



The Champion Centre

Tamariki Toiora

Child Protection Policy

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Policy

Statement of Commitment

The most effective way to safeguard children is to have a comprehensive and effective child protection policy. The Champion Centre is committed to supporting and empowering families, and the community, to act to keep children safe. The Champion Centre values children and is committed to their protection.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that The Champion Centre provide a safe environment where children are free from all forms of abuse and are treated with both dignity and respect.

This Policy aims to ensure that all persons working for The Champion Centre and its affiliates, are able to recognise and identify signs of abuse, know how to respond appropriately to these signs, and operate in ways which ensure that children are protected from harm.

This Policy confirms the commitment of The Champion Centre to the protection of children and proceeds to:

- outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide
- define child abuse
- outline the action to be taken by all staff where any form of child abuse or neglect is known or suspected
- establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff
- outline safe working practices and the expected behaviour of all staff.

Guiding Principles

- The Champion Centre has a duty of care to protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people that it comes into contact with.
- The Champion Centre asserts that all children have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, or economic status.
- All decisions and actions of The Champion Centre in response to any child protection concern will be guided by the principle of “the welfare and best interests of the child”.
- The Champion Centre acknowledges and will adhere to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- All services provided by The Champion Centre for the safety and wellbeing of children adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation, and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- The Champion Centre will adhere to the Child Protection Policies and Procedures of the area in which they provide services. Where the Child Protection Policies and/or Procedures are in conflict with those of The Champion Centre, the Champion Centre Policy and Procedure will prevail. In all instances, the welfare and best interests of the child will be the paramount consideration.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Champion Centre staff.

For the purposes of this Policy, and for the evidence of any doubt, the term “staff” is defined in the definitions section below and includes volunteers.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed at a minimum of every three (3) years, 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.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

“*Child*” means any person under 18 years of age.

“*Child Abuse*” can involve ongoing, repeated, or persistent abuse, or may arise from a single incident. Abuse may take many forms, but it can be categorised into four different types:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

“*Designated Person for Child Protection*” is a person, or persons, within The Champion Centre who is responsible for the safeguarding of children. This person is responsible for ensuring that child protection is a key focus within The Champion Centre at both a strategic level and on a day-to-day basis.

Designated Person(s) for Child Protection

As at the date of this Policy, the Designated Person(s) for Child Protection for The Champion Centre is:

Marguerite Wilson, Senior Social Worker

“*Emotional Abuse*” is any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual, and/or emotional functioning and development of a child.

“*Family Violence*” can take many forms and includes not only acts of physical violence, but also intimidating behaviour such as threatening to harm people, pets, or property. Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.

“*Neglect*” is characterised as the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological need. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for and/or protect the child. It may also include neglect of a child’s basic or emotional needs.

“Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children” formally known as Child Youth and Family Services (“CYFS”). Oranga Tamariki is a government ministry dedicated to supporting children in New Zealand whose wellbeing is at significant risk of harm now, or in the future.

“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.

“Sexual Abuse” is an act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child, whether consensual or not.

“Staff” refers to any person working at, for, with, or on behalf of, The Champion Centre and includes, but is not limited to, staff employed directly by The Champion Centre, irrespective of whether they are paid or voluntary, or whether they are working on a full time, part time, casual, or temporary basis, as well as any persons contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of The Champion Centre.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a part to play in protecting children and young people from harm. It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect and abuse, and to report any concerns or allegations immediately.

Each member of staff should:

- Be aware of, and alert to, potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- Record a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention
- Appropriately seek advice and support from the Designated Person for Child Protection who will then contact external agencies if appropriate
- Work in co-operation with caregivers unless this compromises the safety of the child.

The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police. No member of The Champion Centre staff, including the Designated Person for Child Protection, are permitted or mandated to investigate allegations of abuse.

Role of the Designated Person for Child Protection

The overall responsibility for implementation of this Policy rests with the Champion Centre Designated Person for Child Protection.

