

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Category: Health and Safety

RATIONALE

Magic Garden as an early childhood education provider 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 child is paramount. We aim to promote a culture where employees feel confident to raise issues of concern, keeping the children at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to:

Provide a safe environment - free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.
Proactively prevent child abuse and neglect in our centre community.
Give confidence in identifying and addressing any concerns of child abuse and neglect.
To comply with legislation in place for the protection of tamariki, education and early childhood services regulations, health and safety legislation and other applicable legislation.

TE WHĀRIKI

Well-being/ Mana atua - Goal 3: Child experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

PROCEDURES

- Establish and maintain relationships with agencies within the community who specialize in the support and counselling of families and will refer on, tamariki who are the suspected to be victims of abuse.
- Magic Garden to include Child Protection Workshops in their Professional Development for all employees.
- Early Childhood Services Regulations state 1:5 teacher child ratios for children 0-2 and 1:10 teacher child ratio for children aged 2-5. Magic Garden maintains higher teacher/child ratios than those specified by the 2008 Regulations.
- New teachers will undergo required safety checks that comply with the Vulnerable Children's Act Oranga Tamariki, 2014. This will include: a police vet, identity verification, references, and an interview. A work history will be sought, and previous employers will be contacted. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed. See Safety Checking Policy for further details.
- Teachers at Magic Garden are made aware of this policy and how to raise issues of concern at the time of their induction. Further training and support will be offered if deemed necessary.
- Possible situations of abuse in early childhood education could be:
 - Adult to Adult
 - Adult to Children
 - Children to Adult

- Children to Children

- This policy addresses adult to child abuse. The police will be contacted where appropriate for adult to adult abuse. If one child is suspected of abusing another, it may indicate that the abusing child has been abused. Treat this as an indicator and compile information about the behaviour of this child over time to look for a pattern.
- Written documentation is kept on any issue of concern teachers may note about a child. Full, relevant, contextual factors are recorded in a confidential 'concern book' held at each centre.
- Early identification and timely action is encouraged.
- If any team member sees a child being abused, observes signs of abuse, or a children reports being abused, we will follow the reporting process for children abuse, as detailed at the conclusion of this policy.
- We realise and accept our own limitations in dealing with issues of abuse. Professional agencies such as the Police and the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children will be involved in suspected cases of abuse. These agencies are sought for their specialised knowledge.
- Our playground, indoor play areas and child bathroom changing are designed to ensure they can be readily observed by supervising teacher.
- Families at Magic Garden are encouraged to visit at any time during the day. When families are settling a child into the centre they are encouraged to observe and take part in our program until such time as they feel secure enough to leave.
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are able to collect child from the centre. If a children 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 management including their relationship to the children.
- If child are picked up by anyone other than their parents or legal guardian, this is to be record this.
- Written permission from parents is required for their children to participate in centre excursions.
- Information regarding a child will be shared to both parents unless there are any custodial arrangements in place which will limit this.
- 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 Magic Garden can be constantly improved.
- Visiting students are not allowed to change or toilet any child unsupervised and are not to be left alone with any child or group of tamariki.
- Regular relievers will be allowed to change or toilet child and can be left alone with groups at the discretion of the centre manager.
- Parents will be notified of the presence of any student or reliever.
- We value the internet as a learning tool. Magic Garden teachers will only access child appropriate websites when exploring with child by using Kiddle. Kiddle is a safe visual search engine for child powered by Google.

Definitions:

The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse and these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

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.

Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse is any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning and development of a child

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual Abuse is an act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child, whether consensual or not. Sexual abuse can be committed by a relative, a trusted friend, an associate, or someone unknown to the child.

Neglect

- Neglect is any act or omission that results in impaired physical functioning, injury and/or development of a child. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs.

Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

It is essential to continue to maintain a confidential record, including observations of the child's behaviour for some time following an allegation or incident. The process for responding to child abuse is given in the 'Reporting Process for Child Abuse' at the conclusion of this document.

An incident report template is also provided at the conclusion of this document. All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Person in Charge as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the child(ren) and record the report.

If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, the Person in Charge shall notify Oranga Tamariki: 0508 326 459. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 111.

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies (i.e., Oranga Tamariki or the Police), this child protection policy will also help staff to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern. In many of these cases the involvement of statutory agencies would be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families/whānau. Throughout New Zealand statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services and it is important for our organisation to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau in a manner proportionate to the level of need and risk.

Staff members will discuss suspicions with a senior staff member. Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.

