



Document Control

Any amendments made to this document must be recorded in the below table.

If adjustments are minor, then version number can be increased by 0.1 (version 2.0 becomes 2.1)

Any major reviews will require a complete version change (version 2.0 becomes 3.0)

Any amendments must be authorised by a Director, and the date of approval recorded.

Date and version number must be amended in the footer of the document.

VERSION	AMENDMENTS MADE	APPROVED	DATE
2.0	Reviewing entire system to check alignment with supporting documents.	Amy	15/8/2018
2.1	Updated Abuse policy and flow charts	Dave	14/12/2018
2.2	Updated Formatting	Dave	14/7/2020
3.0	Removal of complaints and client intake info	Dave	27/06/2022
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REVIEWED BY	DATE REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW DATE

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Child Protection Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines how Adventure Southland will protect children in instances of suspected or alleged child abuse.

Policy Purpose

This policy fulfils our organisation’s commitment to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect in a timely and appropriate way, with the safety and well-being of the child at the forefront of any decision making.

Scope

All staff, including employees, contractors, and volunteers, are expected to be familiar with and follow this policy, and have a responsibility to discuss any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, with management.

Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, and management has a responsibility to ensure that the appropriate course of action is taken regarding any concerns raised, including notifying the appropriate authority when a staff member has a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. This extends to ensuring all known information about the child/young person and their family/whānau is shared in full with the appropriate statutory authority to determine the appropriate response.

This policy protects all children/young people staff may encounter—including siblings, the children of adults accessing our services, and any other children encountered by our staff.

In accordance with Section 15 of the [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#), any person in our organisation who believes that any child or young person has been or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a social worker or the local Police.

Policy Principles

Adventure Southland is committed to engaging in collaborative relationships that produce the best possible outcome for children and working towards continuous improvement of our child protection practices.

The interests and welfare of the child will be the prime consideration when any decision is made about a child suspected of being abused. Early intervention is key, and we aim to apply the least intrusive intervention necessary to protect children.

We recognise the importance and rights of family/whānau to participate in decision-making about their children and will operate in a way that is open and transparent, including a willingness to share concerns about child safety issues with family/whānau unless this would result in an escalation of risk for the child. Children have the right to participate, in age-appropriate ways, in decision making about themselves.

This organisation supports the roles of statutory agencies, i.e., the Police and Oranga Tamariki, in the investigation of abuse, and will act on recommendations made by relevant agencies concerning reporting of suspected abuse, consulting with families, and provide information and aid any investigation in a timely manner. We will not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise.

We are committed to ensuring our staff are supported in their professional development regarding child protection, including having access to resources which aid in identifying the signs and symptoms of potential abuse, in order to work in accordance with this policy. Staff should be confident in discussing concerns about an individual child with colleagues and management and taking appropriate action in response to suspicions or allegations of abuse.

We are committed to ensuring our Child Protection policy and procedures reflect best practice and current relevant legislation. We will work with partner agencies to ensure our child protection policies are consistent and of a high quality that complies with relevant legislative responsibilities. Within our organisation, we will promote a culture of child protection where our staff feel confident to constructively challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

Definitions

'Abuse' refers to the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect, or deprivation of any child. Please see definitions and indicators of types of abuse on page 8 (more detailed information in "*How Can I Tell: Recognising Child Abuse*" booklet in resources folder).

'Child' means a child or young person aged under 17 years (who is not married or in a civil union).

'Child protection' describes 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. It also recognises the role that organisations play in promoting the wellbeing of children and responding to their vulnerability.

'Child protection cultures' are ones that are open and accountable, understand the needs of children, make their safety and security paramount and work in partnership with other agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

'Child protection policies' are the documents describing the processes and procedures that organisations use to keep the children accessing their services safe.

'Child protection practices' are the processes and procedures that organisations use to implement their child protection policies.

'Children's workforce/children's workers' refers to people who work with children, or who have regular contact with children, as part of their roles.

'Disclosure' is information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver, or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

'Neglect' is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

'NZ Police' or 'Police' is the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

'Oranga Tamariki' is the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect, and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in a need of care and protection.

'Provider, employer, or organisation' includes voluntary, commercial, private, or independent agencies or organisations providing services for children and families/whānau.

