

# HEALTH

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# SAFETY





# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## 03 – YOUTH AND CHILDREN

**In this folder:**

Safety check for paid and volunteer workers

Child and youth protection policy

Action plans – fire, earthquake, power outage, missing youth or child, flooding, volcanic eruption and ash fall, trespasser on premises, violent intruder (repeated from section 02, but important for youth and children’s health and safety development as well)

First aid policy

Toileting policy

Individualised special needs plan

# Child & Youth Protection Policy (Vulnerable Children's Act 2014)

Identifying, supporting and protecting vulnerable children.

Ensuring the well-being and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse or maltreatment, is of vital importance. This policy provides guidance to staff on how to identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child, including possible abuse or neglect. For the purposes of this policy, children includes youth up to the age of 18 years. This organisation commits to support the statutory agencies (Child, Youth and Family and the New Zealand Police) to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy. All children attending children's church must have a completed registration form signed by a legal guardian or parent.

Overall principles in responding to potential child abuse:

- We recognise that the protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- We recognise the rights of families to participate in decision making about their children.
- We will ensure that all workers are able to identify possible signs of abuse and/or neglect and know the process involved in reporting concerns (See appendices 1 and 2)
- We will comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone responsible. We shouldn't act alone.
- We understand that exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.
- We seek to provide information and engage with relevant organisations in relation to supporting families at risk.

In order to keep children safe from abuse/neglect the following actions will be taken

- Paid and volunteer Workers to undergo safety checking in accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014
- Procedure in place for reporting concerns regarding abuse/neglect
- Make available relevant support literature for families regarding keeping children safe

**We understand that the following may be signs of abuse/neglect**

- Physical signs (e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, appearing unkempt, inappropriate or dirty clothing etc)
- Developmental delays (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in relation to peers, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).

- Behavioural concerns (e.g., age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression).
- The child talking about things that indicate abuse
- Neglect (e.g. lack of supervision, poor hygiene, untreated medical issues)

#### **The procedure for reporting abuse/ neglect is as follows**

1. Concerns may be raised due to seeing a child being abused/observe signs of abuse/reports of abuse or a disclosure from the child.
2. If there is a disclosure of abuse, respond to the child's needs by ensuring that the child is safe from immediate harm. If there is immediate danger call the police on 111. Or if there is physical harm requiring medical attention ensure that the child receives this.
3. Listen to the child, reassure the child and ask open-ended questions (e.g. what happened next?).
4. If the child is not in immediate danger explain what will happen next and re-engage them in activity.
5. Immediately inform the Health & Safety Officer of what has happened.
6. As soon as possible prepare a written record of the abuse, including:
  - Date, time and place of observation
  - Names of anyone present
  - What the child says, exactly
  - Physical/behavioural signs of the abuse
  - Date of birth of child if known
  - Ethnicity
  - Name of caregivers/ parents
  - What action the organisation has taken
  - Any other relevant information
7. Person in charge to report abuse by ringing CYF on 0508 326459
8. Discussion whether the person involved in the reporting of the abuse/neglect requires follow up support.

This organisation will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Child, Youth and Family and the Police. We will only inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after we have discussed this with these agencies.

When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour we will write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. This is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled.

We will maintain knowledge of individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

If a staff member or volunteer is suspected to be an abuser the same process is observed. To ensure the child is kept safe, management may take steps to remove the staff member or volunteer against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law.

**This policy needs to be reviewed every 2 years – date of review 2018**

# Appendix 1

## Child & Youth Protection policy: Resource for workers/ families Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

### Is that child OK?

The majority of children in New Zealand are happy, healthy and loved by their families, whānau and caregivers. However, not all children have the support and protection of a trusted adult.

Sadly, abuse and neglect of children happens a lot in New Zealand. Most people wish there was more they could do to keep kids safe. But often it all seems too hard or they're afraid of doing the wrong thing.