- The following measures will be taken by all kaiako regarding suspected abuse or neglect:
 - All allegations of child abuse/neglect will be taken seriously.
 - No kaiako will act alone regarding suspected child abuse/neglect. Notify the manager immediately
 - Record in writing, the exact details of behaviour or language used by the child.
 - Date and sign the records, identifying the child by initials and birth date only. Manager and staff member to co-sign.
 - Keep details confidential to the manager and staff member involved, or on a “need to know” basis.
 - If appropriate, record further observations to build up a clear impression of the situation.
 - If the centre manager suspects a child is unsafe, she/he will report it to the Ministry of Children, Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT) - 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)
 - If not appropriate to approach parent/caregiver/guardian, the supervisor will ensure the parent/caregiver/guardian is informed by the appropriate person(s).
 - Support will be given to the family in any way possible.
 - Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by law.
 - If there are any allegations of abuse by a Coastlands Preschool employee, the authorities will be informed immediately and the employee will be suspended while the matter is investigated.

Ongoing care for vulnerable children

Ensure the child's immediate safety - do not alert the suspected abuser.

- If a child tells of abuse; listen; have a conversation - don't interrogate them.
- Say you're glad they told you and you're sorry it happened
- Let them know it's not their fault and that you'll do your best to help
- Do not ask further questions
- Do not put words in the child's mouth
- Allow them to tell only as much as they want
- Continue to support the child
- Ignore or distract negative behaviour

If a child's behaviour affects other children's health and well-being at the Centre, a parent meeting will be called by the manager to discuss the situation. The final decision of future action will be made by Management and the Child Safety Team, with consideration to the fact that the manager has the right to exclude any child if his/her behaviour poses a significant danger to others.

The Basic Principles for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse

- Believe what children tell you and what you see.
- Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This may mean contacting the Oranga Tamariki or the police if you think there is an immediate risk of the child being abused again.
- Record clear concerns and observations, factual statements with dates The priorities in responding to any suspicion of child abuse are:
 - 1. Reassure the child that it was all right for them to talk to you. Have a conversation but do not interview the child
 - 2. Share the information with someone you trust that also knows the child (centre supervisor)

- 3. Protect the child's privacy by limiting the number of people who will be involved in discussions
- 4. Immediately write up the incident or what was said in a confidential record
We recommend that you do not make decisions alone. Consult with someone experienced. If there is no short-term risk, take time to consult thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision.
- Act on your concerns. Don't leave it to someone else or hope it won't happen again. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.
- Seek support for yourself. The tasks and situation will be stressful.
- Where abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the family, do not initially inform the family, but ensure that the appropriate person informs them at the appropriate time under guidance from Oranga Tamariki.

Staff Selection

- The Centre will employ staff only after an interview and thorough checking on the applicant's work history. This will include making contact both with referees and past employers. This will be done with the applicant's consent.
- All employees will have been passed through a 7 Point Safety Check including
 1. Verification of identity (including previous identities)
 2. An interview
 3. Information about work history
 4. Referee information
 5. Information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body
 6. A New Zealand Police Vet will be carried out every three years (carried out as part of registration renewal for registered teachers)
 7. A risk assessment
- All staff not holding current registration with the NZ Teaching Council will have a Police Vet Check every three years.
- Management will ensure when selecting staff that they have the skills and attributes to ensure children's safety.
- When employing staff, the applicant's referees will be contacted prior to employment.
- All staff, including volunteers, will be required to read and abide by the Child Protection Policy.

Parent Involvement

- The Centre has an open door policy where parents/whānau are welcome to visit at any time and to be involved as much as possible within the centre.
- Parents and visitors are not permitted to undertake any caregiving routines with other people's children or be alone with them.
- If any teacher is concerned that a parent/adult collecting a child may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs they will seek support from another staff member and:
 - Ask the parent/adult if anyone can be contacted to take them home or a taxi fare offered.
 - In the case of parents/adults where the above is not satisfactory and the safety of children and staff is at risk, the Police will be informed.
- Children cannot leave the centre without written permission from parents, except in an emergency. If a non-custodial parent/guardian wishes to collect a child from the Centre the custodial parent will be informed before the child leaves the Centre.

Professionalism Procedures

- Management will encourage staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.

- At least once each year, the Child Protection Policy will be discussed at a staff meeting to ensure staff are familiar with the policy and are continually reminded of their responsibilities.
- The management team is committed to ensuring staff are familiar with this policy, and is aware of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse. All new staff will familiarise themselves with this policy during their induction process.
- If parents have concerns about the treatment of a child by our staff, they are encouraged to make this known to the Manager/Supervisor/Head Teacher, who will ensure that the matter is investigated and acted on immediately as per the Complaints Procedure.

Preventative Education

- All teachers follow the Positive Guidance and Social Competency Policy which promotes positive guidance of children's behaviour and keeping children safe.
- Staff work as a team to ensure they can support each other in managing children's challenging behaviours. If a teacher is feeling stressed by the behaviour of a child/ren they should immediately communicate this to another member of the teaching team
- This policy will be discussed every year in a staff meeting.
- At the above meeting, the manager will run a session on child protection for staff.
- Information is provided on the prevention and recognition of child abuse and procedures on how to respond in the event of allegations or recognition of abuse as set in Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children guidelines.
- Education of children and parents/whānau is important in the prevention of child abuse. We encourage parents to make use of education programmes organised by agencies in the community.

