

### INTENT / RATIONALE

This policy affirms our centre's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children. It outlines the procedures to be followed when child abuse is reported or suspected and provides practical guidance on preventative measures to reduce the risk of abuse occurring.

All staff members are required to be familiar with this policy and to adhere strictly to its protocols. Our collective responsibility is to ensure a safe environment where children are protected, respected, and supported.

## IMPORTANT

*Anyone who believes that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), neglected, or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person can make a report of concern. Any notification made to Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police (specified agencies) requires notification to the Ministry of Education at the same time (HS128).*

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Our foremost priority is the protection of children from abuse and neglect, and we are dedicated to creating an environment where every child feels safe, valued, and supported.

We actively support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children—in the investigation of suspected or alleged abuse, and we will report any concerns to these agencies promptly and responsibly.

We work in partnership with families and whānau to uphold the safety and wellbeing of their children, recognising the vital role they play in a child's life.

Our environment is one where physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse are not tolerated. We are committed to maintaining a culture of vigilance, care, and respect.

### POLICY PRINCIPLES

We are firm in our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Our guiding principles are:

- Child-Centred Approach – the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all our actions and decisions.
- Whānau Engagement – we recognise and respect the rights of family and whānau to be involved in decisions affecting their children.
- Staff Capability – we are committed to ensuring all staff are trained to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and to respond appropriately and confidently.
- Collaborative Practice – we support our staff to work in alignment with this policy and in partnership with external agencies to uphold consistent, high-quality child protection standards.
- Legal Compliance – we will always act in accordance with relevant legislation and regulatory responsibilities.
- Information Sharing – We are committed to sharing information in a timely and appropriate manner, and to discussing concerns, with colleagues and management to ensure a coordinated response.
- Safe Culture – We promote a culture where staff feel safe and supported to challenge poor practice or raise concerns without fear of reprisal.
- A commitment to develop and maintain links with iwi, Pasifika and other cultural and community groups and to ensure that important cultural concepts (e.g. whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice.

### MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Management ensures:

- there are policies for the appropriate response to, and management of, child abuse and neglect.
- procedures exist to provide appropriate, adequate support for, and supervision of, staff affected by child abuse or neglect.
- staff seek advice when child abuse is suspected or identified.

- the Child Protection policy is reviewed at least 3 yearly and as required.
- there is a training plan that ensures teachers receive child protection training upon induction and refresher training at least every 3 years.
- ensure there are tools in place, and these are accessible to staff for recording care and protection concerns.
- provide support and advice for staff regarding child abuse and neglect.
- committed to implementing safer recruitment procedures. Safety checking is completed upon employment (7 step safety check) and every 3 years subsequently (4 step safety check)
- service layout supports the supervision of children and minimises areas of low visibility
- the service implements a supervision policy that ensures all children are supervised and those adults working with children are supervised by a Person Responsible.

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Child** – Any child or young person aged under 18 years and who is not married or in a civil union.

**Staff** – Any adult who is employed by or volunteers for our centre and any person or organisation contracted to provide children’s services for our centre.

**Disclosure** – Information given to a staff member by a child, parent/caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

**Person responsible** – The Person responsible in accordance with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 or the designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about any child/children, or they want advice around the child protection policy.

**Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children** – The government agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found in need.

**New Zealand Police (NZ Police)** – The agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

**Safer recruitment** – Following good practice processes for pre-employment checking to manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children’s workforce. This relates to and is in accordance with the mandatory requirements under the Children’s Act 2014.

**Child protection** – Activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect

#### DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

**Child abuse** – Includes 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.

**Emotional abuse** – Emotional abuse is a pattern of systematic and purposeful harm aimed towards the child, which damages their psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional functioning or development. This type of abuse is often repetitive and targeted, and it can include:

- constant degradation or vitriolic criticism
- humiliation or shaming
- isolation from family or peers
- scapegoating (singling out a child for blame or punishment)
- threatening, corrupting, or exploiting the child
- denying access to cultural, faith, or identity-affirming experiences
- exposure to family violence.

**Neglect** – Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning/development of a child or young person. It is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs. Neglect may include:

- physical neglect – not providing adequate food, clothing, shelter, or hygiene
- medical neglect – failing to seek or follow through with necessary medical care
- emotional neglect – ignoring a child’s emotional needs, affection, or support
- supervisory neglect – leaving a child unsupervised or in unsafe situations
- educational neglect – child's educational needs are not adequately met.

