

Child Protection Policy

Purpose statement

Child abuse and neglect is not acceptable. Children need our protection. Where protection is not adequately provided by adults responsible for the child, others need to step in to ensure the child receives adequate protection. The safety of the child must be paramount and all staff and caregivers are responsible for the safety of children in their care.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate actions are taken to protect all children enrolled in our care from abuse and neglect through;

- Knowing - Understanding what is abuse and neglect.
- Keeping Us Safe - Outlining procedures and expectations that ensure Fingerprints is a safe environment free from abuse and neglect.
- Responding - Defining our roles and responsibilities in relation to the identification and reporting of abuse and neglect.
- Working Together - Outlining procedures for supporting children, families and reporting to and working with outside agencies in the instance that abuse or neglect is suspected.

This policy applies to employees, contractors, volunteers and other adults (and children not enrolled) but may be present in our service. The Centre Director is firstly responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and is supported by the Service provider. This policy is reviewed at least every three years.

Policy principles

- The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- We recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- We have a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- We are committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and high quality.
- We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- We are committed to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues or the caregiver.
- We are committed to promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

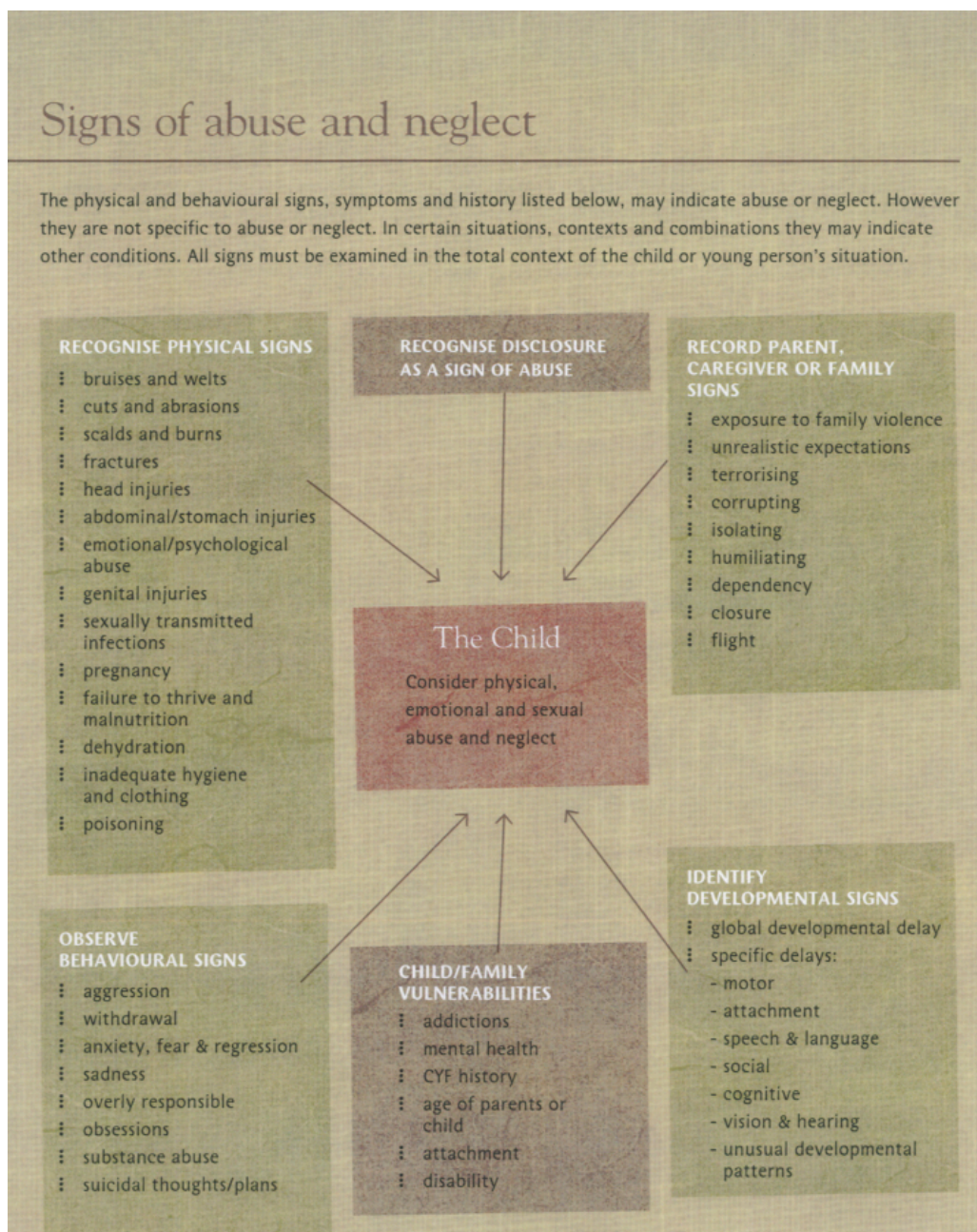
Knowing

Definitions

Child Abuse: Includes physical, emotional and sexual harming, abuse, ill-treatment or deprivation of a child and includes neglect. Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in the impaired functioning or development of that child. Neglect may be physical, medical, abandonment, neglectful supervision (failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision) or refusal to assume parental responsibility.

Vulnerable children: Are children who are at significant risk of harm to their well being now and into the future as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised and, in some cases, due to their own complex needs. Environmental factors that influence child vulnerability include not having their basic emotional, physical, social, developmental and/or cultural needs met at home or in their wider community.

Identifying possible abuse or neglect



For further information see Oranga Tamariki Policy statements [Safer organisations safer children](#)

OR www.childmatters.org.nz -

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/56/learn-about-child-abuse/recognise-the-signs>

When we review this policy each staff member will review parts of these pamphlets and websites. We will refer to this information when a staff member identifies the possibility of child abuse in the preschool.