'Safer recruitment' refers to following good practice processes for pre-employment checking which help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children's workforce.

'Safety' means that children are not exposed to a risk of abuse or neglect that could reasonably have been predicted or prevented by the organisation.

'Safety checking' refers to the process of safer recruitment that is mandatory for organisations covered by the Children's Act 2014

'Staff' means all persons employed or engaged, in both paid positions and as volunteers, by an organisation.

Safer Recruitment

Our prime consideration in choosing staff will be ensuring that they have skills and attributes to succeed in the role, as well as contribute to clients' health and safety, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development, and will not put children at risk of abuse.

Recruitment will follow the Adventure Southland Recruitment Policy, and legislative requirements. To ensure all those employed by Adventure Southland do not put children at risk of abuse, rigorous safety checks as required for Children's Workers by the Children's Act 2014 must be completed prior to engagement with children. (See the Recruitment Policy for more detailed information). All staff will have vetting updated every three years.

Professional Development and Safe Practice

This organisation will ensure that our staff have sufficient knowledge of child protection and the skills necessary to recognise and respond to suspected abuse and neglect. All staff will undergo regular child protection training, and incoming staff will cover this policy and associated child protection practices during their induction into our organisation.

Staff are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the Adventure Southland Code of Conduct and other relevant policies.

We encourage staff to maintain professional boundaries when working with children. Personal and professional lives should be kept separate, and we do not encourage the fostering of close personal relationships, infatuation or over-familiarity, gift giving, or caretaking activities with children and families outside the work environment. Staff are to remain objective in their dealings with clients, and where a staff member has an existing relationship with a client or their family, this should be notified on the Conflicts of Interest Register.

Apart from toilets and bathrooms, this organisation will have an open-door policy and staff should be aware where all children are at all times. Personal visitors and telecommunications must not interfere with responsibilities of supervision.

Children should not be present when staff uses the toilet and bathroom facilities for personal needs. Any staff medication must be labelled and stored securely out of reach of children.

We will ensure staff are supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children. Opportunities for staff to be alone with children will be kept to a minimum and must have a clear and valid rationale e.g., approved one-on-one mentoring activities. Supervision should ensure volunteers and visitors are never alone with a child or group of children.

Our organisation encourages parents to be involved in our activities. With prior approval from management, parents and family are welcome to visit our service delivery at any time.

Many children have affectionate natures and express themselves freely. Regardless of the situation and child's culture and nature, staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact.

In making physical contact, staff should be guided by the principle that they do so solely in order to meet the child's physical or emotional needs, or when necessary for the delivery of the service. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs, and children should not be asked to take care of adult physical or emotional needs. Necessary physical contact will be conducted in a way that is appropriate and considers the child's safety, wellbeing, and any cultural concerns. When making physical contact, staff must first gain the child's consent, however some emergency situations may not allow for this, and staff must act in the interests of the child's physical safety. Parents/caregivers should be advised of any activity requiring one to one physical contact.

If a child initiates physical contact in the seeking of affection, reassurance, or comfort, it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child's developmental stage and needs. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection or touching on a child.

The physical contact of children during changing or personal cleaning must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for that job. Children should be encouraged to take care of themselves to the limits of their ability. Where a child requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, where possible we will involve the child's parents/caregivers and outside agencies to assist.

Staff must realise their individual emotional and physical limitations and request support and or relief when necessary.

Consent either in writing or by phone from parents/caregivers and the child/young person must be sought before transporting children. Staff are not to transport children in their own personal vehicles, or transport children to any location other than what is deemed necessary for the intended activity, including the staff member's own home. Staff are not to travel in vehicles alone with a child, except in the case of an emergency.

In limited circumstances, staff may be expected to liaise directly with children for the delivery of a service, including the use of telecommunications technology. In this instance, staff must maintain a professional level of communication, and only contact the child in relation to matters pertaining to the service. "Adult" topics of conversation should not take place with hearing of any children.

Identifying Possible Abuse or Neglect

Child abuse and neglect can take many forms. It is more important to consider and act in regard to the overall wellbeing and risk of harm to the child than define or categorise the type of abuse or neglect. Symptoms and patterns may be subtle.

Some indicators of potential **abuse** could include:

- Physical Signs (e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries)
- Development Delays (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, 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 (i.e., making allegation or disclosure)

Some indicators of potential **neglect** could include:

- Physical Signs (e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight)

- Developmental Delays (e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, 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., disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression)
- Neglectful Supervision (e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to)
- Medical Neglect (e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders, or other untreated medical issues)

You may also identify indicators of elevated risk, e.g., family/whānau circumstances such as family/whānau/intimate partner violence, lack of family/whānau support, financial stress; child characteristics such as routine absence from school; or parental characteristics such as hitting and yelling, drug and alcohol abuse, or unmanaged mental health struggles.

For more detailed guidance on what might be an indicator of abuse or neglect, see 'How Can I Tell: Recognising Child Abuse' booklet in the Child Protection Resources folder.

Every situation is different, and indicators should be taken in context with all available information considered about the child and their environment before reaching any conclusions. There may be a valid explanation for any identified indicators such as the resulting effects of life events, e.g., divorce.

Decisions regarding handling and escalation of suspicions or allegations of abuse must not be made in isolation. Staff must follow the procedure outlined in this policy, including consultation with management, and relevant agencies.

Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect, or Other Concerns

It is important that staff are equipped to respond to any disclosures made by children they are in contact with.

The following information describes how to respond to concerns staff may have about an individual child.

Key points to remember for staff receiving a disclosure of abuse are; remain calm, listen carefully, be patient, reassure the child and do not make promises, i.e. “I will keep you safe” or “I won’t tell anyone”.

RESPONDING TO A CHILD IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

If a child is in immediate danger staff should contact NZ Police on 111 immediately, and take appropriate action as required to ensure the safety of themselves and the child/young person.

RESPONDING TO A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES ABUSE, OR WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Where a staff member has concerns about the safety of a child, they must record their concerns and in consultation with management, discuss these concerns with a statutory agency.

See ‘Reporting Suspected Abuse_Flow Chart’ in policy resources for detailed actions to be taken.

CHILD ABUSE EITHER SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED

IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CONTACT POLICE IMMEDIATELY ON 111. IF A CRIME AGAINST A CHILD HAS BEEN COMMITTED THIS MUST BE REPORTED.

Remember: any person can report suspected child abuse if they believe that child or young person has been, or is likely to be: harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, and/or deprived.

STAFF MEMBER ACTIONS

RESPOND TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS

Remain calm. Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child — take to hospital if appropriate.

LISTEN TO THE CHILD

Pay attention to what they say and record it word-for-word. Ask open ended questions, e.g., 'what happened next?' **Do not** interview the child or ask too many questions. Believe and reassure the child that they have done the right thing. Let them know you will act to try and keep them safe. **Do not** promise not to tell anyone.

RE-ENGAGE THE CHILD

If the child is not in immediate danger, reinvolve them in ordinary activities.

if Adventure Southland is responsible for care of the child—

NOTIFY MANAGING DIRECTOR

Immediately inform the Managing Director (or in their absence, a member of the management team).
Avoid gossip and speculation.

if a school/other organisation is responsible for care of the child—

NOTIFY TEACHER/ADULT IN CHARGE

Immediately inform the teacher/adult in charge of the group (if safe and appropriate, i.e., if allegation does not implicate teacher/adult). Advise of any actions Adventure Southland will take.

NOTIFY MANAGING DIRECTOR

Inform the Managing Director (or in their absence, a member of the management team).
Avoid gossip and speculation.

PREPARE A WRITTEN RECORD

Using Child Protection Report of Concern Form, record;
date, time, and place of observation/disclosure of abuse; names of anyone present;
what the child says - word for word; factual concerns or observations e.g. any physical or behavioural signs of abuse;
action taken by our organisation; any other relevant information
Discuss with your manager, and provide them with your written record.

DO NOT MAKE ANY DECISIONS IN ISOLATION



RESPONDING TO OTHER CONCERNS

It can be harmful to the wellbeing of a child and their family/whānau to make a notification to the statutory agencies when a concern about a child doesn't amount to suspicion of abuse or neglect. In this instance, this organisation will partner with social service providers in our community to identify and address the needs of the child. See appendix 1 for a list of suggested agencies.