**Physical abuse** – Physical abuse is an act that may result in physical harm to a child. This harm may be deliberate or the unintentional result of a deliberate action. It includes both single incidents and patterns of behaviour and may include:

- bruising, cutting, hitting, or beating

- biting, burning, or causing abrasions
- strangulation, suffocation, or drowning
- poisoning or fabricated illness
- shaking (especially of infants)
- use of objects as weapons (e.g. broom, belt, bat)

**Sexual abuse** – Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older, or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose, and includes,

- Touching a child in a sexual way
- Exposing a child to sexual acts or materials
- Involving a child in the production of sexual images or videos
- Encouraging or coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour
- Rape or attempted rape
- Sexual exploitation, including grooming (online or in person)

### IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All staff must be able to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse, and have the confidence to take appropriate action, with the support and guidance of the Person Responsible.

### INDICATORS OF ABUSE

We all have a responsibility in knowing how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect these can be found in the attached *Appendix 1* and at the websites below.

[Identify abuse | Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)

Child Matters is a registered charitable trust that provides guidance, advice, education and support to protect children. Indicators of different types of abuse can be found on the Child Matters website.

[Indicators of Child Abuse | Emotional, Physical, Behavioural](#)

### RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All suspicions, observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Person Responsible as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the child(ren) and ensure that:

- the concern is recorded in accordance with organisational procedures,
- initiate a Report of Concern (RoC) to Oranga Tamariki if there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred, or
- seek advice / consult Oranga Tamariki where evidence is less clear but there is cause for suspicion of abuse.

### ORANGA TAMARIKI CONTACT DETAILS

0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)

[contact@ot.govt.nz](mailto:contact@ot.govt.nz)

0508EDASSIST (0508 332 774)

### RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES AND IDENTIFICATION OF ABUSE

Any person has the right and responsibility to contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police if they are concerned that a child may be in need of care and protection.

**Any notification made to Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police (specified agencies) requires notification to the Ministry of Education at the same time (HS128).**

### MANDATORY REPORTING TO TEACHING COUNCIL OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND (TEACHING COUNCIL)

Under the Education and Training Act 2020, our centre is legally obliged to make a mandatory report to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Teaching Council) when there is reason to believe a teacher has engaged in serious misconduct. This is to be brought to the Teaching Council's attention early in the process and a conclusive assessment of the circumstances is not required by our centre prior to doing this. Failing to make a report is an offence, which carries a fine of up to \$25,000 unless there is reasonable justification.

## PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

The Protected Disclosures Act 2022 encourages employees to disclose and report information about serious wrongdoing in the workplace. This Act provides protection for those employees from criminal and legal retribution and outlines the internal procedure to be followed when investigating the matter.

## TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION

Where appropriate, individuals making an allegation will be provided with a copy of this policy to ensure transparency and understanding of the process.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

All matters related to individual cases are confidential to those directly involved and should under no circumstances be discussed with other staff, other parents, children or any other person outside of our centre. The Privacy Act 2020 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the 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 Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Staff may be required to share information about children and their wellbeing with authorised government agencies such as Oranga Tamariki, the New Zealand Police, the Family Court, legal representatives, and registered health professionals. All requests for information must follow the our centre's formal procedure to ensure compliance with privacy legislation and the protection of children's rights. Information will only be shared when the request is made in writing, appropriate identification and purpose are confirmed, and where necessary, written consent from the child's parent or caregiver is obtained. All responses must be factual, impartial, and approved by the Person responsible before release.

## BEST PRACTICE

Inform parents of your intention if it is safe to do so. However, parental consent is not required to transfer this information as it will be used to prevent harm to a child. Where parents object, the facts should be recorded and note the reasons for your decision to transfer information.

## RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT (SAFETY CHECKING)

Our centre's recruitment policy reflects a commitment to child protection by including comprehensive screening procedures in accordance with the Children's Act 2014.

Our centre ensures that all staff working with children, are employed in accordance with this Act as stipulated in the staff recruitment policy. Safety checking is a central part of this and will be carried out in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.

Details of the safety checking process are fully detailed in the services Employment Policy.

## TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all staff can develop and strengthen their knowledge of:

- the detail of this policy.
- the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
- roles and responsibilities around record keeping and reporting.
- responsibilities to children.
- limitations of their role.

