

Child Protection Policy

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, HS31. Childrens Act 2014.

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This policy applies to all children in our care, and to those with whom personnel come into contact with in the course of providing service at Nature Kids Motueka.

Statement of Commitment

Nature Kids is committed to the prevention of abuse and to acting at all times in the best interest of the well-being of children.

Objectives

The safety of the child is our prime consideration at all times.

All children have the right to physical, mental and social well-being, and it is our responsibility to report any concerns of abuse of a child, and provide a safe environment for children.

Related Documents

The child protection policy is to be used in conjunction with the following existing policies:

- Personnel Policy
- Individual Contracts
- Health & Safety Policy
- Supervision Plan
- Complaints Procedures
- Nappy Changing and Soiled Children Policy
- Excursions Policy
- Privacy policy

The child protection policy adheres to the following Acts:

- Childrens Act 2014
- Children Young Persons and Their families Act 1989
- Privacy Act 1993
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Education Act 1989/1998
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Treaty of Waitangi

Definitions:

'Child' Anyone under the age of 18.

'Staff' Those whom are employed directly by or volunteer for Nature Kids Motueka, as well as staff and volunteers, students on placement or partner organisations whilst they are working with children in the care or supervision of Nature Kids Motueka.

'Designated Person for Child Protection' A person assigned by Nature Kids Motueka who holds the responsibility for child protection.

Designated Person for Child Protection

The Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP) for Nature Kids Motueka is **Kate Whitehead**. If Kate is unavailable It Is **Michaela Lobban**

The Designated Person for Child Protection's responsibilities include:

- Being available for immediately for advice and support for staff who may have child protection concerns. If immediate contact is not available but required then the person concerned should contact Child Youth and Family 0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774). If immediate advice is not required then the DPCP will respond as soon as possible.
- Ensuring the Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually, and that staff are well informed
- Ensuring required staff have received child protection training, and that this is recorded
- Ensuring practices and procedures within Nature Kids Motueka have a child protection lens applied
- Overseeing the maintenance and confidentiality of child protection records and documentation
- Maintaining a good working relationships with Child, Youth and Family, local Police, and other local external agencies involved in child protection.
- After a record of concern is made Follow up with CYF through the call centre within 3 working days if CYFs haven't made contact.
- Advocate at senior levels with CYF if the response is not satisfactory.
- Ensuring that the list of contacts for child protection advice and support are kept up to date.

Important Contacts

Designated Person for Child Protection:

Kate Whitehead
021 0222 0572

Child, Youth and Family

0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774), Specific phone line for Education Sector
0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)
03 9894200 Nelson CYF duty social worker

Police

111
Motueka (03) 528 1220
Richmond (03) 543 9500
Nelson child protection team (03) 546 3840

Definition of Child Abuse

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Act, 1994, section 2, defines child abuse as;

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

Below are some indicators of abuse, these are should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

a) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorizing a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others, which includes a child experiencing domestic violence.

b) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

c) Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example , rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

d) Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: to action, emotion or basic needs.

e) Intimate Partner Violence

This refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. Such behaviour includes:

- Acts of physical aggression – such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating.
- Psychological abuse – such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating.
- Forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion.
- Various controlling behaviours – such as isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting their access to information or assistance.

A child who experiences intimate partner violence between parents/ caregivers is being emotionally abused and is also more likely to be directly abused

d) Cumulative harm

Cumulative harm refers to the effects of patterns of circumstances and events in a child or young person's life which diminishes their sense of safety, stability and wellbeing.

Cumulative harm is compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or layers of neglect. Constant daily impact on the child or young person can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of their life.

For further information about identifying child abuse and neglect can be found in the reference guide published by Child Matters, *How Can I Tell? CYF Working Together Handbook*. All of which are kept as references in the Office.

Child Protection Procedures

The following procedures clearly outline what should be done if a child discloses abuse or there is a concern that a child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, from abuse or neglect.

Parents will be informed of our Centre's Child Protection Policy at the time of enrolment and a copy is kept in the drawer of the sign in deck.

The procedures must be followed in all circumstances, including if the allegation is made against a parent or caregiver, a member of staff, or someone else.