If a Staff Member is Suspected or Accused of Abuse

If we individually or collectively suspect that a staff member or other person within our organisation has perpetuated child abuse, we will not collude with or protect that person or the organisation but promptly report the matter to the management and statutory authorities.

The suspected member of staff will be prevented from having further access to children during any investigation and will be informed fully of their rights.

Children, families, and staff involved in the investigation of allegations of child abuse will be referred to appropriate agencies in the community for support.

If a staff member is under investigation for child abuse allegations and resigns the investigation will continue until its completion.

If, following discussion with Oranga Tamariki and/or Police, there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employment matter, the person concerned will be advised, and informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. Any disciplinary actions taken against that staff member will follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the individual employment agreement and relevant statutory obligations.

Historical allegations will be responded to in the same manner as contemporary ones, with the same priority. All allegations will be investigated thoroughly, regardless of the resignation or termination of the staff member involved.

Support will be made available for any staff involved in an allegation of abuse, i.e. staff receiving the allegation or expression of concern, and the staff member against whom the allegation has been made, but must have separate support persons. See appendix 1 for a list of suggested support agencies/organisations.

Our organisation is committed against using ‘settlement agreements’ where these are contrary to a culture of child protection.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

In line with the Privacy Act 2020, and the Children’s Act 2014, information is able to be shared to keep children and young people safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.

Our organisation will act on advice received from Oranga Tamariki and/or Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone other than management or a designated person for child protection.

Under section 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, 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 this matter to Oranga Tamariki or Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

When collecting information, staff must understand their obligations under the Privacy Act 2020. This includes the privacy principles, namely,

- [Principle 1 - Purpose for collection](#)
- [Principle 2 - Source of information - collection from the individual](#)
- [Principle 3 - What to tell the individual about collection](#)
- [Principle 4 - Manner of collection](#)
- [Principle 5 - Storage and security of information](#)
- [Principle 6 - Providing people access to their information](#)
- [Principle 7 - Correction of personal information](#)
- [Principle 8 - Ensure accuracy before using information](#)
- [Principle 9 - Limits on retention of personal information](#)
- [Principle 10 - Use of personal information](#)

Staff may disclose information under the Privacy Act where there is good reason to do so—such as where there is serious risk to an individual’s health and safety (see [Principle 11 - Disclosing personal information](#)). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person can also be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

The [Escalation Ladder](#) for sharing information about vulnerable children from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner includes a range of helpful advice about confidentiality and information sharing.

Related Documentation and Review

We will, on a regular basis, collectively review our child abuse policies and evaluate our performance in meeting the standards outlined by them.

Reviews will incorporate the views of staff, managers and leaders within our organisation and seek to gauge the accessibility, relevance and usefulness of this policy. Any serious incidents will be taken into consideration, and the effectiveness of this policy in responding to such incidents will be evaluated. Updates to this policy may arise from lessons learnt, or at the request of staff.

Reviews will also consider developments in child protection theory and any additional guidance produced by government agencies.

Our child abuse prevention policies will be made available to all family/whānau. If family/whānau have any concerns about the treatment of a child by any of our staff they are encouraged to make these known. We will ensure that the matter is fully investigated and acted on appropriately. We will use an advisor and mediator from outside the organisation if independent investigation or arbitration is indicated.

Appendix 1 – Listing Of Information, Support & Resources

<https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/listing-information-support-resources-child-abuse>

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) provides free, confidential information and advice to anyone about any query or problem. You can [contact your local CAB](#) for details of local crisis counselling services, as these differ from centre to centre.

Child Matters is a trust dedicated to preventing harm to children in Aotearoa. Child Matters provides guidance, advice, education and support to those in a position to act to protect children. Their training and education programmes provide adults with essential skills, and just as importantly the confidence, to intervene when a child needs help. See the website for [information and resources](#).

Crimestoppers provide support to help you report a potential case of family harm anonymously. Freephone 0800 555 111.

The Family Services Directory lists organisations in your area that can provide whānau with help and support.