Our Centre commits to bi-annual staff training and consistent review of our child protection policy and reporting processes to ensure they are effective and fully understood by all staff.

Review of this policy and the procedure will also be undertaken after an incident that requires this policy to be implemented. Review will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and the implementation of the procedures by those staff involved.

Our centre will ensure that all staff have access to necessary training, resources and/or advice to ensure they can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:

- understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse

- how to reduce the risk of child abuse
- understanding and complying with legal obligations regarding child abuse
- working with outside agencies on child abuse issues
- planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk
- conducting conversations appropriately with a child, parent and whānau.

Understanding this policy and initial training will form part of our induction programme for new staff.

Our preferred training is the Child Protection e-learning modules provided by Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o Te Mātauranga.

### **VOLUNTEERS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS**

Volunteers/students are welcome in the service.

- At no time will a volunteer or student be left alone with a child. They will always be supervised by a Person Responsible.
- Volunteers/students will not be placed on nappy changing duty.
- We rely on an Education provider / Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to carry out the safety check for students on our behalf, and we will obtain a letter from the institution confirming this. If any components of the safety check have not been completed by the TEO, we are responsible for completing these. We will complete a "Student Record Form, which includes obtaining the safety check from their Institution of Learning, and a copy of their photo ID.
- We always complete the identity check and risk assessment (On Student Record Form), even if these have already been completed by the TEO. A separate letter should be obtained for each named student teacher.

### **SAFEGUARDING CULTURE (SUGGESTIONS OF PRACTICE)**

Staff working in the service are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children. We maintain a supervision plan that ensures an awareness of our learning environment and clear lines of sight. The supervision plan ensures effective deployment of staff to keep children safe.

- *Any children's bathroom doors remain open and / or there is some visibility from other parts of the service, while also respecting children's privacy.*
- Physical contact of children during changing or cleansing must be for the purpose of that task only and no more than is necessary. Encourage children to take care of themselves if possible.
- Sleep rooms must be able to be viewed from outside the room (not to be used for sleep checking requirements)
- If a child is in the office, the adult must be able to be visible or have another person with them
- No child is to be in the garden shed.
- No child is to accompany a solitary staff member on any trip outside the Centre.
- There will be no trips to any private home outside of the centres premises.
- Never photograph a child's ano-genital area, even as a record of your concern.
- Visitors to the service will not perform care-taking tasks with children or be alone with them.

### **ALCOHOL/DRUGS**

Our centre has a zero tolerance for staff being under the influence of drugs and alcohol, staff will be excluded from the licensed premises while any suspicion is investigated. Suspicions involving a registered teacher will be reported to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

If any parent arrives to pick up their child and is suspected to be under the influence of drugs of alcohol, staff will use their discretion to decide whether the child is safe to be driven by the parent. Staff can offer to call another family member, but where drivers are non-cooperative, staff should call the NZ Police (111).

### **EXPLICIT MATERIAL**

At our centre, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for all children. In alignment with Te Whāriki and the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, we strictly prohibit the use, display, or distribution of any explicit, inappropriate, or harmful material within our service.

We ensure that all learning resources, digital content, and environmental displays are carefully vetted. Staff are trained to identify and report any concerns related to inappropriate content, and we maintain clear procedures for addressing such issues.

This policy reflects our dedication to upholding the rights of children to learn in an environment free from exposure to material that is not suitable for their age or stage of development.

#### **FURTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER UNDER SAFE PRACTICES**

- Staff rostering aims to prevent staff working on their own with children (outside, beginning and end of day)
- Baby sitting for families is strongly discouraged

#### **REVIEW**

We will provide evidence that we have reviewed the policy and procedure at least every three years. As part of the review, we will evaluate how well the policy and procedure works using at least one example of either:

- how well the policy and procedure has supported our centre to respond to an actual scenario or
- how well the policy and procedure would support our centre to respond using a hypothetical scenario, as listed in HS125