Exclusions for Risks to Children

If the person responsible/management has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has physically ill treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilization, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter or protection or is in a state of physical or mental health that presents any risk of danger to children or has an infectious or contagious disease or condition, that person will be excluded from the centre.

Persons displaying unacceptable behaviour as outlined in the Health & Safety Policy, Managing Aggressive and Threatening Behaviour, will be excluded from the centre.

Any material of an explicitly sexual or violent nature is prohibited in our Centres. All practical steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material.

Responding and Reporting Child Abuse

When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against another person, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of the child.

At ANY time any person who has concerns regarding the safety and protection of a child may ring Child Youth and Family Services on 0508 EDASSIST or 0508 FAMILY or the Nelson Duty Social Worker 03 989 4200. cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz

If anyone has reason to be concerned about their own safety in raising a concern about the safety of a child they should immediately visit the local Police station. The Designated Person for Child Protection should also be contacted to provide support.

Immediate danger response

- If there is concern that the is **child is in immediate danger**, the Police must be called by calling **Emergency Services on 111**

Abuse disclosed

- LISTEN to the child and reassure them, but do NOT make promises or commitments you cannot keep.
- Do NOT formally interview the child – obtain only necessary relevant facts if and when clarification is needed.
- Refer to Appendix “Child Matters recommendations for Dealing with Disclosures of abuse”

Recording a concern or disclosure

- Any details of a concern should be recorded on a Record of Concern form, including any Physical signs observed.
- Record any physical or behavioural observations and anything said by the child, using the child's own words as far as possible.
- All records should include the date, time and who was present & as much detail about the observation as possible.
- Anything that is an opinion or a personal concern will be identified as such and not as being fact
- All Records of Concern are to be consulted with the Designated Person for Child Protection immediately. Together you will record the details on a record of concern form.
- All Record of Concerns are to be held in a safe and confidential manner.
- The Designated Person for Child Protection will hold a register of concerns.
- Records of Concern will be followed up by the Designated Person for Child Protection on a weekly basis and records the outcomes of the reviews kept with the register.

Consultation

- No person will not act alone on suspicions, but will consult with the Designated Person for Child Protection who will be committed to taking action as outlined in these procedures. Staff will not act in a way that is outside their knowledge or capacity.
- If a member of staff has a child protection concern then they must consult with the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP) immediately then together record on the record of concern form. If the DPCP is not available the person concerned should ring Child Youth and Family (CYF) for advice (0508 EDASSIST).
- The Designated Person for Child Protection will consult with Child, Youth and Family to clarify whether a notification of concern should take place. Even if CYF say that it's not necessary and you still think there should be a notification of concern you should still make one.
- If it is decided that concerns do not require a notification to statutory authorities, the child will continue to be monitored, information gathered, analysed, records kept and actions taken
- Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:
 - The parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator
 - It is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence
 - There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed

Reporting Concern to Child Youth & Family

- We recognise that by law, [Sec 15 of the Children, young Persons and their Families Act 1989] any person may report a case of suspected abuse to the statutory agencies (Child Youth and Family Services on 0508 EDASSIST, 0508 FAMILY or the Nelson Duty Social Worker 03 989 4200)
- The Designated Person for Child Protection is responsible for submitting a record of concern to CYF with the assistance of the member/s of staff involved.
- The Designated Person for Child Protection will follow up on the Report of Concern made to CYF about 3 days after the Notification was made.
- Re-notifications to CFY will be made when new information is recorded or if concerns are still held about a child and the matter has not been dealt with satisfactorily

Review of Records of Concern & Notifications to Child Youth & Family

- The Designated Person for Child Protection will follow up any Records of Concern on a weekly basis and record the outcomes of the reviews.
- All staff members involved will be kept informed as far as possible within the limits of confidentiality and the need to protect the best interest of the child. This will be determined by the Designated Person for Child Protection.
- In all cases of suspected abuse, the information and concerns will be made available only to those staff who have a need to know. This will be determined by the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Record of Concern

Name of child/young person involved:	DOB of child/ young person involved:
Date of concern/ Date of review:	Staff member:
Outline of concern/ Details of review:	

Quick Reference for Responding to Child Abuse

ABUSE SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED
 Child abuse or potential child abuse is suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed.