Guidelines for Prevention of Child Abuse

Clear guidelines will be given for protecting tamariki from abusive situations, and for protecting staff from unfounded accusations of abuse:

These will include:

1. Children will be encouraged to perform their own hygiene and toileting routines as age and independence permit.
2. Educators will endeavour to be visible at all times while interacting with tamariki.
3. Children will be accompanied by more than one adult on all walks and excursions.
4. Child abuse policies and pamphlets will be available to parents/caregivers/guardians
5. Books and songs about personal safety will be used regularly with tamariki.
6. Visitors to the centre, including contractors, will not be left alone with tamariki.

Management Practices

1. There is no smacking or hitting of tamariki by staff members.
2. No child is to be put in solitary confinement, immobilised, or deprived of food as punishment.
3. Positive reinforcement and guidance should be implemented at all times and any blaming, harsh language, belittling and degrading by staff members avoided.
4. Children deserve the respect to be listened to by staff members when they have something to say.
5. Any conflict between tamariki should be dealt with by: redirecting and letting each child have his/her say while the other listens without interruption, as age and independence permits.
6. All staff undertake professional development in relation to identifying and responding to vulnerability and child abuse, or other child protection courses.

Allegations or concerns about staff

If a staff member is seen using inappropriate physical contact with a child, or there is

reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the service, or any other 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, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection.

The Manager will:

- stand the staff member involved down immediately until an investigation has been carried out. This means the person involved is excluded from coming into contact with the children participating in the service.
- contact Oranga Tamariki and the police immediately.
- Report the incident to the Ministry of Education immediately.
- Inform the Teaching Council if the person involved is a registered teacher.
- The Manager/Supervisor will undertake to implement the requirements of **Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008** to ensure children are protected from ill-treatment and their health and safety is maintained.

Protection of Staff

Magic Garden is committed to providing a safe working environment for all our staff and ensuring that employee privacy is protected. We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff safety. The centre will not disclose personal information (including personal address, phone numbers and personal circumstances) of any employee, to any child, parent or member of the public. Information will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the office and only employees with specific authority will be permitted access to confidential employee information.

We require staff to be observant. If you have a concern regarding a child (ie observation of an unusual behaviour, evidence of injury etc) then you must document this concern and pass it onto your Supervisor. We recommend that staff report any such observations immediately to the Centre Manager who will help them determine the appropriate course of action. We recommend that you don't act alone. Your written observation/statement will be retained by the centre as confidential information and kept on file for our records.

We recommend that you consult with other team members and the manager to make a final decision whether it is appropriate to report your observation to an external agency (guidelines throughout this policy). Your statement/identity will not be revealed by the centre to any third party (except any agencies required to support the centre) and only in consultation with you or as required by law.

For the protection of staff who, through the course of their work, are caring for children's bodily needs the following should be noted. All details of care given in respect to children's genital areas must be recorded with date, time and action taken, as soon as possible after the event. This includes: washing genitals (toileting sheet), applying medication to genitals (medicine book), inspection of genital areas if soreness, itching or injury is suspected (accident book). Children under two years old have this information recorded on their daily record sheet. Teachers are not to be left alone with children where a situation could arise where allegations of sexual abuse could be made.

Never photograph a child's ano-genital area, even as a record of your concern.

Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

	Indicators of potential abuse may include	Indicators of potential neglect may include
Physical signs	e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.	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., age- inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression, sudden change in behaviour.	e.g., disengagement/ neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression.
The child talking about things that indicate abuse	Sometimes called an allegation or disclosure.	
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.

Inappropriate Material

All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material.

This includes:

- Checking magazines that are brought into the centre for inappropriate content
- Ensuring children do not have access to the internet, unless with a kaiako present
- Ensuring that conversations that are not appropriate for children to hear take place where no children are present (e.g. staffroom)

LINKS TO:

- Personnel Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Reg46/HS31
- Reg 56

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated regularly, to ensure it is kept up to date with changes that may have been made to legislation, related policies and procedures, and in light of operational experience.

Authorised:	Nikki Reive
Date:	May 2022
Review Date:	May 2025
Consultation Undertaken:	Safer environment Safer Children Child Matters, Creating a Safe Organisation Child Matters, 2019. Management and Team leaders

REPORTING PROCESS FOR CHILDREN ABUSE

You see a child being abused, OR you observe signs of abuse in a child OR a child reports being abused.

RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE child

- Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. Call the Police if the child is in immediate danger.
- Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child – take to hospital if appropriate.
- Listen to the child.

Are you a
staff
member?