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Working-with-children/Childrens-act-requirements/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

More information, guidance or support can also be sought from

The Vulnerable Children's Hub (VCH) - or 0800 FOR OUR KIDS - VCH will become the first port of call for triaging incidences of abuse or neglect and will assist and guide if needed.

Oranga Tamariki - Call 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) Email edassist@ot.govt.nz

The police - (03) 363 7400

Keeping Us Safe

Other Policies to guide us

- Positive Behaviour Guidance
- Human Resources - Police Vetting, Staff Complaints
- Natural and Man Made Emergencies (permission by parent for a child to be picked up from preschool must always be in writing)
- Complaints
- Excursions
- Nappy Changing and Toileting
- Sick or Soiled Children
- 3 Monthly Emergency Drills (Including Shelter in Place)

Prevention Practices

The Centre Director and Team Leader will work to increase staff and parental awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse, including creating an understanding of inappropriate touching.

The centre has established rules about acceptable touching of children, which are discussed at staff meetings.

- If a child initiates physical contact in the seeking of affection, reassurance or comfort it is appropriate to respond. It is not appropriate to force unwanted affection or touching on a child.
- In staff initiated physical contact, the principal that they will only do so to meet the child's physical or emotional needs should guide staff. Touching should never be initiated to gratify adult needs. Children will not be asked to take care of adult needs, physical or otherwise.
- Physical contact of children during changing or cleaning must be for the purpose of that task only and be no more than is necessary. Self help skills and independence will be encouraged.

The Centre Director and Team leader can direct parents/whānau to appropriate resources for children and adults about child abuse. Teachers will, when appropriate, discuss with our 4 year olds, a 5-6 week curriculum based on the All About Me programme designed by the Police around keeping ourselves safe.

To assist in employing appropriate staff - A police vet will be carried out on all staff not holding a current practising certificate at the time of employment and thereafter, three yearly. Two forms of ID will be required. Checks of professional organisations and/or memberships will be made. Due care will be taken when doing background reference checks and a decision matrix will guide our employment process. Every contractor, or the employee of a contractor, volunteer or student who has or is likely to have unsupervised access to children at the ECE service during service opening hours will be vetted at least every three years. We will form Memorandum of Understandings with agencies who send other children's workers or workers into our centre to ensure they have appropriately vetted these people. Contractors who will work at Fingerprints Christian Preschool when children are present will be supervised by staff or are required to be police vetted. Fingerprints Christian Preschool has been approved to obtain police vetting. For further details on the vetting process see the Human Resources Policy.