Is an immediate response required to ensure the child's safety?
 (if unsure, consult immediately)

No

Record details of the disclosure or concern on a Record of Concern form

Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection;
 Kate 021 0222 0572
 Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection,
 Kate 021 0222 0572

Yes

Ensure the immediate safety of the child and contact **Immediately, Police, 111** or **CYF 0508 332774**

Record actions taken

Yes

Report of Concern made to Child Youth and Family

Record actions taken

Review of Concern by Designated Person for Child Protection

Record actions taken

No

Record actions taken

Review of Concern by Designated Person for Child Protection

Record actions taken

Youth

Record of Issue or Concern / Review

Child's name:		DOB:	
Date:		Time:	

Notes / Review:

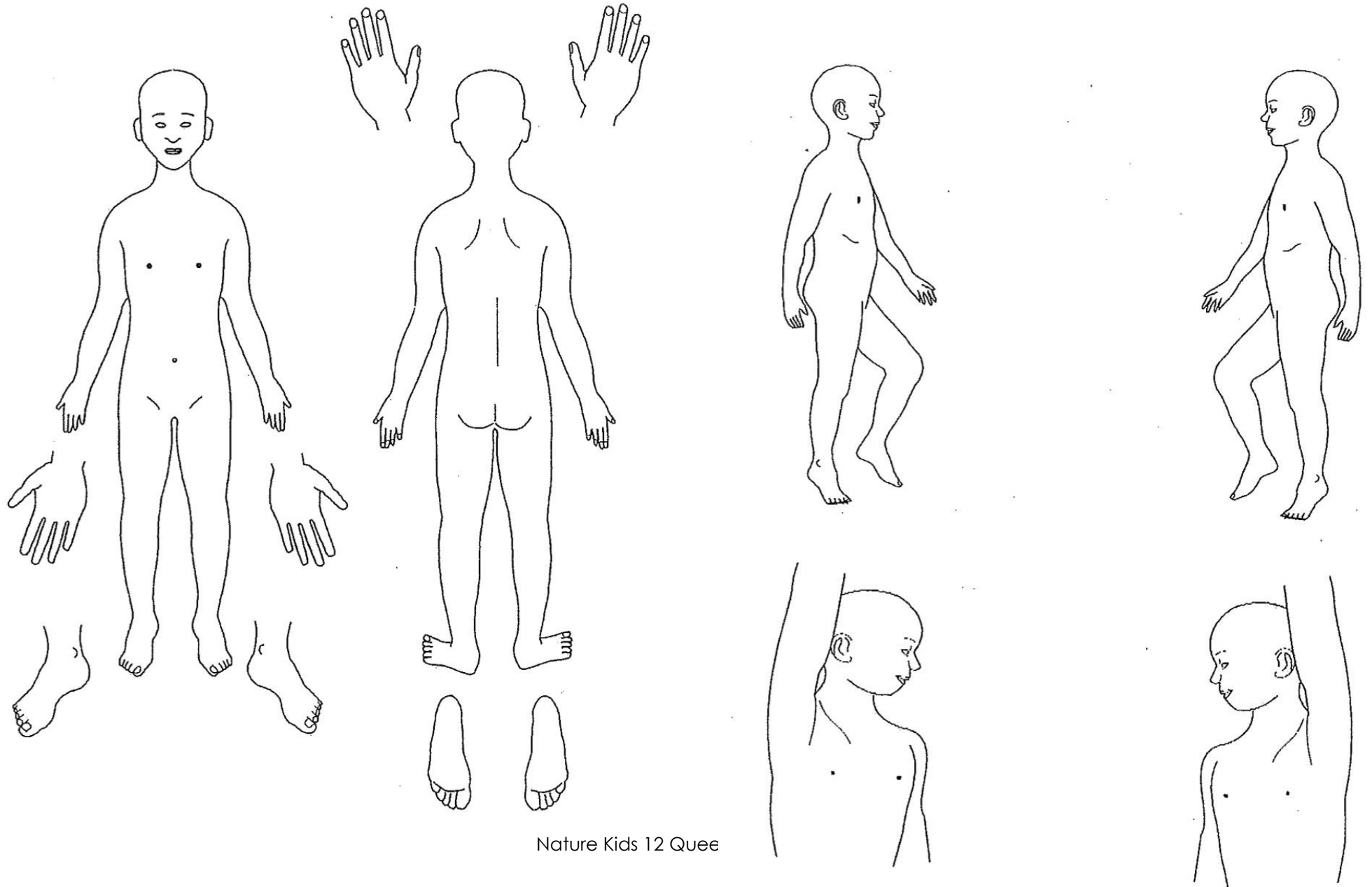
Action:

Record of Concern to CYF? Yes / No

Signed:		Date:	
Name:		Position:	
Review Scheduled:			

This form is to be given to the Designated Person for Child Protection ASAP. If this concern requires immediate action please ensure that its information is passed on following NATURE KIDS MOTUEKA process for responding to Child Abuse.

Record of Physical Signs



Managing allegations against a staff member

These recommended procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. The child must be protected from harm.

The procedures are to ensure and/or provide:

- The **safety of the child is the first consideration**
- That all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively
- That in the case of a complaint against an employee, action is guided by the applicable employment contract.
- Clear guidance for management and employees in respect of any allegations received concerning children within the Centre environment.

Please note there are two procedures to be followed here:

1. For the child - Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse
2. For the staff member – Responding to an Allegation against Employee.

In all cases it is suggested that no one person should have responsibility for dealing with both the the child and employee issues. If the allegation is against the Nature Kids Manager or the Designated Person for Child Protection the local office of the Ministry of Education should be contacted immediately (03 546 3479)

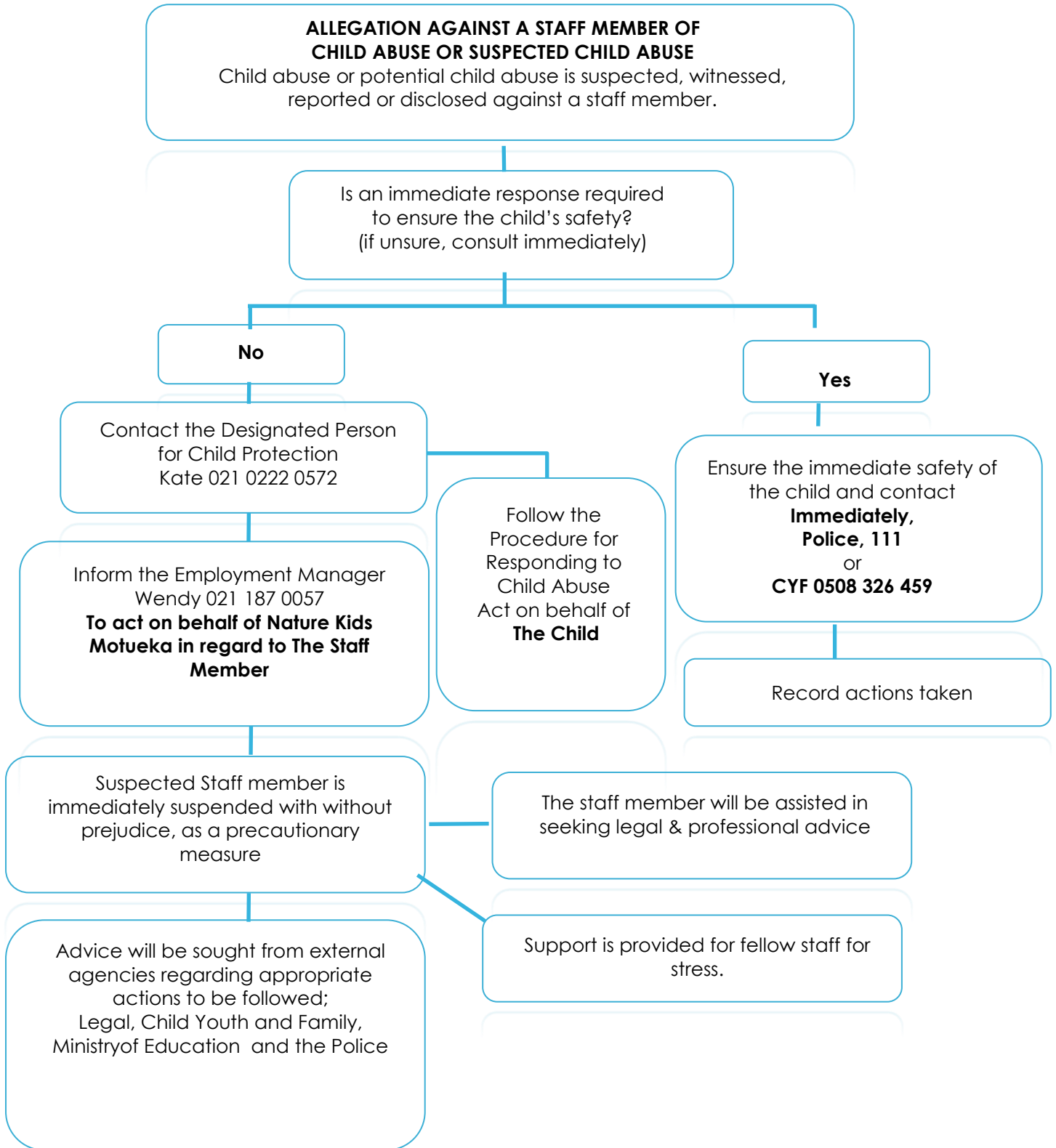
Responding to an allegation against a staff member

1. The Centre will respond to suspicions and allegations of child abuse by a member of staff in a manner which best ensures children's immediate and long-term safety and will treat suspicions or allegations against a staff member with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person.
2. The Centre will not act alone, and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to Police or Child, Youth and Family. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organization will collude to protect an adult or organization.
3. Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration;
4. When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against a staff member, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of the child.
5. The Centre must ensure that the suspected individual is immediately suspended without prejudice, as a precautionary measure.
6. The centre Manager – Kate Whitehead **is** to be notified immediately, preferably along with a written notification. In the event that the suspicion or allegation is made about the centre manager then contact CYFS or the Police directly.
7. When abuse is suspected, staff will follow the process for Responding to suspected child abuse included in this policy.
8. When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both staff and children's rights are to be attended to. This means the safety of the child is of first concern, and that the staff member must have access to legal and professional advice.
9. The person managing the child abuse issue will not be the same person as that managing the employment issue.
10. The Centre will adhere to the principles of the Employment Contract's Act and give the staff member all information regarding their rights.
11. The Centre recognizes the added stress to fellow staff in such a situation, and will ensure support is available.
12. The Centre should liaise with Child, Youth and Family and the Police regarding the process and progress of the investigation.
13. If the Centre is aware that a member of staff it has placed on precautionary suspension also works with children for another organization, either as an employee or a volunteer, it should ensure that the other organization is informed of the suspension and the subsequent

outcome. Consultation with Child, Youth and Family or the Police will determine how this information is conveyed.

14. If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff, which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.
15. Records will be kept of any comments, complaints or allegations by the complainant and any follow-up action taken.
16. The Manager should consult with the policy regarding reporting.
17. The Manager is advised to ensure records are kept of any comments by the child complaints and /or allegations, and follow-up action.
18. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse against an employee of the Centre should be made in consultation with the following:
 - a. Child Youth & Family
 - b. New Zealand Police
 - c. Ministry of Education Local Office
19. The Manager will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child and the employee. As mentioned above it is strongly recommended that an immediate consultation is sought with the agencies involved. The purpose of this consultation is to enable the Manager to discuss the concern or allegation and to;
 - a. Determine the extent of the assistance they can give to the investigation
 - b. Consider the timeframe to be followed with regard to the possible conflict between what steps the Manager may take as an employer and possible police intervention
 - c. Consider the employer role in conjunction with any procedures outlined in relevant employee contracts.
20. When it has been determined the Manager should pursue the matter as an employer, they should advise the person accused of the allegation and seek a response. It is vital that the employer should refer to the relevant employee contract and it is advisable to seek legal support in every case when proceeding with disciplinary action. The accused employee/volunteer is to be immediately suspended to protect all children at the service and the employee concerned.
21. We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.
22. The Manager should take care to ensure actions taken by the Centre do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by any external agency. It is strongly recommended that the Manager maintain a close liaison with CYF and the police to achieve this.

Quick Reference for Allegations of Child Abuse Against Staff Member



RECORDING

Carefully documented records are to be kept of all steps involved in this process, conversations, actions, observations etc. All Records must be dated and signed and stored in a safe manner to guard confidentiality.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

Nature Kids Motueka ensures that all staff working with children are employed in accordance with the Safe Recruitment & Employment Policy. The ability of staff to protect children in their care is critical.

Induction Training

- All staff will be required to read and have a copy of our Child Protection Policy.
- At the earliest convenience a new staff member will attend training provided by Safeguarding Children Initiative or engage E-Learning to receive training in identifying vulnerability, risk factors and child abuse.

Refresher Training

- The Designated Person for Child Protection will ensure that all staff receive annual refresher training to remain familiar and up to date with the Child Protection policy.
- E-Learning or attendance at local seminars will be encouraged for staff to remain up to date with recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- Reference to the Child Protection Policy will be made on a regular basis in staff meetings so that staff remain familiar with and up to date with the policy statements and procedures.

Safe Working Practices

- Nature Kids Motueka has guidelines on safe work practices to protect children from abuse and at-risk situations and to protect staff from unwarranted suspicion. Our Safe Working Practices can be found within our Safe Recruitment and Employment Policy.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Our Centre recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements of the Privacy Act, Children, Young Person's and their Families Act, Health Information Act and other statutes. There are provisions within each of these acts for sharing information needed to protect children and enable other people to carry out their legitimate functions. In general staff will not share information if they believe that by doing so this will endanger the child.
- Our Centre encourages the sharing of information when appropriate steps have been taken.
- Staff may be asked to provide information to Child, Youth and Family, the Police, Court or Lawyers and Psychologists.
- Information sharing will be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children.
- When any of the above contacts a staff member for information that staff member must first refer to their supervisor and consent gained from the Centre Manager before providing the information.
- Information will only be given after the Centre Manager has identified the person making the request, the actual purpose of the request, what use the information will be put to, and who will see the information.
- In the case of a Social Worker or Counsel for Child wishing to interview a child while in the care of our Centre, the staff member must consult their manager to be certain that such an interview will be undertaken legally and in the best interests of the child.
- A child's records will be kept as factual as possible, and nothing will be recorded as fact without evidence to back it up. This means, for example, that no entry will be made on a child's record about guardianship of a child without sighting the appropriate documentation.

Relationships with External Agencies

- Our Centre will maintain a good working relationship with Child, Youth and Family and with Police, and be familiar with the laws that serve to protect children from abuse. We will consult with Child, Youth and Family, the Police, and with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge to help us protect children from abuse.
- We believe that in order to keep children safe, people who suspect or uncover abuse should not be tempted to deal with cases themselves. When there is a relationship of trust and understanding with the statutory agencies, people are more likely to report and enable professional investigation to ensue.
- We will ensure that our contacts for Child, Youth and Family and Police offices are up to date. The Designated Person for Child Protection will maintain this information.
- A list of specialist agencies will be kept and updated by the Designated Person for Child Protection. A copy of this will be made available to all staff.
- The Designated Person for Child Protection will meet regularly with a contact person from a specialist agency to ensure that a trusted relationship is maintained in order that our Centre can seek help easily and appropriately.
- We encourage the networking of agencies, and our staff will undertake an active programmes for maintaining the relationships between the agencies.

Collection of Children & Access Arrangements

- Parents are to be reminded that they need to keep their child's collection details up to date on their enrolment form.
- Parents to notify the teachers of any changes to their child's collection routines.
- If there is no legal access order, staff cannot lawfully withhold any child from their parent.
- Children are only permitted to be collected by persons who the Centre has prior written parental consent for. In the event that this is a spontaneous arrangement with the parent the Centre will phone the parent for verbal consent to release the child into the collectors care and details of this will be recorded on the day sheet.
- In the event of a person attempting to uplift a child without parental consent the police will be rung immediately, and staff will ensure the safety the child.
- If there is an access agreement, staff will use their best efforts to protect a child without endangering other children or staff members.
- When centre staff are informed of a child being the subject of a custody arrangement or dispute, they will explain this section of the policy to the parent and ensure they have completed the Custodial Statement section of the child's enrolment form and a copy of the court order is held on the child's file.
- All staff will be informed and the child's name and contact details clearly displayed on the office notice board. At no time will a child who is the subject of an access order be left in the building with only one staff member.