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR MANAGER

If the suspected abuser is your manager, inform the service owner OR Oranga Child on 0508 326 459 OR Police Child Abuse Team.

Are you
in
charge?

CALL THE
POLICE IF THE
CHILD IS IN
IMMEDIATE
DANGER

PREPARE WRITTEN RECORD

Record

- Date, time and place of observation/reporting of abuse.
- Names of anyone present.
- What the child says – exactly.
- Any physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

GIVE THIS TO YOUR
MANAGER/CONTACTED PERSON

PERSON IN CHARGE

GATHER INFORMATION

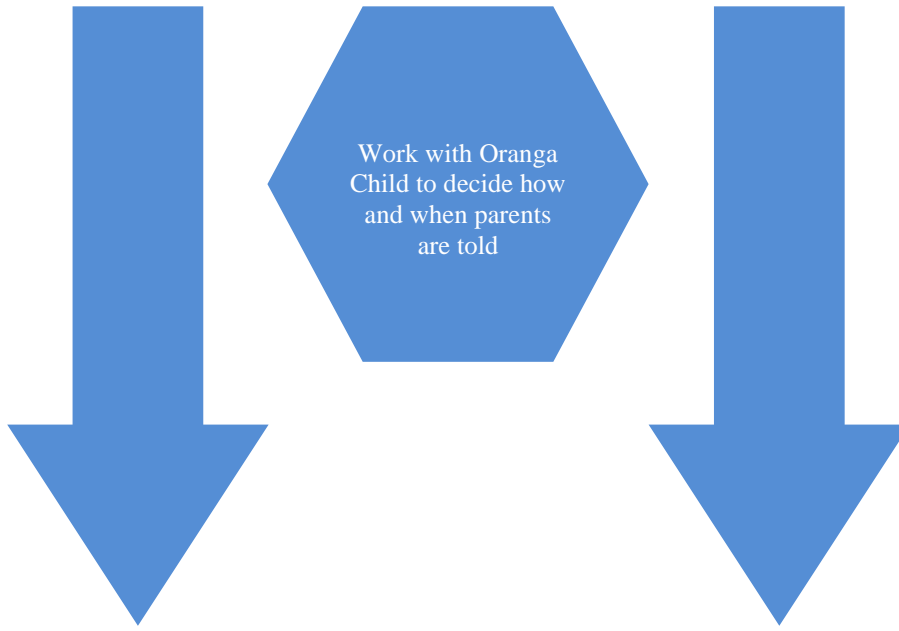
Ensure you have a full report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support. Get them to sign the report. Tell them what actions you will take. Ring Oranga Child (0508 326 459) or the Plunket line (0800 933 92) and discuss your concerns. Oranga Child will tell you if you need to do a formal report about your concerns.

REPORT ABUSE

Ring Oranga Child on 0508 326 459 and tell them:
(If it is an emergency, ring the Police Child Abuse Team)

- Your own name and contact details.
- Name of child (also known as/nicknames).
- Date of birth (if known).
- Ethnicity (if known).
- Name of caregivers, parents and other family members and current living situation.
- Current legal custodians.
- Reasons why it is believed that the child has been abused.
- Other significant background information.
- Any concerns for your physical safety in making this notification.

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – get timeframe



Work with Oranga Child to decide how and when parents are told

OUTSIDE SERVICE

- You are most likely to suspect the abuse is by a parent, but you cannot assume this. If you are concerned about the child going home, tell Oranga Child or the Police this.
- While the child is in your care, ensure the child is not at risk of being further abused.

INSIDE SERVICE

- Maintain close liaison with Oranga Child/Police and discuss any actions you want to take with them first.
- Discuss with Oranga Child/Police who will tell the suspected abuser of the allegation and whether the suspected abuser should remain on the ECE premises.*
- Recommend the suspected abuser seeks support from their union or lawyer.
- 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.
- Get employment/legal advice where appropriate.

ATTEND TO HEALING OF YOUR COMMUNITY

If there is disruption to the ECE service or community, negative impacts on other child and/or staff, or media interest contact

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAUMATIC INCIDENT COORDINATOR for support on 0800 84 8326

Note *If a centre manager or owner knows of alleged abuse and another incident occurs by the offender at the centre, the owner of the centre is liable for failing to provide a safe educational environment for child.

RECORD OF ISSUE OR CONCERN

Date:

Time:

Child:

Date of Birth:

Address:

What brought the incident to the teacher's attention?

What did the child say (record in their words)?

Describe the child's body language etc as they spoke to you

Where did the incident take place?

What happened or was alleged? (Be clear, use anatomical words):

How did the teacher manage the behaviour/situation?

How did the child(ren) respond?

What action was taken?

Staff involved:

Level of Concern:

Note		Immediate Action
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Incident #:

Action Taken:

By Whom:

Date action was taken: Follow up: