

Child Protection Policy

Rationale:

Te Rāwhiti Kindergarten is committed to child protection and its responsibilities under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 as well as under section 6 of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989. The interest, safety and well-being of tamariki is paramount. We aim to promote a culture where employees feel confident to raise issues of concern, keeping the tamariki at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse.

This policy is designed to meet the Ministry of Education Licensing Criteria: HS31 and Education (ECS) Regulations: 56, 57. It recognises the important role and responsibility of all employees (including volunteers and contractors) in the protection of tamariki by identifying suspected child abuse or neglect and appropriately responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a tamaiti.

Te Whāriki:

Well-being/Mana atua: Tamariki experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

Procedures:

Definitions

Abuse: The harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet the basic physical or psychological needs of a child, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Designated Person for Child Protection & Training

1. The kaiārahi is Te Rāwhiti's Designated Person and is responsible for:
 - a) Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of tamariki.
 - b) Ensuring staff training is up to date.
 - c) Ensuring child protection remains a key focus within the team.
2. The kaiārahi is the first point of contact if a staff member has child protection concerns and are responsible for convening a Child Protection Team in the allegation of abuse or neglect.
3. In the case of allegations against the kaiārahi, the Service Provider Contact (Licensee) will step into this role.
4. All qualified kaiako receive professional training and guidance as part of pre-service teacher education and are aware of what to look for and how to act professionally in the children's best interests in cases of suspected child abuse.
5. The kindergarten will work to help prevent abuse and support early recognition of signs of abuse by ensuring all staff receive Child Protection Training at least every 3 years. The kaiārahi will receive more in-depth training at least every 3 years.

Safer Recruitment

6. All adults working with tamariki will undergo required safety checks that comply with the Vulnerable Child's Act Oranga Tamariki 2014 and the Ministry of Education. Safety checks

will occur every 3 years for all staff and records will be kept by the kaiārahi. These checks will include:

- a) An interview.
- b) Reference checks from previous employer (at least one).
- c) A full work history.
- d) A police vet, or current practicing certificate and approval letter checked against the online register.
- e) Identity verification.
- f) Risk assessment.

Keeping Tamariki Safe with Safer Working Practices

7. The kindergarten playgrounds, indoor rooms and tamariki bathrooms are designed to ensure they can be readily observed by supervising kaiako.
8. Whānau settling tamariki into the kindergarten are encouraged to stay and observe the session until such time as they feel secure in their child's safety.
9. Only adults named on the enrolment form can collect tamariki from the kindergarten. If a child is to be collected by someone other than the persons on their enrolment form, parents/legal guardians are required to give written or verbal permission to the kaiako, including an explanation of their relationship to the child.
10. If tamariki are picked up by anyone other than their parents or legal guardian, kaiako are required to record this on the sign in sheet.
11. Written permission from parents is required for their tamariki to participate in kindergarten outings.
12. Information regarding a child will be shared with both parents unless there are any custodial arrangements in place which will limit this.
13. A complaints procedure ensures issues of concern are dealt with appropriately. Parents are encouraged to express their feelings and concerns so that the operation of the kindergarten can be constantly improved.
14. Visitors and students are not allowed to change or toilet tamariki and are not to be left alone with any tamaiti or group of tamariki. Only permanent staff and long-term relievers are responsible for nappy changing and toileting.
15. Parents will be notified of the presence of any visitor, student or reliever via the sign in sheet.
16. Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern kaiako may have about a tamaiti. Full relevant and contextual factors are recorded in the confidential concern book which will be held by the kaiārahi in their office.
17. Kaiako will respond appropriately to a tamaiti who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted physical affection on a tamaiti. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of tamariki must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job.
18. We realise and accept our own limitations in dealing with issues of abuse. Professional agencies such as the Police and Oranga Tamariki will be involved in suspected cases of abuse.

