents involved in the alleged abuse, nor other parents, nor with persons outside the Centre.
3. Where the investigation takes more than one day, the staff member may be asked to carry out alternate duties or be suspended until a full investigation can be completed.
4. Where there is some substantive evidence that an instance of child abuse may have taken place an appropriate outside support agency (CYFS or Police) should be contacted by Management. Where there are reasonable grounds, after proper investigation (in terms of disciplinary procedure), to believe that an instance of child abuse has taken place, that staff member may be suspended (not permitted to be at work). The employee will be advised on their rights to seek support and advice from appropriate representatives.
5. The Centre will take into account the advice of CYFS or other support agency as to whether Police (or parents) will be advised, unless it is clear that a criminal offence has taken place, in which case the Management will advise the Police directly.
6. The parent of the child (or children) affected will be advised as soon as possible after the investigations are reasonably complete, if the accusation or implication appears to be substantiated, unless such advice is deemed by the Team Leader to be inappropriate.
7. Whilst the protection of the child shall be paramount and the next obligation of the Management shall be a full and fair investigation. The impact that a false allegation on staff members can have shall not be forgotten. Care will be taken to ensure that the presumption of innocence of those accused or implicated will be maintained until investigations are complete. Counselling and time off will be offered to staff who have been falsely accused.

WHEN ABUSE OUTSIDE THE CENTRE IS SUSPECTED:

1. Where there is reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is subject to abuse, (but not in immediate danger), the Management and Team Leader will be advised and will arrange for the child to be observed and a confidential record will be initiated.
2. Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in immediate danger of abuse when they leave the Centre or where an investigation or observations reveal evidence of abuse, the Team Leader shall notify the appropriate outside agency as soon as possible (i.e. CYFS or Police).
3. All observations, after an investigation has been notified shall be kept in writing.
4. If it is clear from the evidence that parents) are not involved as parties to the alleged abuse, the Management may, if appropriate, advise them in a suitable professional and sensitive manner, that an investigation is being initiated or that CYFS or any other agency has been notified and to take necessary steps to ensure that they have support and information and are made aware of a suitable referral or support service.

Statutory Sources and Resources for Review:

This policy must be reviewed at least every 3 years.

Vulnerable Children's Act 2015

Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989

Privacy Act, 1993

Safer Organisations, Safer Children

Safer Recruitment, Safer Children

Support Line Contact List

Child, Youth & Family	0508 326 459
Tauranga Police	07 577 4300

Strengthening Families

Charlotte Van Doorn- Coordinator	07 394 4179
Glynette Gainfort - Coordinator	07 394 4192
Ros de Candole- LMG Chair	07 571 7800

Whānau Organisation

Plunketline	0800 933 922
Positive Parenting	07 578 5505
Relationships Aotearoa	07 578 7833
Tauranga HELP	07 578 8227
Tauranga Moana Victim Support	07 577 6660
Victims Advocate Line	0800 650 654
Women's Refuge	07 541 1911

Iwi Social Services

Māori Women's Welfare League	04 473 6451
Nga Ngaru Hauora O Aotearoa	07 542 9091
Relationships Aotearoa	0800 735 283

Children's Teams

Eastern Bay of Plenty	029 350 0039
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Family/Whānau Counselling Agencies

Bay Counselling	07 578 0959
Living without Violence	07 577 9297
Family Violence Information Line	0800 456 450
Family Planning Association	07 578 8539
Family Works Northern, Community Services	07 575 9709
Special Education Services	07 571 7800
Support Net Tauranga (for people with disabilities)	07 571 0093
Parent to Parent Coastal	0508 236 236

Budget Services

Budget Advisory Service	07 571 0959
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Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services

Free Drug and Alcohol Counselling	0800 571 3712
Health Line	0800 611 116
Alcohol and Drug Services	07 579 8391
Alcohol and Drug Helpline	0800 787 797
Alcoholics Anonymous	08002296757
Hamner Clinic	07 579 6470