Whether you're a family or whānau member, friend, neighbour, teacher, or workmate, there are things you can do to protect children from abuse and neglect. Every action counts.

What you can do:

- If you see or hear about a child whose safety and wellbeing is in immediate danger, don't wait, and don't assume someone else is acting. Contact the police on 111 or Child, Youth and Family on 0508 326 459.
- If you are concerned that your safety may be put at risk by reporting and wish to remain anonymous, phone Crimestoppers NZ on 0800 555 111.
- Make sure you know what abuse and neglect are, and how to recognise the signs – see eg. <http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/resources/is-that-child-ok/recognising-abuse-and-neglect/>
- Offer encouragement and practical support to families if you think they might be running into problems
- If you feel worried, talk to the parent or another member of the family or whānau about your concerns

### Who else can I talk to?

- Talk to someone else who knows the family well, eg, a friend, neighbour, workmate or teacher.
- Link the family up with others who can support them – see the useful contacts on this page.
- Talk to someone experienced, for a different point of view, or for ideas about how to help.
- Call a helpline for free, confidential advice and support:

Parent Help – 0800 568 856

Child, Youth and Family – 0508 326 459

Are You OK – 0800 456 450 (Family Violence Information Line).

If you're worried that nothing's happening, let someone in your neighbourhood or community know, like a community worker, health worker, church leader or kaumātua from the local marae.

Trust your judgement and keep trying until your concerns are taken seriously.

## Appendix 2

(from <http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/resources/is-that-child-ok/recognising-abuse-and-neglect/>)

### Recognising abuse and neglect

Make sure you know what abuse and neglect are, and how to recognise the signs.

#### Abuse is harming a child:

- Physically (eg, giving them hidings)
- Emotionally (eg, yelling or swearing at them, shaming or rejecting them)
- Sexually (eg, involving them in sexual activities)

**Neglect is failing to meet a child's physical and emotional needs** – that is, not giving them the care, supervision, love and attention they need to grow up safely and happily (eg, failure to provide food, warm clothing or health care)

Emotional abuse and neglect can cause serious and long-term damage

#### When should I be worried?

The early stages of abuse and neglect can be hard to pick up – but over time small things can develop into serious concerns

Listed below are different situations that can lead to problems, or be early signs of things going wrong. They are only examples – there may be other signs that a child needs help

Parents might need extra support

Some things make life extra hard for parents, and sometimes that can lead to problems for the kids:

- money problems, being out of work
- overcrowding or housing struggles
- parents seem over-stressed
- child with special needs
- isolated from friends, family/whānau
- parents fighting and yelling
- history of depression or other mental illness
- parents separating

Early help can stop things getting worse down the track. Keep an eye on the situation and offer help and support where you can

Early signs of abuse and neglect

These include problems that need to be checked out:

- parent has a drug, alcohol or gambling problem
- parent does not engage with their child or has a difficult relationship with them
- child doesn't have enough clothes on and is often cold and hungry
- child has unexplained or changeable emotions (eg, withdrawn or depressed)
- parents frequently yell at, swear at or shame a child
- child seems scared of a particular adult

Talk to others about your concerns and what you can do to help.

Serious signs of abuse and neglect

Signs that a child's safety and wellbeing is in danger include:

- child tells someone they have been abused (eg, have been hit, touched or are frightened)
- young child home alone or unsupervised near roads or water
- child threatened with hidings and/or regularly hit by an adult
- child exposed to violence between adults in the house
- baby or toddler left unsupervised in cot or car seat for long periods of time
- baby or child with unexplained or untreated injuries

You need to take urgent action by contacting Child, Youth and Family on 0508 326 459 or the police on 111. If you are concerned that your safety may be put at risk by reporting and wish to remain anonymous, phone Crimestoppers NZ on 0800 555 111

If in doubt, trust your instincts – and don't wait, act. See What you can do. For more warning signs of abuse and neglect visit the Child, Youth and Family website