Confidentiality

19. We understand confidentiality to be of the utmost importance in cases of suspected child abuse. Suspected child abuse will only be discussed between the Child Protection Team. If the matter is to be taken further, the information will only be shared with Oranga Tamariki, the child's GP, the Police and/or the child's parents, as appropriate.
20. When a parent is suspected, the child's parents will be informed after consultation with Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
21. Advice will be sought from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone other than the kaiārahi.
22. Any person who believes that a tamaiti has been, or is likely to be, physically, emotionally or sexually harmed, or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police. Provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them. All information and discussion, including the identity of any informant, will be kept confidential to the Child Protection Team. Documents and data will be stored in one place known only by the kaiārahi.
23. In the case of suspected abuse, the kindergarten will set up a Child Protection Team (CPT). In the first instance the kaiārahi will be informed and will take over the issue that is reported. The CPT will be chosen on a case-by-case basis and should comprise no less than three people from the following:
 - a) Kaiārahi (Designated Person).
 - b) The person reporting the suspected abuse.
 - c) A representative from the Kāpiti Waldorf Trust.
 - d) A kindergarten kaiako.
 - e) The school principal and leadership team.
24. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct.

Procedures for Suspected Abuse by a Person Outside of Kindergarten Staff

25. If the tamaiti is in immediate danger, act immediately to secure his or her safety.
26. Make confidential detailed and factual notes of any report, disclosure or concern (comments and events surrounding the concern). Avoid making judgements, simply record what is said.
27. When responding to the tamaiti:
 - a) Do not interview them; obtain only relevant information necessary for clarification.
 - a) Reassure the tamaiti.
 - b) Do not make promises or commitments that you may not be able to keep.
28. Inform the kaiārahi immediately. The kaiārahi will ensure that the tamaiti has a responsible adult support them through the process and will clearly define this support.
29. The kaiārahi will convene the appropriate CPT for each case.
30. The child's parents will be informed with appropriate and accurate information, unless, in opinion of the kaiārahi this might place the tamaiti at risk. Where the tamaiti may be at risk, appropriate outside agencies involved will inform the parents.
31. The CPT will agree on appropriate actions and agencies that need to be contacted. If a tamaiti is at serious risk or a crime against a tamaiti has been committed, this must be reported immediately. Call 111 and ask for Police.
32. To discuss or report your concerns call Oranga Tamariki free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or contact the local Police station.

33. If there is disruption to the kindergarten or community, negative impacts on other tamariki and/or staff, media interest or a public profile, seek support from the Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator on 0800 84 8326.
34. All decisions and actions will be recorded promptly after they happen.
35. The CPT will await further contact and advice from the appropriate agencies before any more action is taken.
36. The kaiārahi will ensure that relevant staff members have the support they need.

Procedures for Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct by a Staff Member

37. The kindergarten will act immediately on any allegations or suspicions by following the procedures outlined below. The staff member will be treated fairly, and in accordance with their employment contract and principles of natural justice. The tamaiti and whānau will be assured safety, privacy and respect at all times.
38. The issue will be reported immediately to the kaiārahi. In the event of any allegation being made against the kaiārahi, the Service Provider Contact (Licensee) will take on the role of the Designated Person.
39. The kaiārahi will report the issue to the Service Provider Contact of the Kāpiti Waldorf Trust immediately. These two people will form the CPT for this case, unless they decide to create a bigger team which may include the leadership team or other members of the Trust.
40. The staff member will be informed of the allegations in writing and will be advised to seek legal advice.
41. The CPT will consider suspending the staff member on full pay while the investigation is underway. Further action will depend on the outcome of the investigation.
42. The rest of the staff will be informed appropriately throughout the process.
43. The CPT will commence a full investigation of the allegations until an outcome is reached. The CPT may choose to involve an outside agency in this process in which case the agency will investigate, and the kindergarten will act on their advice.
44. All actions will be recorded as accurately as possible and promptly after they occur. The kaiārahi will keep these records and ensure they are confidentially stored.

Outside Agencies:

- Tamariki Ora (Child, youth, and family services) – Care and protection for the child.
- Police – Investigation and possible prosecution.
- CAT (child abuse team) - Police Investigation team.
- HELP/Rape crisis – Victim support and information.
- DSAC (Doctors for sexual abuse care) – Victim support.
- CAPS (Child abuse prevention Society) – Information.
- The Child Abuse Prevention Parent Helpline is the only nationwide parenting helpline in NZ that is available seven days a week. They have no time limit on calls and their telephone support workers can offer immediate help as well as information, referral, and ongoing support to those affected by child abuse, concerned about the welfare of a child or needing family or parenting support. Call 0800 568 856.

Links To:

- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Personnel Policy



➤ Te Ra Waldorf School Privacy Policy

Authorised:	Shelley Wrigley
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