

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Effective From: October 2023

Review Date: October 2024

Purpose: Henderson Early Learning Centre ensure that the children who attend our Centre will be prevented from all kinds of child abuse including but not limited to: neglect, physical abuse, verbal and non verbal abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

This policy is in accordance with the Education Act 2008; The Early Childhood Licensing Criteria 2008, amended 2016 (HS31) and the children's Act 2014 and Children's core worker safety check from July 2015.

This policy will identify concerns and procedures to deal with when concern arises. Training to keep children safe will also be provided to our staff and parents.

This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers and temporary roles and contractors. It is intended to protect all children that staff may encounter, including siblings, the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff as they provide their service.

Procedure:

Staff Management

Safety check:

Henderson Early Learning Centre requires all staff to be safety checked before starting their employment with Henderson Early Learning Centre.

The 7 step safety check is listed below:

- 1- Identity – checking 2 forms of identity that is current e.g. Passport and Drivers Licence.
- 2- Have an interview either on phone or face to face
- 3- Check work history for past 5 years
- 4- Check at least one referee that is not related to them
- 5- Seek information from any relevant professional organisation
- 6- New Zealand Police Vet
- 7- Evaluation done of the above 6 points to assess the risk of the potential children's worker

We will redo safety check every 3 years for existing children's worker, the 4 steps safety check is listed below:

- 1- Verification of Identify (Including previous identities)
- 2- Information from any relevant professional organization
- 3- A New Zealand Police vet
- 4- A risk assessment.

All staff must have either work visa or permanent residency to have the right to work in New Zealand

Relevant information on child abuse is available at the office to enable all staff and parents to access and to be familiar with prevention, recognition and correct responses to child abuse.

Henderson Early Learning Centre has the right to exclude anyone who is suspect to abuse the child by:

- physically ill-treated, neglect or abused a child
- Or any other form of abuse that has been stated in the signs of child abuse.

We could also exclude anyone that we think is unable to perform education and care to our children. These people are in a state of mental or physical health that we think it is not safe for our children.

We also exclude people who are ill and are contagious away from the children to avoid disease passing through to the children.

What is child abuse and how do I recognise it?

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

Cluster of signs:

If you notice a pattern forming or several signs that make you feel worried, this could be an indication that something is going wrong.

These clusters of signs may include:

- Physical signs
- Behavioural concerns
- Developmental delays, changes or signs
- The child talking about things that may indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure)
- The family environment.

The earliest help is the best help

If we notice things starting to go wrong for a child or the people caring for them there are some helpful ways to get involved- by listening and supporting them, or putting them in touch with people who can help.

The sooner we reach out, the sooner they can get help, and we might stop more serious problems happening down the track.

Some things to look out for:

- parents seem stressed or not coping
- they are not able to live on the money they have
- there are signs of drug or alcohol problems
- parents don't have friends or family to help
- adults are hitting or yelling
- there are mental health problems
- children are left home alone or seem to be neglected.

Ways to help:

- Listen, and let them know you're there to help
- Provide encouragement and offer practical support
- Link them up with others who can offer the support they need
- Talk to someone experienced, for a different point of view or ideas for helping
- Call Oranga Tamariki if you're worried about a child, give them a call and you will be able to talk to a trained social worker who will listen to your concerns. Oranga Tamariki will work out whether they need to work with the family or put them in touch with people in the community who can give them the right support.

Identifying child abuse:

Young children who have experience child abuse will be confused and might find difficulties in making connection of what is happening around them. There are many different signs of child abuse.

Emotional abuse:

This can include a pattern of criticising, rejecting, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, and terrorising a child. It may result from exposure to family violence or involvement in illegal or anti-social activities.

- **Sleep problems like bed-wetting or soiling:** with no medical cause, nightmares and poor sleeping patterns.
- **Frequent physical complaints:** real or imagined such as headaches, nausea and vomiting, and abdominal pains. This might coincide with the child being very underweight or dehydrated.
- **Signs of anxiety:** including poor self esteem, being unable to cope in social settings and sometimes obsessive behavior.

Neglect:

Neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, they are just as serious, leading to damaged self esteem and a lost opportunity to thrive in the world.

It can consist of:

- **Physical neglect:** failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth
- **Medical neglect:** failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child
- **Neglectful supervision:** leaving a child in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning
- **Emotional neglect:** not giving children the comfort, attention and love they need through play, talk, and everyday affection.
- **Educational neglect:** allowing chronic truancy, failure to enroll children in school, or inattention to special education needs.

Children who are being neglected may show a combination of behavioural and physical signs, and think about what you can do to help.

- **Looking rough and uncared for:** children might be extremely dirty and not have the right clothes to keep warm and dry. Neglected children may also be underweight or small for their age because they're not getting enough, or the right sort of food.

- **Persistent nappy rash or skin disorders:** can be an indication that children aren't being well cared for.
- **Out and about unsupervised:** if the child is left alone, or doesn't have a safe home to go to they might spend lots of time at the neighbours', steal food, or regularly hang out at school or on the streets. Neglected and abused children are at greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse, and can drift onto a dangerous pathway to offending.
- **Indiscriminate attachment to adults-**strong attention and affection seeking, or a severe lack of attachment to their own parents can be a sign of neglect.

Physical abuse:

Injuries to a child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks, major fractures of the long bones or skull.

- **Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions:** particularly in unusual places like the face, on their back or tummy, buttocks, or the backs of their legs.
- **Unexplained fractures or dislocations:** fractures to the head or face, and hip or shoulder dislocations.
- **Burn marks:** Anywhere on the body are concerning. And if not easily explained need to be notified. Be mindful of burns in the shape of an object like a stove ring or iron, cigarette marks or rope burn.

Sexually abuse:

Sexual abuse is any act that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- **Physical indicators:** like unusual or excessive itching, bruising, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in the genital or anal area, and urinary tract infections. Also be concerned and ask questions if there is ever blood in a child's urine or faeces, it's painful for them to go to the toilet.
- **Age inappropriate sexual play or interest:** and other unusual behaviour like sexually explicit drawings, descriptions and talk about sex can indicate this type of abuse.
- **Fear of a certain person or place:** Children might be trying to express their fear without saying exactly what they are frightened of, so listen carefully, and take what they say seriously.
- photographing children inappropriately.

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

This is the name given to injuries that can happen when a baby is shaken. A single shake can cause bleeding in and around the brain. This can lead to permanent brain damage, leave a baby blind, deaf, paralysed, with seizures, delays in development or even death.

- Talk to the parents you work with about Shaken Baby Syndrome, and about making sure they never leave their baby with someone who has a problem with anger or violence.
- Teach them how to handle their baby's head and neck with great care.
- Help parents to make a 'crying plan', injuries to children, including Shaken Baby Syndrome, are most often caused because a baby won't stop crying and caregivers become frustrated and can't cope.

Prevention of Child Abuse

Supervision

There is an open door policy except for private spaces where changing or cleaning of children is required. Opportunity for staff and other adults to be alone with children, unobserved is kept to minimum.

The centre staff and other adults visiting or working in the centre are well supervised and visible in their activities with the children.

Parents should perform caretaking tasks with their children only. Unpaid workers and visitors are not permitted to perform such tasks with children.

Visitors and contractors on official business in the centre shall not be left unsupervised with children at any time.

The floor plan will be designed with attention paid to easy viewing of all areas.

No child is to be taken from the centre (unless in emergencies) without permission of the parent and without the specific knowledge of the supervisor.

Unless agreed otherwise with the children's parents there should always be at least two staff in attendance on any outing.

Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse:

- **Listen to the child-** disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
- **If the child is in immediate danger:** contact the police immediately
- **Reassure the child:** Let the child know that they have done the right thing and it is okay to talk about it that they are not in trouble.
- **Use open ended prompts:** do not ask questions beyond open prompts, use questions such as what happened and what happened next? Do not make promises that cannot be kept, e.g, "I will keep you safe now".
- **If the child is visibly distressed:** provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
- **If the child is not in immediate danger:** re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
- **Formally record the disclosure as soon as possible:** Record word for word, what the child said and the date and time and the person who was present.

Responding to suspected Child Abuse

When we suspect that child abuse has been perpetrated by a family member, or someone close to the family, we will **not** initially inform the family, but will ensure they are informed by the appropriate person at a suitable time.

Staff members under suspicion will be suspended while the matter is investigated. Staff can seek for legal advice.

All information is treated with confidentiality. Under no circumstances, the matter will be discussed with other staff, parents, children or any other person in or outside the centre.

Full and detailed written records will be kept of every related discussion or incident that involves parent, child, or accused staff member from the first instance of suspected child abuse. It is important that this information recorded is accurate, factual, concise and then dated and signed

No staff member will act alone when suspecting child abuse.

It is the duty of all staff at Henderson Early Learning Centre to immediately consult management or the Supervisor, if they have good cause to suspect the child abuse is occurring, has occurred, or might occur to any child enrolled at the centre.

Management will seek guidance and assistance from appropriate professional agency such as Oranga Tamariki, ministry of education or the police.

- Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre telephone number is 0508326459 or Email Oranga Tamariki contact@ot.govt.nz and follow what they have advised

-Ministry of Education: 09 - 6329400

. Managing situations where a staff member has been accused of child abuse

The person managing the situation will need to do the following:

- Maintain close liaison with the police and avoid any action that may compromise their investigation.
- Notify the staff member of the allegation and advise of the potential consequences, this should be done in consultation with the police. Note it is important that the person that makes the notification to Police/Oranga Tamariki is not the same person who advises the staff member of the allegation against them.
- Consider whether it is appropriate for the staff member to remain in the ECE service premises, this should be done in consultation with Police and service provider.
- Recommend staff seek support from the union or other representatives.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and /or allegations and follow-up action is taken and documented.

Training for all Henderson Early Learning Centre staff and parents

Professional Behavior

It is not acceptable to force any form of unwanted affection or touching on a child. Touching should never be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact of children during changing must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for that job.

To ensure all Henderson Early Learning Centre staff are skilled and knowledgeable in the area of child protection additional to the training that is given they will be required to:

- Read and familiarise themselves with the Child protection policy and be involved in the review of it so that they are familiar with the indicators of abuse and process of responding to suspected abuse.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with relevant websites and documents such as
 - o www.childmatters.org.nz
 - o www.safeguardingchildren.org.nz
 - o www.Oranga Tamariki.govt.nz
- Management will support initial child protection training for all new staff.
- Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses and webinars where possible to support and extend their knowledge and understanding of child protection.
- A copy of the advice provided by ORANGA TAMARIKIS “working together to keep children and young people safe” is available at the office for staff and parents to view and to become more familiar with how to keep children safe.

Information needed for reporting child abuse

When a notification is made to Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police the person making the referral (the notifier) needs to provide the following information:

- True name and contact details
- name of child/children (also known as/nicknames)
- date of birth (if known)
- ethnicity (if known)
- name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living status
- current legal custodians
- reasons why it is believed that the child is at risk
- other significant background information
- Any concerns for their physical safety in making this notification.

Oranga Tamariki role-what happens once reporting is made

Step	Action
1	Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre will enter information on the Oranga Tamariki database and carry out an initial assessment. This may involve requesting further information from the notifier. If the Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre decides further action is required the matter will be referred to the local Oranga Tamariki site office for follow up. The Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre will acknowledge the report, and advise the notifier the matter was referred to recommending either further action or no further action.
2	Oranga Tamariki site will make the final decision as to whether or not further action will be taken and by whom. Depending on the assessed level of needs for the child and their family a referral may be made to a non-government organization (NGO) social service for their support.
3	If further action is to be taken the social worker allocated to the case will develop an investigation plan. This may require input from the notifier. The police will be involved with Oranga Tamariki in this process.
4	Once the reporting has been investigated Oranga Tamariki will contact the notifier to advise if any further action has been taken or will be taken or whether a referral will be made to an NGO for either an assessment or for provision of family support.
5	If reporting is urgent the above actions will take place immediately . Decisions concerning ECE arrangements and notifying the parents will be made by Police and social workers in consultation with the ECE service provider/contact person/person responsible.
6	The notifier may contact the Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre at any stage to obtain information on the status of the notification.

Confidentiality of the person who notifies Oranga Tamariki and the Police

The Privacy Act 2020 and the children, young persons, and their families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. 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.

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if needed.

Reporting Process for Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

Child abuse is suspected or disclosed
Ensure the child or young person is safe from immediate harm



- Physical/behavioural observations and anything said by the child should be carefully documented (include date, time, who was present, sign name on document).
- Consult immediately with Henderson Early Learning Centre management or contact person if the allegation concerns the service's person responsible.
- The service provider, contact person or person responsible that has been advised of the suspected or disclosed child abuse should contact ORANGA TAMARIKI (0508 326 459) or the Police.
- If advised to do so, complete a referral form to ORANGA TAMARIKI/Police. Referral forms are available from the contact centre for ORANGA TAMARIKI's and Police, either by fax or email.
- If there is disruption to the ECE service or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, or media interest, you may seek support from Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator (0800 84 8326).



**Alleged abuse by contact person/
person responsible / other staff**

Alleged abuse by someone outside the service

The service provider, person responsible or contact person should do the following:

- Follow the advice of ORANGA TAMARIKI/Police.
- Avoid further risks to the child/children
- Ensure there is no contact between the child and the person whom the allegation is against while the child is attending the service.



Managing situations where a staff member has been accused of child abuse

The person managing the situation will need to do the following:

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- Notify the staff member of the allegation and advise of the potential consequences, this should be done in consultation with the police. Note it is important that the person that makes the notification to Police/Oranga Tamariki is not the same person who advises the staff member of the allegation against them.
- Consider whether it is appropriate for the staff member to remain in the ECE service premises, this should be done in consultation with Police and service provider.
- Recommend staff seek support from the union or other representatives.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and /or allegations and follow-up action is taken and documented.

Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver will be determined by Oranga Tamariki and/ Police in consultation with Henderson Early Learning Centre