



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Overview:

This policy outlines Carrigane Early Childhood Centre's commitment to child protection. It includes our protocols when child abuse is reported to us, or suspected by us. It also includes the safety practices that we take to prevent child abuse.

Purpose Statement

- All staff at Carrigane have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care and we are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the protection of all children. The safety and well-being of the child is the first priority when investigating suspected or alleged abuse.
- We support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga O Tamariki (Ministry for Vulnerable Children) in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.
- We support whānau/families to protect their children.
- Children are entitled to physical and emotional well-being and to have their needs met in a safe environment that is free from
 - Physical Abuse
 - Emotional Abuse
 - Sexual Abuse
- In all matters relating to the care or protection of children, the welfare of the child comes first. This is in line with the paramount principle set out in the Vulnerable Children's Act.
- This centre is totally committed to the protection of children from any sort of abuse.
- This commitment means that the interest and welfare of the children are the prime considerations when any decisions are made about suspected abuse.

- We will respond appropriately using the services available to us.
- We will have no hesitation in reporting any case that we suspect.
- We have knowledge of, and relationships with, agencies and individuals in the community available to support and counsel families.
- We provide a homely environment in warm, safe, secure, caring and loving surroundings.

PURPOSE:

- To ensure children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.
- To ensure staff experience an environment that prevents unfounded accusations of child abuse.
- To develop effective procedures to deal with cases of suspected abuse.
- To have a referral procedure to the appropriate agency .
- To meet all requirements of the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

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

A full definition of each type of abuse is included in the attached appendix of this policy

Possible ECS situations

Abuse within an early childhood centre could be:

- Adult to adult
- Adult to child
- Child to child

This model addresses adult to child abuse. The police can be contacted where appropriate for adult to adult abuse. If one child is abusing another, it is often an indication that the abusing child has been abused. Treat this as an indicator and compile information about this child’s behaviour over time to look for a pattern. Discuss with Oranga O Tamariki social worker or Plunketline.

This policy is to be reviewed annually with Staff, management and centre families.

The next review will be in July 2017. A digital version of this will be available online on the centre's website

PROCEDURE:

STAFF:

- All new staff to be informed about the content of the child protection policy along with other relevant policies as part of their orientation.
- All staff will be given information and training so they have the skills necessary to recognise and respond to suspected child abuse and neglect.

Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

- All new staff members appointed are subjected to worker safety checking in accordance with Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. The Manager will follow the guidelines given in the document 'Safer recruitment Safer children' written by 'Child Matters'.
- There are 7 steps involved in checking worker safety. This includes: a police vet; identity verification; references and an interview; seeking a work history and contacting previous employers.
- If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, the applicant will not be employed.
- Further information on this is contained in the centre policy 'Appointing New Staff' and the document 'Safer Recruitment Safer Children'.

Checks Required for Periodically Checking Existing Employees

Every three years following their initial check, the following must be completed for each person who is employed as a core or non-core worker:

1. Confirmation that the worker has not changed their name on the documents produced during the identity confirmation.

If there have been a change to the person name since he or she was last safety checked the person must reconfirm his or her identity by producing a supporting name change document relating to his or her name change.

2. Seeking information from any relevant professional organisation or licensing authority, confirming that the person is currently a member of the organization, or licensed or registered by the authority.
3. Obtaining and considering information from a **New Zealand Police Vet** - unless at least three yearly New Zealand Police Vetting is already a condition of the worker holding professional registration or a practicing certificate (and the specified organisation confirms that the specified organisation has confirmed that the registration certificate is current).
4. Evaluation of the above information to assess the risk the worker would pose to the safety of children if employed or engaged, taking into account whether the role is core children's workforce or non-core children's workforce.

Students on Practicum

All students on practicum at the centre must be safety checked by the tertiary education organisation that they are enrolled in. The centre needs to confirm that the safety check is to the Vulnerable Children's Act standard, and also do an identity check and a risk assessment.

The centre will need to confirm the identity of the student by checking two forms of identity documents –

- An original primary identity document (e.g. passport) and
- A secondary identify document (e.g. a drivers license)

Once this information has been gathered an assessment is made of the risk the student would pose to the safety of the children if engaged.

Training and support

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly

- Understanding child abuse and the indicators of child abuse.
- How to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regards to child abuse.
- Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues.
- Planning, environment and supervision to minimise risk.
- Dealing with child/parents/whānau/family.

Safety practice for staff and children

- A good staff/child ratio is always maintained.
- A minimum of two staff members are rostered on at all times when there are children on the premises during the centre hours of operation.
- Staff should be aware of where children are at all times and whenever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used.
- The closed off toilet area in the Infant centre has an observation window.
- The toilet area in the Early Childhood Centre is designed to provide enough visibility for appropriate supervision while still allowing an element of privacy for children.
- As far as it is practically possible a staff member working alone with a group of children will not be behind closed doors.
- Staff will at all time be professional in working with children, will have clear expectations of what is appropriate adult behaviour and will keep professional and personal lives separate.
- If teachers are tending to children's toileting, or helping children to change clothes, they will be in sight of other teachers, or let another teacher know what they are doing.
- If a child has not been picked up from the centre after the centre's closing time of 5.30pm, both teachers rostered at that time will stay with the child until he or she has been collected.
- Staff should not be alone when transporting a child, unless an emergency requires it, such as when urgent medical attention is needed and another staff member is not available to accompany the child.
- Children are not to be taken from centre premises without written parental consent.
- Visitors, volunteers and outside instructors will be monitored at all times by staff.
- In sleeping areas when there is only one staff member rostered to supervise children, they should be visible at all times.
- When teachers take a child or group of children with them while moving around the centre grounds, they should be visible to other staff members.

PARENTS:

- The centre has always had an open door policy where parents are welcome to drop in unannounced and are welcome to stay and take part in activities.
- Parents are welcome to attend change their own child's nappy, but not any other children.
- Parents are to voice any concerns through the Resolving Concerns policy.
- Parents wishing to confide information to a staff member that is "not to go any further" shall be told by the staff member before that information is revealed, that if it is a matter concerning the welfare of the child an undertaking to keep that information secret cannot be given.
- Appointments may be made with senior staff for discussions where necessary.

REPORTING PROCEDURES AFTER ABUSE IS SUSPECTED:

- Where a staff member has noticed symptoms of possible abuse it must be reported to the head teacher and recorded.
- As some of the symptoms could have had other causes it is important to look carefully at what is known about the child and any recent changes in his/her circumstances which might be significant, meanwhile all staff caring for that particular child should be alerted and the behaviour monitored.
- Concerns, observations and anything said by the child should be recorded.
- Concerns should be written up as a factual, accurate, concise record, signed and dated.
- Staff should not investigate, or interview the child. (Only Police and Oranga O Tamariki have the mandate to do this).
- Decisions should not be made alone.
- Staff should act upon their concerns, and not leave it to someone else or hope it will not occur again.
- Staff should seek support for themselves. This situation is can be very stressful. They should discuss support with the person they contact if reporting concerns.

Staff should use the process as recommended by the Children's Action Plan guided by the Vulnerable Children's Act

ENQUIRES TO: The Manager

DATE: November 1993

Reviewed September 1998

- August 2000
- August 2001
- August 2002
- October 2003
- October 2004, October 2005, October 2006, October 2007, November 2008, November 2010, October 2012, October 2013, October 2014, October 2015, June 2016, January 2017