All volunteers and visitors must have contact with a staff member on arrival and be noted in the visitors diary.

Volunteers and parents will be supervised if with children (other than their own) in the centre. The Centre Director or Team Leader/Person Responsible along with staff will ensure other adults are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children.

Only permanent, fixed term staff or long term relievers will undertake nappy changing and toileting of children and change sick or soiled children. Students, short term relievers and volunteers will be supervised in the sleep room. No person under 17 years old will be employed or given supervisory responsibility.

When using magazines or internet material with children, staff will check material for explicit content and remove any concerning material before the magazine or internet material is shared.

Because of the Christian character of our preschool, personal and professional roles may overlap. Staff are required to be open about their personal relationships and/or care taking activities with children and families outside the work environment. These relationships will be openly discussed at staff meetings. Any concerns will be forwarded to the Centre Director, Team Leader and/or Service provider. Babysitting is not recommended and has to be discussed, prior to agreement, with Centre Director.

The Team Leader will ensure no child is taken from the centre by any staff member or adult, without the written permission of a parent.

Oversee the collection of children.

When an emergency occurs, the centre staff remain responsible for children until:

(In accordance with Reg 58) The service provider of a centre must ensure that no child leaves the centre with any person, unless the person—

(a) has the role of providing day-to-day care for the child; or

(b) is authorised in writing to take the child by a person who has the role of providing day-to-day care for the child.

In circumstances where it is not possible for children to return home alternative arrangements must be made in consultation with the Police.

When children are collected the roll must be signed and the time recorded by the parent/caregiver. If the police service collects the child, then the roll must also be signed and time recorded by them. The following information must also be recorded.

- **Name of police officer collecting child and official capacity**

- Ask for police officers official I.D.

Safety on trips - see Excursion Policy

If a staff member or any person in the centre has reasonable grounds to believe that any person is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behavior, must report the identified person to the Centre Director or Team Leader. The Centre Director or Team leader will take steps to exclude this person from the centre's premises.

Our child protection policies are available to all parents and prospective parents on our parent noticeboard and as a link on our private facebook page. Information about child abuse and appropriate responses to it, will be available to parents/whānau in the parent library and through discussion.

The Centre Director will maintain appropriate records of complaints, disclosures, reports to agencies and investigations and ensure the confidential nature of these records is observed.

Responding

Child Disclosures - If the abuse or neglect is identified through the disclosure of a child remember this is a critical moment. Your response is extremely important.

Listen

- do not put words into the child's mouth
- allow them to tell only as much as they want to
- ensure the child's immediate safety

Let them know

- you're glad they told you
- you're sorry it happened
- it's not their fault
- you'll help

Do not

- over-react
- panic
- criticise
- ask pre-disposing questions
- make promises you may not be able to keep
- formally investigate the situation or interviewing the child. Obtain only necessary relevant facts.

Report circumstances to Centre Director or Service provider (if Centre Directory is not available).

Record date, time of disclosure, concerns, observations, and anything said by child in our google docs template for disclosures (under Complaints and Disclosures in the Policy folder). [Disclosures](#)
[Complaints](#)

If there is no short-term risk the Centre Director and/or Service provider will take the time to consult thoroughly with appropriate members of the teaching team in order to make a well-informed decision.

Adult Observations

- If the observation is by staff member of abuse or neglect of a child in our centre by employees, contractors, volunteers and other adults (and children not enrolled in but) present in our service **MUST** be reported immediately to the Service Provider and Centre Director.
- If the observation is by an adult (other than a staff member) of abuse or neglect of a child in our centre by employees, contractors, volunteers and other adults (and children not enrolled in but) present in our service should be reported via our Complaints Policy immediately to the Service Provider. Any person may also notify VCH or OT directly where they suspect abuse or neglect.