A child makes a verbal disclosure of abuse to an adult in the service.	
Steps	Actions
<b>Listen carefully and calmly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow the child to speak freely—do not interrupt or ask leading questions.</li> <li>Stay calm and composed, even if the disclosure is distressing.</li> <li>Use open-ended prompts like “Tell me more about that” or “What happened next?”</li> </ul>
<b>Reassure the child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let the child know they did the right thing by telling you.</li> <li>Avoid making promises you can’t keep (e.g. “I won’t tell anyone”).</li> <li>Say something like: “Thank you for telling me. I’m going to do my best to help you.”</li> <li>If the child is not visibly distressed re-engage the child in the programme.</li> <li>If the child is visibly distressed provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in the programme without adult support.</li> </ul>
<b>Do not investigate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify your concern.</li> <li>Avoid asking leading or suggestive questions.</li> <li>Leave the investigation to trained professionals (e.g. Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police).</li> <li>Make no assumptions about what has occurred or who it might involve</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure child’s immediate safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111), and MoE</li> <li>Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.</li> </ul>
<b>Report immediately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions.</li> </ul> <p>If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify Oranga Tamariki promptly, and MoE</p> <p><b>Oranga Tamariki contact details:</b> Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)</p>
<b>Record the disclosure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down exactly what the child said, using the child’s own words as much as possible.</li> <li>Note the date, time, location, and any witnesses.</li> <li>Do not add your own interpretations or assumptions.</li> <li>Record what actions have been taken</li> </ul> <p><b>(Do not take photos)</b></p>
<b>Maintain confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information only with those who need to know.</li> <li>Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities.</li> <li>Store all information securely</li> </ul>
<b>Follow up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the child receives appropriate support.</li> <li>Continue to monitor the child’s wellbeing.</li> <li>Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.</li> </ul>

## IDENTIFICATION OF ABUSE

If a staff member identifies suspected child abuse.	
Steps	Actions
<b>Ensure child's immediate safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111), and MoE</li> <li>Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.</li> </ul>
<b>Stay calm and supportive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain calm and composed.</li> <li>Avoid expressing shock, disbelief, or anger.</li> <li>Make no assumptions about what has occurred or who it might involve</li> </ul>
<b>Do not investigate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify your concern.</li> <li>Avoid asking leading or suggestive questions.</li> <li>Leave the investigation to trained professionals (e.g. Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police).</li> </ul>
<b>Report the concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions.</li> <li>If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify <b>Oranga Tamariki</b> promptly, and MoE</li> </ul> <p><b>Oranga Tamariki contact details:</b> Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)</p> <p>If the suspected abuser is the Person Responsible contact [<i>service provider details</i>]. Where this is not possible contact Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police</p>
<b>Formally document the concern</b>	<p>Formally document the concern as soon as possible, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what was said or observed (the facts)</li> <li>date, time, and location</li> <li>names of those involved</li> <li>what actions you have taken.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Do not take photos)</b></p>
<b>Maintain confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information only with those who need to know.</li> <li>Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Follow up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the child receives appropriate support.</li> <li>Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing.</li> <li>Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.</li> </ul>

A child makes a verbal disclosure of abuse by another child	
Steps	Actions
Staff should be observant of children's play and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the play age-appropriate and about curiosity or is it a sign of learnt behaviour?</li> <li>Is the play sexual, does the child display unusual knowledge or describes sexual activity?</li> </ul>
If staff is satisfied that play / actions are age-appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with other staff / management</li> <li>Record actions and steps taken</li> <li>Take steps in accordance with positive guidance policy</li> <li>Communicate and consult with parents</li> </ul>
If staff is concerned about play/actions of the child	Contact Oranga Tamariki helpline in the first instance to obtain advice – 0508 326 459

## STAFF ALLEGATIONS

When it has been disclosed or observed that a person employed or engaged in our centre has allegedly abused or neglected a child the following process will be followed.

Allegations or concerns about a staff member	
Steps	Actions
<b>Ensure child's immediate safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111), and MoE</li> <li>Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.</li> </ul>
<b>Report the concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions.</li> <li>If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify <b>Oranga Tamariki</b> promptly, and MoE.</li> </ul> <p><b>Oranga Tamariki contact details:</b> Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY) If the suspected abuser is the Person Responsible contact (<i>service provider details</i>). Where this is not possible contact Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police</p>
<b>Consult/notify appropriate agency</b>	<p>Consult/notify Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police and MoE before advising the person concerned.</p> <p><b>Oranga Tamariki contact details:</b> Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)</p>
<b>Formally document the concern</b>	<p>Formally document the concern as soon as possible, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was said or observed (the facts)</li> <li>Date, time, and location</li> <li>Names of those involved</li> <li>What actions you have taken</li> </ul> <p><b>(Do not take photos)</b></p>
<b>Implement Regulation 56 Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008</b>	<p>If the Service Provider has reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the services has physically ill-treated or abused a child, after consultation with Oranga Tamariki and/or NZ Police, the Service Provider will take immediate steps to exclude the person from coming into contact with children. (Regulation 56)</p>
<b>Inform the parents/whānau</b>	<p>Parents / whānau, whose child/ren have been affected by the staff member's actions, will be informed by the Person Responsible of the allegations. They will be offered support and informed of the actions that will be taken.</p>
<b>Inform the Ministry of Education</b>	<p>Any notification made to Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police (specified agencies) requires notification to the Ministry of Education at the same time (HS128).</p>
<b>Allegation investigation</b>	<p>An investigation into the allegation will be undertaken, with the guidance of Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police.</p> <p>The investigation will seek to establish if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person has physically or emotionally ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children.</p>
<b>Human Resources process</b>	<p>Implementation of appropriate Human Resources processes will be undertaken. We will follow (service name) disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations</p>
<b>Maintain confidentiality</b>	<p>Share information only with those who need to know.</p> <p>Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities.</p>
<b>Follow up</b>	<p>Ensure the child receives appropriate support. Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing. Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.</p>

Our centre commits to not using 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection.

Allegations or concerns about staff will also be made to the Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand without delay, where there is reason to believe a registered teacher has engaged in serious misconduct.

Where a notification is made by the service to as specified agency such as Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police and Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand the service provider must also notify the Ministry of Education at the same time.

Role of the Person Responsible / Manager	
Steps	Actions
<b>Gather information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure you have the written record of what has occurred from all persons involved.</li> <li>Offer support to the persons involved.</li> <li>If needed, access guidance and support from the appropriate Agency - Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police.</li> </ul>
<b>Report suspected abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report the suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police and MoE</li> <li>Seek guidance on how to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to families /whānau</li> <li>Support the child, and</li> <li>What happens next</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Oranga Tamariki contact details:</b> Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)</p>
<b>Things to consider as a Person Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure child's immediate safety - Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.</li> <li>Consider, Regulation 56 - if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the services has physically ill-treated or abused a child, after consultation with Oranga Tamariki and/or NZ Police, take immediate steps to exclude the person from coming into contact with children.</li> <li>Inform the parents/whānau.</li> <li>Report the serious incident to the Ministry of Education (HS128).</li> <li>Complete an investigation using the report template (<a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>Implementation of appropriate human resources processes.</li> <li>If the person is a registered teacher complete a mandatory report to Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand.</li> <li>Continue to maintain records of additional meetings, discussions and comments.</li> <li>Seek legal advice where appropriate.</li> </ul>

**CONTACT NUMBERS:**

**Ministry of Education:**

09 265 3000 (South/Southwest)

09 632 0390 (North / West)

**Oranga Tamariki:**

0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)

## Indicators of Child Abuse

The list of behavioural indicators provided is only indicative, and not exhaustive, and only covers children and young people. These signs should never be used in isolation to make assumptions about someone's behaviour. Instead, they should be considered as part of a broader context, and any concerns should be addressed through proper child protection procedures