Updated October 2016

Appendix: CYFS Referral Form



Child, Youth and Family National Contact Centre

Making a Report of Concern to Child, Youth & Family

The below email address is used exclusively for any Reports of Concern.
All other Education email enquiries please send to: edassist@cyf.govt.nz

- 1. Please ensure you make contact by phone if:**
 - Immediate action is required
 - Your matter is urgent
 - You need advice about a student prior to making a report of concern

PHONE
0508 332774
0508 EDASSIST

2. Email report of concern service

- An email report of concern TEMPLATE form is attached.
- Please read the instructions on it prior to sending.
- You will get an automatic response immediately your email has been received by Child, Youth & Family.
- Please check for this directly after sending your email.

Email address

CyfCallCentre@cyf.govt.nz

The CYF email notification system is secure

You may also send encrypted emails. [SEE TEMPLATE ON NEXT PAGE](#)



NATIONAL CONTACT CENTRE

EMAIL/FAX REFERRALS

Contact Centre Telephone:
FREE PHONE 0508 332774 [0508 EDASSIST]

Contact Centre Email Address: CyfCallCentre@cyf.govt.nz

Contact Centre Fax: (09) 914 1211

Details of person sending the email / fax:

DATE:

TO: Child Youth and Family National Contact Centre

FROM:

NOTIFIER'S FAX ADDRESS:

NOTIFIER'S EMAIL ADDRESS:

Note: Emails sent to CYF National Contact Centre generate an automatic reply as follows:

Your email has been received by the Child Youth and Family National Contact Centre generic email address. This email address is monitored regularly from 8am Monday morning until 6.00 am Saturday morning. If you have concerns that need urgent follow-up outside of the above hours then please phone CYFS toll free number [0508 326 459] for further assistance. This email address is for the use of Professionals and Agencies only.

If you have spoken to an Intake Social worker about this notification, please complete the following details:

NAME OF ISW: _____

DATE/TIME OF THE CONVERSATION: _____

Type of Abuse: *(Please identify category/categories.)*

Physical

Sexual

Emotional

Neglect

Other

FOR **EACH** CHILD BEING REFERRED PLEASE SUPPLY FULL CONTACT DETAILS INCLUDING:

Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Gender:

Ethnicity (incl lwi if known):

Home address and contact telephone numbers:

Mother's name: *(and address if different from child's)*

Father's name: *(and address if different from child's)*

Step parents: *[address(es) if different from child's]*

Caregiver:

Siblings: *[Full Names, Dates of Birth, Schools, address(es) if different from child's.]*

Other Members of Immediate Household: *(Relationship to child)*

Other Family/Whanau: *(Full Name, Age, Address, contact telephone number, contact person):*

Pre-School / School: *(Address, contact telephone number, contact person):*

Other Agencies Involved with Child and Child's Family: *(Address, contact telephone number, contact person):*

Medical & Social Work Contacts at Agency: *(Names, Contact telephone/Locator Numbers)*

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Concerns: *(Please identify concerns. As far as possible give time, date, and place for each. Use additional pages as necessary.)*

Background/Additional Information: *(Relevant child / family medical and social history, other background matters of importance to investigation of abuse or neglect.)*

WHAT SERVICES EXACTLY DO YOU ENVISAGE CYF PROVIDING? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC.

1)

2)

Your Name:

Designation:

Service/Group:

Address, Usual Contact Numbers:

WHERE CAN YOU BE REACHED NOW?

LIMITED CONFIDENTIALITY

Do you wish (as far as is legally possible) departmental social workers not to tell any person being investigated as a result of the information you have given, that you are the source of that information?

NO

YES – Because

DATE:

SIGNED:

Appendix: Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse



EDUCATING TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

[Home](#) > [Child Protection Policy](#) > [Section 4 - Additional Resources](#) > Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise and legal action against the abuser.

There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child:

- Don't panic.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says.
 - Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
 - Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
 - Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
 - Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
 - Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
 - Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
 - Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
 - Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure
- Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person.

Important Notes:

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the children
- Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

Things TO SAY when a child discloses

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

Things NOT TO SAY when a child discloses

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I am shocked!'
- 'Oh that explains a lot'
- 'No not...he's a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

Things TO DO

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated child protector.
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.