Family Violence - It's not OK. This Ministry of Social Development website has information about family violence, what it is and where to get help. They also have an 0800 Family Violence Information Line (0800 45 64 50) which provides self-help information. It also connects people to services where appropriate. See their website for the following:

[I want to help \(you can help people who may be experiencing family violence\)](#)

Family Works is the name for child and family services provided by the 7 Presbyterian Support organisations in New Zealand. They are based in 40 centres in Aotearoa New Zealand. [To find out more about what is available where you live, simply click on the map on their website.](#)

Family Works delivers a full range of social work and counselling services in communities throughout Aotearoa.

Call **Healthline** on 0800 61 11 16 if you need advice about a child of any age who is unwell or hurt, or has any symptoms of sickness. You can call Healthline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's free to callers throughout New Zealand, including from a mobile phone. Healthline nurses are specialists in assessing and advising over the phone. [See more information about Healthline on this website.](#)

[New Zealand Association of Counsellors \(NZAC\)](#) is the professional organisation for counsellors in New Zealand. NZAC offers Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)-approved counsellors. If the correct procedures are followed, costs are met by ACC. You can check whether a counsellor is a member of NZAC by asking the individual counsellor to show you their certificate or by contacting NZAC - [check the website for contact details](#). Remember, if your child has been the victim of abuse, they should only see an approved counsellor who has experience in this area. Check with ACC for approved counsellors.

[The Office of the Children's Commissioner](#) is an independent authority promoting the wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi through advocacy, consultation, monitoring, research and investigation.

If you are worried about a whānau you know and would like some advice, give [Oranga Tamariki](#) a call on 0508 32 64 59. They're there to help. Their social workers will be able to listen to your worries, and they are trained to be able to help find solutions to family problems. Freephone: 0508 32 64 59

[Parent Help](#) has a free helpline staffed by skilled and committed volunteers who offer their time, experience and knowledge to respond to the wide range of issues which parents face in today's environment. The free national helpline is available 9am-9pm. Freephone: 0800 568 856

[Parentline](#) offers individual and group counselling, therapy and social work services to children up to 13 years of age who have been traumatised by abuse and domestic violence. Parenting programmes are also available for the parents of children being seen at Parentline, as are opportunities for whānau therapy to strengthen the whānau unit. [See their website for contact details](#).

[SAFE](#) offers specialist treatment services to those with harmful sexual behaviour, and their family and whānau. SAFE's goal is to have a safe community for our tamariki – they work not only to stop individuals' harmful sexual behaviour but ultimately to keep future generations safe too.

[Safeguarding Children](#) provides training and support in safeguarding and child protection education in New Zealand. They deliver educational programmes through online e-learning courses as well as in house seminars and workshops.

[Salvation Army](#) helps people in need through a wide range of community programmes including food parcels, budgeting, housing support, life skills and addiction services (drug, alcohol and problem gambling). [Check the nearest centre to you](#). For the full range of assistance the Salvation Army offers, see their drop-down menu 'Get Help' on their website.

[Shine](#) provides a range of services, including a comprehensive website on family violence. Although the organisation is Auckland based, the information on the website is nationally relevant. [Shine also offer KIDshine and child safety programmes that help support tamariki who are exposed to family violence](#). The organisation provides a national helpline. Freephone: 0508 74 46 33.

Victim Support

Victim Support provides 24-hour emotional support, personal advocacy and information to all people affected by crime and trauma throughout Aotearoa Call free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Freephone: 0800 84 28 46

Victims Information

The New Zealand Government website for people affected by crime. If you or your family or whānau have been affected by crime, you can get support to help you deal with the practical and emotional effects of the crime and information to help you understand the legal process. Call the Victims Information Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Freephone: 0800 65 06 54

[What's Up](#) (Freephone: 0800 94 28 787) is a free national telephone counselling helpline for New Zealand tamariki and rangatahi. It's also free to call from a mobile phone. What's Up counsellors are available 365 days a year, including public holidays, from 11am to 11pm. [You can also chat online](#) with one of their counsellors.

[Women's Refuge](#) is a women's organisation for women and their children, to help prevent and stop family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides support and information when you are dealing with violence in your life. Support includes a crisis line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Freephone: 0800 73 38 43

There is also 24-hour access to a safe house, as well as a range of other help and support.

[Youthline](#) was established to ensure young people know where to get help and can access support when they need it. They have a free telephone counselling service for young people. Freephone: 0800 37 66 33 You can also text free on 234 or [chat with a counsellor online](#) from 10am to 10pm.