



Kindergarten

Dunedin Rudolf Steiner

Learning with head, heart and hands

Child Protection Procedures:

The Reporting of Neglect, Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour (ref the Children's Act 2014)

1. Allegations, disclosures and suspicions of neglect, abuse or inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
2. All relevant observations and communications clearly documented and checked and signed by the person who has expressed the concern.
3. Refer to Appendix A: *Safe Handling*, from *Let's Stop Child Abuse Together* – Oranga Tamariki and to the Protocol for reporting of suspected or actual child abuse agreed between the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Oranga Tamariki (as attached).
4. Suspected abuse should usually be reported by the Kindergarten Head Teacher to the appropriate outside agency. The Ministry of Education must also be notified at this time. However, any person, in good faith, may report suspected abuse to an outside agency
5. Where a teacher suspects abuse or inappropriate behaviour (including neglect) they will discuss their concerns in the first instance with the Kindergarten Head Teacher.
6. In the case of a report from a third party to the kindergarten, the first course of action will be to direct that party to a helping agency without becoming involved. The kindergarten may however, become involved subsequently.
7. In the case of a child disclosing neglect, abuse or inappropriate behaviour, the information will be passed promptly to the Kindergarten Head Teacher who will refer the issue directly to the most appropriate agency and act on the advice of that agency.
8. If an allegation is made against an employee of the Trust, the Chair of the Proprietors Trust will be informed promptly and involved in any follow-up action in consultation with the New Zealand Police and the Oranga Tamariki. The Management Team and Trust Chair have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the employee in such an instance. They will ensure the child is not exposed to unnecessary risk as well as uphold the Trust's role as employer through actions that are consistent with relevant employment contracts.
9. Parents will be informed of this report to the kindergarten and of the referral except where the child's welfare is likely to be threatened by this. The agency contacted may contact parents. The decision of when and who contacts the child's parents will be made in consultation with the outside agency.

10. All personnel involved with an instance of child abuse will refer to the Protocol of the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Oranga Tamariki as attached.
11. In a case where it is a child's behavior that has prompted the concern the Kindergarten will follow its Behaviour Management Procedure, which includes individual observations and an individual supervision plan if necessary.
12. To protect children from abuse or inappropriate behaviour, and to protect staff members from false allegations, a staff member or other adult should not be with a child alone while not in the sight of others
13. When an adult touches a child it has to be in manner that is appropriate and that respects human dignity.
14. If we suspect that a person is on the premises and under the influence of alcohol or drugs they are asked to leave, and children are protected until the person has left. (refer to our policy on Alcohol, Smoking, vaping and drugs)
15. No harmful material will be kept on the premises (including magazines, newspapers, access to digital media, radio or anything that could expose children to harmful material, for example of a pornographic or violent nature)

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

16. The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children's and Young People's Wellbeing Act 1989 (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989) allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.
17. Generally, advice should be sought from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before information about an allegation that may identify an individual is shared with anyone, other than the appropriate supervisor/manager, designated person for child protection, Regional Managers, and/or Director of Education.
18. 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 Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against **them**.

Identifying possible abuse or neglect

We understand that no situation is the same, and it is important that employees consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching a conclusion. It is important therefore that all relevant factors are taken into account such as a divorce of parents, a new step parent and/or siblings, accidental injury, illness etc. It is not important to specifically identify the type of abuse, however it is important to notice when something is wrong and act upon this in the best interests and well-being of the child (always taking into consideration the risk of harm for the child).

Employees must take into consideration the "blurring of lines" when working with families. Employees must look for patterns occurring, or several signs that might suggest a cause for concern. For this reason, it is

important that the employee or team consult and request advice from the OTS. Employees should also be aware of the link between Intimate Partner Abuse and physical abuse of children.

Signs of possible abuse:

- Physical Signs (e.g. unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries and odours).
- Developmental delays (e.g. child is small for their age, cognitive delays, social skill concerns, poor speech).
- 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, withdrawn, helplessness, aggression).
- Disclosure(e.g. child talking about things that indicate abuse)
- Physical Signs(e.g. looking rough, dirty and uncared for, persistent skin disorders from lack of hygiene, without appropriate clothing for weather conditions, underweight/overweight, small for their age).
- Emotional (e.g. low self-esteem, sad or aggressive, inability to cope in social situations).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g. lack of attachment to parents, demanding of affection or attention, takes food, is always hungry or asking for food, poor self-help skills).
- Medical concerns (e.g. persistent nappy rash or skin disorders that are left untreated, untreated asthma, general poor health of child with no medical help sought).
- Supervision (e.g. child left in the care of another child, child home alone, parent not picking child up on time, parent with no form of contact for emergency).
- Disclosures(e.g. child talks about situations at home or while in the care of others that indicate neglect.

19. Please also refer to the following policies and Procedures – Lockdown; Alcohol, Smoking, vaping and drugs)

Contact numbers

Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 459

Dunedin Police 471 4800

National Police 04 474 9499 – or if the Child is in immediate danger call 111

Ministry of Education 471 5200

Print Name _____ Position: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: ____/____/____ Review Date: ____/____/____

Appendix A

“Working together to keep children and young people safe”

Rules of safe handling

- Don't panic.
- Listen to the child.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Write down what the child says.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing.
- Tell them that they will get help.
- Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Refer to Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- After making the referral to Oranga Tamariki or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person.

Guiding principles

- *Always give priority to the safety and well-being of the child or young person*
- *Report early*
- *Do not interview*
- *Call Oranga Tamariki or the Police*

Abuse and neglect are signals that intervention is necessary. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene will usually result in ongoing or further harm to the child or young person. Some children and young people die from physical abuse and neglect. Some are permanently disabled or disfigured. Children and young people may suffer long-lasting emotional and/or psychological harm as a result of any form of abuse and neglect.