Things NOT TO DO

- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself.
- Do NOT formally interview the child:
 - Never ask leading questions.
 - Never push for information or make assumptions.
 - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.
- Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
- Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality.
- Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers.
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.

Reference: <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/258/child-protection-policy/section-4-additional-resources/dealing-with-disclosures-of-abuse>

Appendix: Indicators of Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Bed wetting or bed soiling with no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Non-organic failure to thrive
- Pale, emaciated
- Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Malnutrition
- Dressed differently to other children in the family

Behavioural Indicators:

- Severe developmental lags with obvious physical cause
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
- Running away from home, avoiding attending at school
- Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
- Anti-social behaviours
- Lack of self esteem
- Obsessive behaviours
- Eating disorders

Caregiver Indicators:

- Labels the child as inferior or publicly humiliates the child (e.g. name calling)
- Treats the child differently from siblings or peers in ways that suggest dislike for the child
- Actively refuses to help the child
- Constantly threatens the child with physical harm or death
- Locks the child in a closet or room for extended periods of time
- Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
- Withholds physical and verbal affection
- Keeps the child at home in role of servant or surrogate parent
- Has unrealistic expectations of child
- Inappropriately involves child in adult issues such as separation or disputes over child's care
- Exposes child to witnessing, either seeing or hearing, situations of arguing and violence in the home

Abuse by Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
- Often extremely dirty and unwashed
- Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
- Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods

- May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult
- Does not receive adequate medical or dental care
- Malnourished - this can be both underweight and overweight
- Lacks adequate shelter
- Non-organic failure to thrive

Behavioural Indicators:

- Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
- Lack of attachment to parents/caregivers
- Indiscriminate attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance and performance
- Demanding of affection and attention
- Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
- May steal food
- Poor social skills
- No understanding of basic hygiene

Caregiver Indicators:

- Puts own need ahead of child's
- Fails to provide child's basic needs
- Demonstrates little or no interest in child's life - does not attend school activities, social events
- Leaves the child alone or inappropriately supervised
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Depressed

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators (often unexplained or inconsistent with explanation given):

- Bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions
- Burns - small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns etc
- Fractures and dislocations - skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
- Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
- Fractures in very young children, especially those not yet mobile

Behavioural Indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- Wary of adults or a particular person
- Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- Cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly
- May be extremely compliant and eager to please
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
- May regress (e.g. bedwetting)
- May indicate general sadness
- Is violent to other children or animals

Caregiver Indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- May appear unconcerned about child's wellbeing
- May state the child is prone to injuries or lies about how they occur
- Delays in seeking medical attention
- May take the child to multiple medical appointments and seek medical treatment without an obvious need

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or stools
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Urinary tract infections
- Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably

Behavioural Indicators:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Refuses to go home, or to a specific person's home, for no apparent reason
- Fear of a certain person, place, sound or smell
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviours

Caregiver Indicators:

- May be unusually over-protective of the child
- Accuses the child of being sexually provocative
- Misuses alcohol or drugs
- Invades the child's privacy (e.g. during dressing, in the bathroom)
- May favour the victim over other children

Intimate Partner Violence

Indicators in the Child:

- Physical injuries consistent with the indicators of Physical Abuse
- Absenteeism from school

- Bullying or aggressive behaviour
- Complaints of headaches or stomach aches with no apparent medical reason
- Talking or describing violent behaviours

Indicators in the Victim:

- Physical Injuries including: bruising to chest and abdomen, injuries during pregnancy
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Fearful
- Submissive

Indicators in the Perpetrator:

- Isolates and controls partner and children
- Threatens, criticises, intimidates, uses aggressive and physical abuse towards partner and children
- Minimises and denies own behaviour, or blames victim for the perpetrators own behavior

Created 2017

Reviewed term 3 2018	Next Review term 3 2019
Reviewed term 3 2019	Next Review term 1 2020
Reviewed term 1 2020	Next Review term 1 2021
Reviewed term 1 2021	Next Review term 1 2022
Reviewed term 1 2022	Next Review term 1 2023
Reviewed term 1 2023	Next Review term 1 2024
Reviewed term 1 2024	Next Review term 1 2025
Reviewed term 1 2025	Next Review term 1 2026