Responding to suspected child abuse:

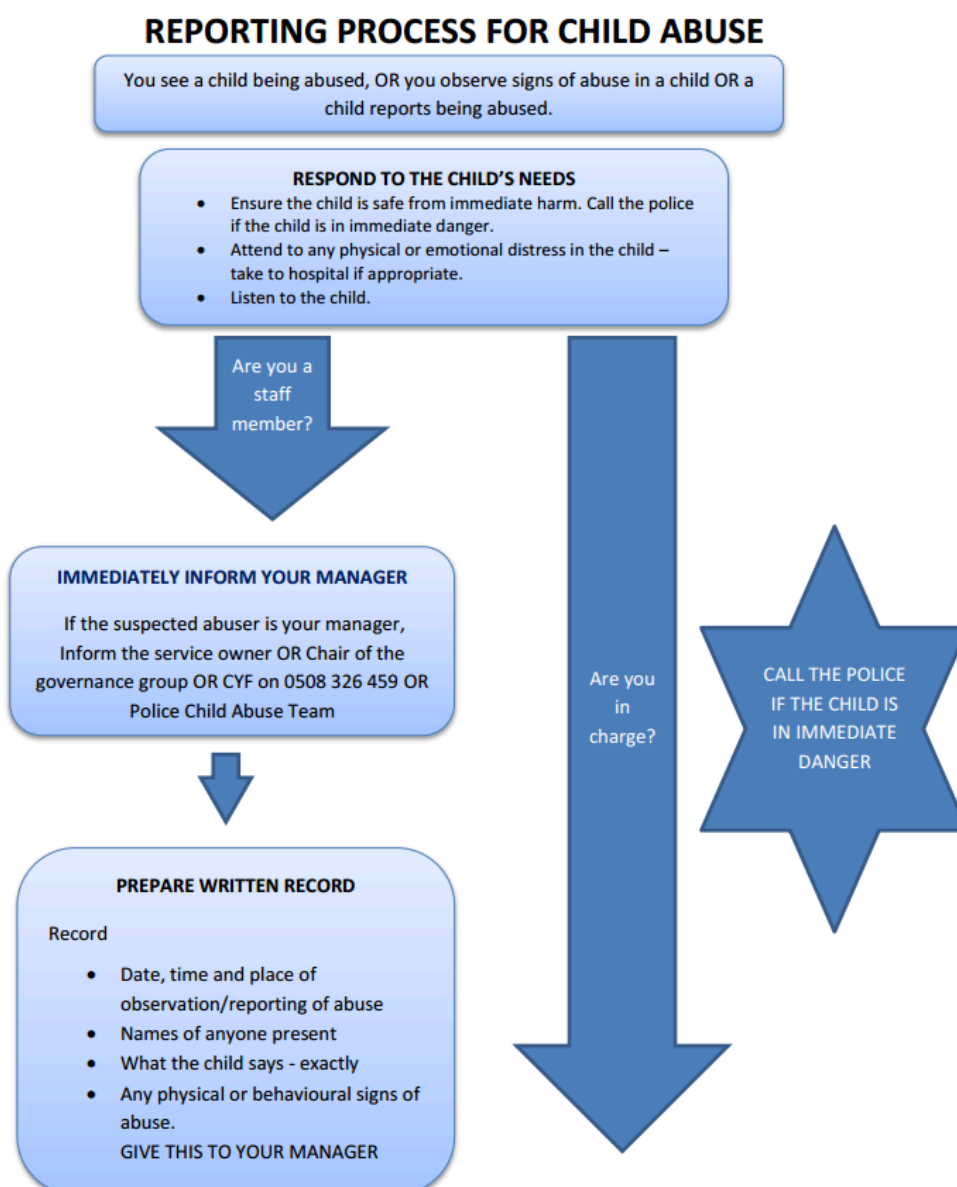
- Involving Adults Outside the Centre - Where family or an adult outside of the centre is accused and the Centre Director or Team Leader and Service Provider suspect abuse or neglect they will decide whether to consult with or report to VCH, OT, Police and other agencies, which have specialist knowledge and resources in accordance with the flowchart below. We do not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise. Local iwi may also be contacted if appropriate. The Centre Director and Service provider will take steps to ensure support for staff involved in the disclosure.
- Involving Adults Inside the Centre - **The Centre Director, Team Leader and Service Provider will ensure that any person ill treating a child at the centre will be excluded from the centre (Reg 56).** Where a staff member (or person working with children in our centre) is accused of abuse or neglect the following will be followed:
 - The staff member/adult accused of abuse or neglect will have no further contact with children while the matter is investigated (or maybe suspended in accordance with our Employment Agreement if Serious Misconduct is suspected).
 - Staff members will be fully informed of their rights, including their right to seek support, and processes in the Employment Agreement will be followed.
 - Investigations will protect the rights of the staff member/adult accused of the abuse.
 - The Service Provider will seek guidance from the MOE Trauma Team (0800TITEAM) for guidance and will likely involve outside agencies such as VCH or the Police guiding the parameters for any investigation of the allegation.
 - If after an initial investigation and discussion of findings with outside agencies the Service Provider finds the allegation is unjustified the staff member will be quickly returned to duties.
 - The person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.
 - Any investigation by a statutory outside agency will not replace an employment investigation if the Service Provider is concerned about the staff member's behaviour.
 - When one staff member brings an allegation of child abuse by another staff member/adult to the attention of the Service provider, the name of the staff member will not be disclosed without their permission unless it is to OT or the Police and is necessary to do so in the interests of the child.
 - We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.
 - The Service Provider will make a mandatory report to the Education Council if a certified teacher is dismissed or resigns as a result of any investigation that brings into question the teacher's competency or conduct as a result of the complaint.

- We recognise that this process is likely to be stressful to our staff team. We will work within the bounds of confidentiality to keep our team informed and at the conclusion of all investigations will bring an appropriate report to a staff meeting.

Working Together

Flowchart for reporting

The following flowchart is taken from the Children's Action Plan and the following text has been adapted to provide a process for reporting child abuse that is relevant for Fingerprints Christian Preschool. Please note that all calls should now be directed to VCH - 0800FOROURKIDS



PERSON IN CHARGE

GATHER INFORMATION

Ensure you have a full report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support. Get them to sign the report. Tell them what actions you will take. Ring CYF (0508 326 459) or Plunketline (0800 933 92) and discuss your concerns. CYF will tell you if you need to do a formal report about your concerns.

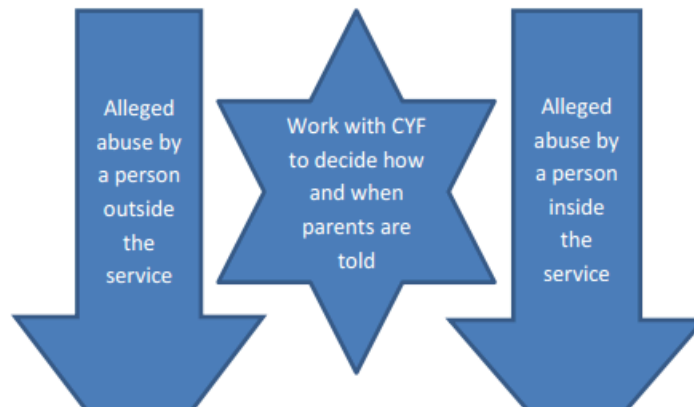
REPORT ABUSE

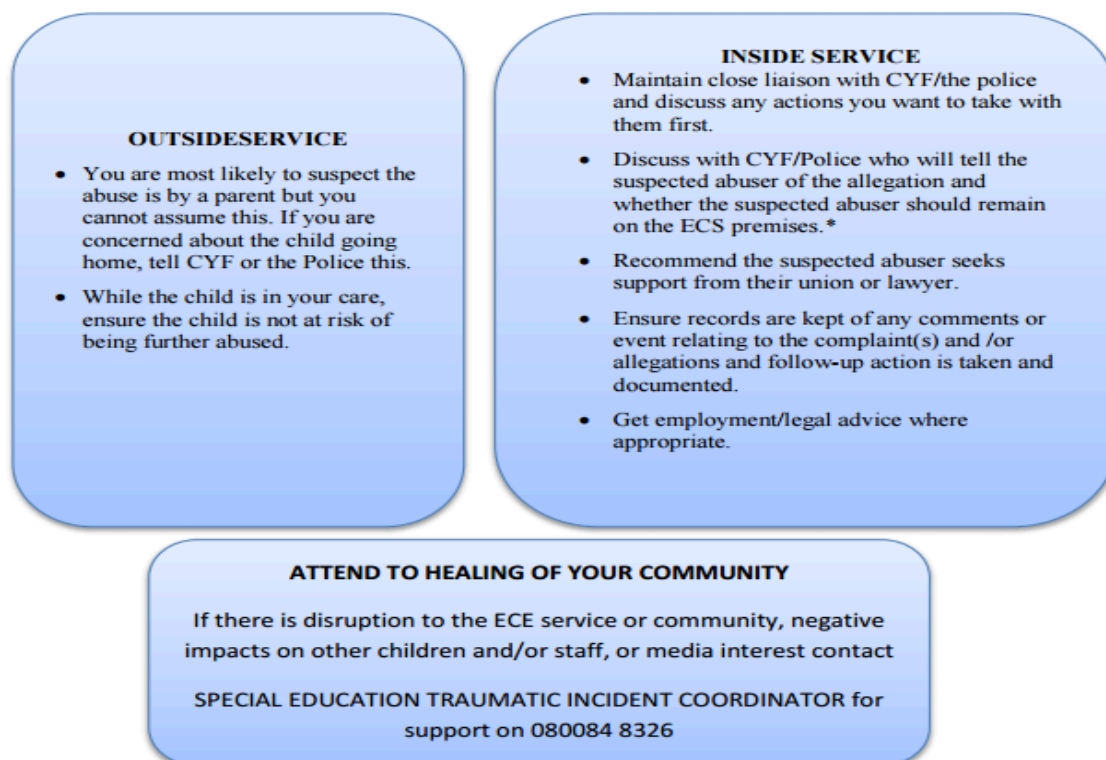
Ring CYF on 0508 326459 and tell them:

(If it is an emergency, ring the Police Child Abuse Team)

- your own name and contact details
- name of child/children (also known as/nicknames)
- date of birth (if known)
- ethnicity (if known)
- name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation
- current legal custodians
- reasons why it is believed that the child has been abused
- other significant background information
- any concerns for your physical safety in making this notification.

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – get timeframe





FINALLY! GET SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

(Note-where CYF is stated in this diagram, this refers to the new name-Oranga Tamariki)

Confidentiality and information sharing.

Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 ("**Oranga Tamariki Act**"), any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to OT or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Care and consideration must be taken with the sharing of information. Information about a child in our care may be shared verbally, in a staff meeting or in the Communication Book. Where private information is recorded access is restricted to our staff team, all of whom have signed an Employment Agreement which requires them to protect the privacy of such information. A breach of this privacy would constitute Serious Misconduct. Short term relievers and volunteers are not given access to this information.

The Privacy Act 2020 and **Oranga Tamariki Act** allows information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. It is important that if a child is at risk of, or suffering, abuse then that information is passed to the VCH or appropriate agency to take action. Treat information about a child in a discreet and confidential manner, understanding it is the child's personal information. Do not disclose the child's identity if able to do so. Be aware of where conversations are being held, ensure they are in a place which is private and not able to be overheard. The privacy of those concerned will be respected at all times. Failure to respect this will be regarded as serious misconduct.

Staff will be informed of events as required.

Please see the Privacy Commission's website for further information and guidance.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS:

Education (Early childhood) Regulations 2008 46, 56, Licensing Criteria - HS31, HS32

Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989, no24, Section 15.

Vulnerable Children Act 2014

<http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/assets/CAP-Uploads/childrens-workforce/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

Official Privacy Act 2020

Approved by:

Centre Director : *Hilary Henderson*

Date: January 2024

Service Provider

Contact Person : *Aaron Donaldson*

Date: January 2024

Reviewed: January 2024

To be reviewed: August 2026

2024

1 *Is this policy working?*

Yes apart from the all about me programme-not sure if Police still in favour?

2 *Does it match our practice?*

Yes, we are quite a vigilant team on this policy

3 *Is it supported by research?*

Yes, Juliet Wensley has worked with other ECE/MOE advisers on research for this topic