The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse. Severe, potentially fatal injuries are not always visible. Severe emotional and/or psychological impacts of abuse may appear only in the longer term. It is essential to see and, if age-appropriate, talk to the child or young person. Be aware of explanations that do not match the signs. Those you speak to will not necessarily be truthful with you.

It is essential to seek competent specialist advice, either medical, psychological or cultural. If a situation appears to justify removing a child or young person to safety, it also justifies urgent specialist assessment. Collective discussion about emergency action is preferable to individual response.

Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse. It may also be a precursor to, or go along with, other forms of abuse. It must be treated seriously.

Child abuse and neglect are not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. Keep an open mind. All signs must be considered in the wider situational context of the child or young person and their family or whanau. Be sure you seek sound cultural advice. Culture is no excuse for abuse and neglect. The best people to challenge culturally unsound excuses for abuse are respected and authoritative members of that particular culture who have knowledge and skills in child protection.

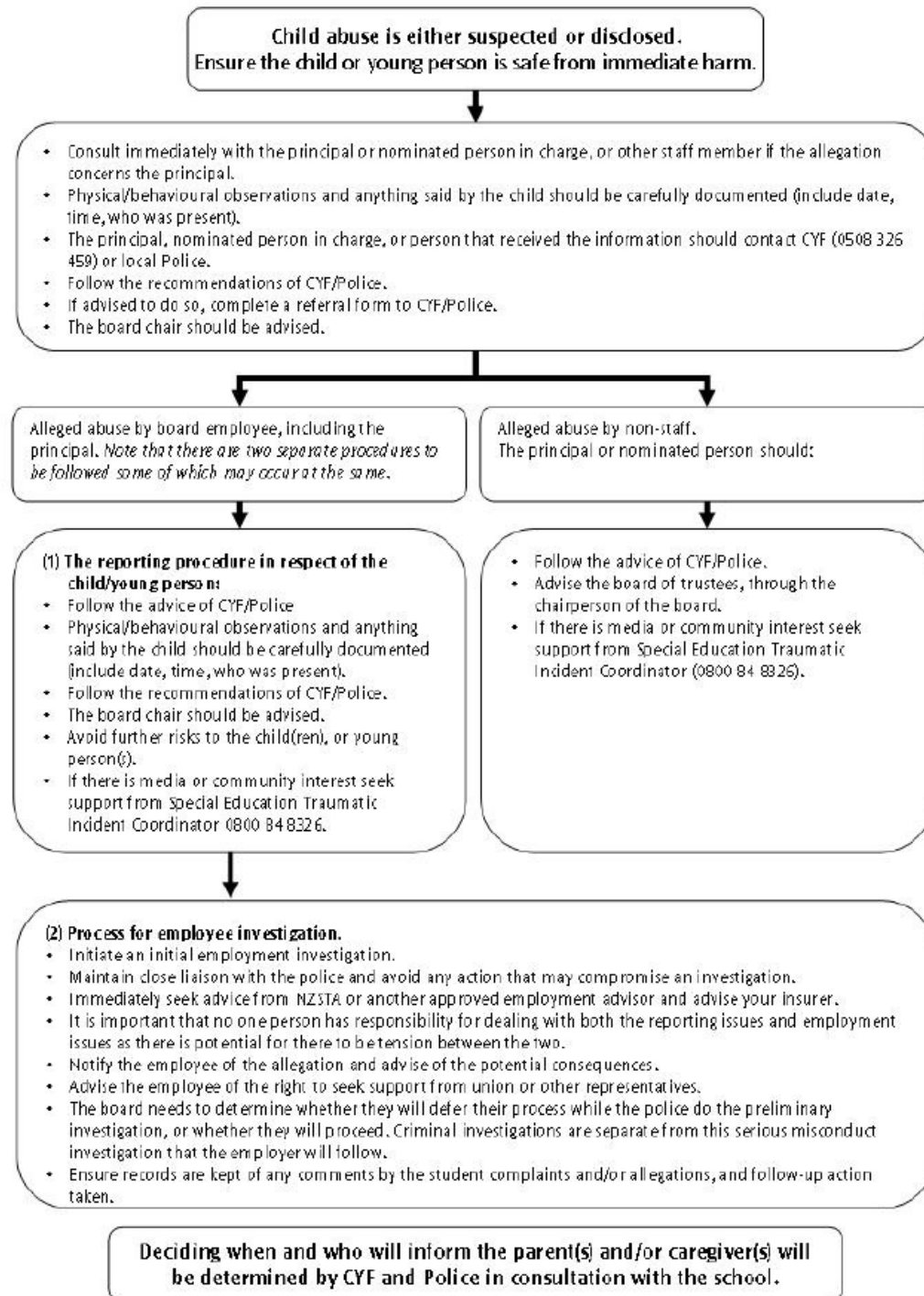
A child's or young person's behaviour is no excuse for abuse and neglect. Children or young people may be described as difficult or hyperactive. However, abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the adult perpetrator regardless of the behaviour of the child or young person.

A parent or caregiver's stress or deprivation is no excuse for abuse and neglect. Such explanations may help to explain the context in which abuse and neglect occurred. However, abusive behaviour is the

responsibility of the adult perpetrator. Beware of blaming, justification and rationalisation as excuses for abuse and neglect. Minimising is also a common dynamic.

The aim of child protective services is to promote positive and enduring change in the lives of children, young people and their families. All action taken with respect to children and young people must reflect the principles and objectives of the Children's Young People's Wellbeing Act 1989 (Oranga Tamariki Act). Priority must be given to the safety and well-being of the child or young person.

Reporting process for suspected or disclosed child abuse



References to CYF refer to Oranga Tamariki