Indicators of Emotional Abuse	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b> that a child is being emotionally abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed physical development - Noticeable delay in growth or weight gain/loss not attributed to medical conditions</li> <li>• Frequent psychosomatic complaints - Headaches, stomach aches, or nausea without a clear medical cause</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances - insomnia, nightmares, or excessive fatigue</li> <li>• Appetite changes - Sudden loss of appetite or overeating.</li> <li>• Poor hygiene - Consistently dirty, unkempt appearance.</li> <li>• Regression in developmental milestones -Bedwetting, bed soiling, thumb-sucking,</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b> that child or young person is being emotionally abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive withdrawal or fearfulness - Appears anxious, timid, or overly compliant, avoids eye contact or physical closeness</li> <li>• Extreme behaviours - Displays aggression, defiance, or hostility, exhibits overly passive or clingy behaviour</li> <li>• Developmental delays - Struggles with language, social, or emotional development, appears behind peers in cognitive or emotional maturity</li> <li>• Difficulty forming relationships - Has trouble making or keeping friends, shows distrust of adults or authority figures</li> <li>• Self-harm or suicidal thoughts - Engages in risky behaviours or talks about self-harm.</li> <li>• Overly responsible or parent-like behaviour - Takes on adult roles or responsibilities, appears overly concerned with pleasing others</li> <li>• Frequent absences or reluctance to go home –Regular non-attendance, expresses fear or anxiety about returning home</li> </ul>
Indicators of Neglect	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b> that a child or young person is being neglected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor hygiene - Consistently dirty or unwashed appearance, strong body odour or untreated head lice</li> <li>• Inappropriate clothing - Clothing that is unsuitable for the weather (e.g., no coat in winter), ill-fitting, torn, or excessively worn clothing</li> <li>• Unmet medical or dental needs - Untreated injuries or illnesses, obvious dental decay or infections</li> <li>• Malnutrition or hunger - Noticeable weight loss or failure to thrive, constant hunger.</li> <li>• Persistent Skin Disorders – Nappy rash, skin infections.</li> <li>• Fatigue or listlessness - Appears constantly tired or lacking energy, falls asleep frequently or struggles to stay awake</li> <li>• Developmental delays – Not meeting physical, emotional, or cognitive milestones, difficulty with motor skills or speech</li> <li>• Frequent accidents or injuries - Repeated minor injuries that may suggest lack of supervision, unexplained bruises or marks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b> that child or young person is being neglected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent Absences or Tardiness - Regularly non-attendance or arriving late without explanation.</li> <li>• Persistent Hunger or Stealing Food - Eats excessively when food is available</li> <li>• Is very demanding of affection or attention</li> <li>• Overly Adult or Caregiver Behaviour - Takes on responsibilities beyond their age (e.g., caring for siblings), appears overly independent or self-reliant</li> <li>• Delayed Development - Struggles with speech, motor skills, or emotional regulation, appears behind peers in learning or behaviour</li> <li>• Low Self-Esteem or Apathy - Shows little interest in activities or achievements, appears indifferent to praise or criticism</li> <li>• Frequent Illnesses or Injuries - Often sick or injured without receiving proper care, may not have access to basic health services</li> </ul>

Indicators of Physical Abuse	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b> that a child or young person is being physically abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained Injuries - Bruises, burns, fractures, or cuts in various stages of healing, injuries with clear patterns (e.g., belt marks, handprints)</li> <li>• Frequent or Recurrent Injuries - Regular appearance of injuries without a reasonable explanation, caregiver explanations may be inconsistent or implausible</li> <li>• Developmental Delays – Hearing, vision and language delays.</li> <li>• Fear of Physical Contact - Flinching or recoiling when approached, reluctance to be touched or examined</li> <li>• Wearing Concealing Clothing - Long sleeves or pants worn even in warm weather, possibly to hide injuries</li> <li>• Delayed or Inadequate Medical Attention - Injuries left untreated or medical care not sought in a timely manner</li> <li>• Signs of restraint - Marks on wrists, ankles, or other areas suggesting the use of restraints</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b> that child or young person is being physically abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fearful or Anxious Behaviour - Appears afraid of going home or being around certain adults, flinches or cowers when approached suddenly</li> <li>• Aggression or Withdrawal - Displays aggressive behaviour toward peers, adults or animals, may be unusually quiet, withdrawn, or overly compliant</li> <li>• Reluctance to Change Clothes or Participate in Physical Activities - Avoids activities that require changing clothes, may try to hide parts of the body</li> <li>• Regression in Development - Reverts to earlier behaviours such as bedwetting or thumb-sucking, shows signs of emotional distress or developmental delays</li> <li>• Hypervigilance - Constantly alert or on edge, as if anticipating danger, difficulty relaxing or concentrating</li> <li>• Disclosures or Hints of Abuse - May talk about being hurt or punished harshly, makes indirect comments that suggest fear or pain</li> <li>• Avoidance of Physical Contact - Resists hugs or physical closeness.</li> <li>• Sudden Changes in Behaviour</li> <li>• Inconsistent or Implausible Explanations for Injuries - Provides vague, changing, or unlikely reasons for their injuries</li> </ul>

Indicators of Sexual Abuse	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b> that a child or young person is being sexually abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injuries to Genital or Anal Areas - Bruising, bleeding, swelling, or pain in the genital or anal region, difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>• Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) - Diagnosis of an STI in a child or young person, genital discharge, itching, or sores</li> <li>• Clothing may be damaged or show signs of trauma</li> <li>• Frequent Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) or Yeast Infections - Especially when recurrent and unexplained by medical conditions, unexplained pain or discomfort</li> <li>• Excessive washing or refusal to bathe</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b> that child or young person is being sexually abused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexualized Behaviour or Knowledge Beyond Age - Engages in sexual play or uses sexual language inappropriate for their age, demonstrates knowledge of sexual acts that is not age-appropriate</li> <li>• Sudden Changes in Behaviour or Mood - Becomes withdrawn, anxious, depressed, or fearful, exhibits mood swings or emotional instability</li> <li>• Avoidance of Specific People or Places - Shows fear or reluctance to be around certain individuals, avoids places such as bathrooms or sleep rooms</li> <li>• Regression in Development - Returns to earlier behaviours such as bedwetting, thumb-sucking, or clinginess.</li> <li>• Difficulty with Relationships and Trust - Struggles to form healthy relationships with peers or adults</li> <li>• Loss of interest in activities</li> </ul>

Indicators of Family Violence	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b> that a child or young person is being exposed to family violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained injuries or frequent bruises</li> <li>• Regression in toileting or sleeping habits</li> <li>• Frequent illness or complaints of headaches/stomach aches without medical cause</li> <li>• Delayed speech or motor skills</li> <li>• Poor concentration or memory</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b> that child or young person is being exposed to family violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fearfulness or anxiety, especially around certain adults or in specific settings</li> <li>• Aggression or withdrawal - children may lash out or become unusually quiet and reserved</li> <li>• Hypervigilance - constantly alert or jumpy, as if anticipating danger</li> <li>• Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness</li> <li>• Difficulty forming relationships with peers or adult</li> <li>• Isolation from peers or reluctance to go home</li> <li>• Overly protective of other siblings or parent</li> <li>• Mature or parentified behaviour - taking on adult responsibilities or roles</li> </ul>

# Record Of Concern, Disclosure, Observation

Please circle one:

Disclosure

Observation

Concern

Other

Child's name

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DOB:

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Date:

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Time

Description

*Include relevant information such as the nature of the incident, when it took place, who was involved, whether there are any injuries, the signs and symptoms, any other relevant information. Ensure that this is reported factually or exactly as reported to you. REMEMBER- LISTEN, REASSURE, ASK OPEN QUESTIONS*

Action taken

Signed

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Name

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Position

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# Child Protection Scenario Review Template

Use this template to guide discussion, reflection, and documentation when reviewing child protection scenarios in an ECE setting. We must review our child protection policy and procedure at least every 3 years.

We must consider how the policy and procedure will support our service to protect children and respond quickly when a child needs to be kept safe.

We can use one of the example scenarios in the [Licensing Criteria \(HS125\)](#) or reflect on a real situation where we used our policy to respond to concerns about a child.

## SCENARIO DETAILS

Scenario Number or real situation:

Date of Review:

Staff Involved:

Reviewer(s):

## SUMMARY OF CONCERN

Brief description of what occurred or was observed:

## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

What immediate actions were taken to ensure the child's safety?

How was the child supported emotionally and physically?

## ASSESSMENT OF CONCERN

What type of concern is identified? (e.g. ill-treatment, neglect, abuse, grooming, risk of harm)

What indicators or behaviours raised concern?

Are there any immediate risks?

## POLICY ALIGNMENT

What does your Child Protection Policy require in this situation?

What specific steps must be followed?

## RESPONSE ACTIONS

What actions should be taken following the incident?

Who needs to be informed internally? (e.g. Person Responsible, Manager)

## DOCUMENTATION

What needs to be recorded?

Where will this be documented?

Who is responsible for completing documentation?

## EXTERNAL REPORTING

Is reporting to external agencies required? (e.g. Oranga Tamariki, Police)

Yes / No

If yes, who will make the report and when?

## COMMUNICATION

How will communication be managed with whānau/parents?

How will confidentiality be maintained?

## STAFF CONDUCT & SUPPORT

How should staff behaviour be addressed (if applicable)?

What support or guidance is needed for staff involved?

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

What ongoing monitoring or support is required?

Are there any preventative actions to implement?

## REFLECTION

What went well?

What could be improved?

Are any policy or practice changes needed?