The role of the Designated Person for Child Protection is to:

- Ensure that the needs and rights of children come first – the safety and wellbeing of each child is the paramount consideration in all circumstances
- Receive information that suggests a potential or actual risk of harm to a child in contact with The Champion Centre, irrespective of whether the alleged abuse is current, past, or likely to occur. The Designated Person for Child Protection will advise and support staff, and where appropriate, will make any referrals to Oranga Tamariki and/or the New Zealand Police
- Ensure clear, confidential and detailed, records on all child protection cases. These should contain all available information relating to the cause for concern and any subsequent action taken, including when it has been decided not to make a notification to Oranga Tamariki or the New Zealand Police. These records will be kept separate from the child's records for the purpose of confidentiality
- Maintain a current awareness of the children identified on a risk register, and regularly highlight these children to the appropriate staff
- Ensure that all staff are aware of, and have access to, full copies of the procedures for reporting child abuse
- Establish close links with the relevant local agencies to ensure clear and effective communication and be a recognised contact within The Champion Centre for agencies to contact regarding child protection concerns

Procedures

Identifying Abuse

The Champion Centre staff should be alert and aware of the fact that child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or indirect disclosure by the child or someone known to the child
- Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child
- Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child's physical or emotional behaviour
- Direct witnessing of abuse.

The signs and indicators of abuse to a child may not be immediately obvious or identifiable. **Appendix 1** of this Policy sets out a non-exhaustive list of signs and indicators to help identify abuse.

If a member of staff is unsure about what might constitute child abuse, or if they are unsure about whether they ought to report an incident, they should ask for advice and guidance from the Designated Person for Child Protection. If the Designated Person for Child Protection is unavailable, staff should ask for advice and guidance from a member of the Family Support Team.

At any time, staff may seek advice from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or Child Matters (07 838 3370) regarding child protection concerns.

Responding to Child Abuse or Suspected Child Abuse

When child abuse is suspected, disclosed, or witnessed, everything should be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child concerned and any other children or young people who may be at risk.

Refer **Appendix 2**.

When a child or young person is in immediate danger

In a situation where any staff member believes that a child or young person is in immediate danger, or in a situation where they believe that a third party is not prepared to secure the child's safety by contacting a statutory service, the staff member in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection will inform Oranga Tamariki or the Police of their concerns.

The child protection procedures set out in this Policy should be followed regardless of whether the alleged offender is a member of the public, a participant of a Champion Centre initiative, programme, event or activity, a member of staff within a Preschool or School to which they provide services, or a member of The Champion Centre staff.

The Champion Centre staff will not act alone about concerns of abuse but will consult with the Designated Person for Child Protection who will be committed to taking action as outlined in the procedures.

All concerns and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. All documentation relating to concerns and information will be held in the Child Protection Register which is to be overseen and managed by the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Responding to Disclosure of Abuse from a Child

Disclosure of abuse may come directly from a child. It is important that staff take what the child says seriously, and respond in a calm, caring and sensitive manner. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the staff member's own opinion on what is being said. If there is information disclosed regarding actual or suspected child abuse, staff should:

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what they want
- Reassure them that they were right to tell
- Tell the child that they are being taken seriously and that they are not to blame
- Explain that they have to pass on what the child has told them as soon as they are aware that the child is making a disclosure
- Give an age-appropriate explanation to the child of what the child can expect to happen next
- Record in writing what was said as soon as possible, using the child's own words where possible
- Report the concern to the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Staff should not:

- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Promise to keep secrets
- Enquire into the details of the alleged abuse
- Ask leading questions.

Under no circumstances should staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns of abuse themselves.

Allegations against Champion Centre Staff

Allegations, suspicions, or complaints of abuse against staff should always be taken seriously and reported directly to the Designated Person for Child Protection.

If the allegation is against the Designated Person for Child Protection, then this should be reported to the CEO (or delegate in their absence). Consultation should occur with Oranga Tamariki or the police to determine if a Report of Concern should be made.

Where there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both the staff member's and child's rights are to be upheld, and the following principles adhered to:

- The safety of the child is of paramount concern
- The staff member should be advised to seek legal advice
- The Champion Centre will cooperate fully with Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police in their investigations and assessments.

A person tendering his or her resignation, or ceasing to provide their services to The Champion Centre, should not prevent an allegation of abuse against a child being followed up in accordance with these procedures.

The fact that an alleged offender has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not necessarily mean that they are appropriate to continue to work with children. A risk assessment should be carried out before allowing the person to return to their duties, or any alternative duties, in any capacity. When making any decisions, The Champion Centre will place the safety and wellbeing of children and young people as the paramount consideration.

Reporting Child Abuse

All Champion Centre staff should report concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Designated Person for Child Protection at the first possible opportunity. A decision will be made as to whether to notify Oranga Tamariki. If an immediate response is required to ensure the child's safety, staff should contact the New Zealand Police and/or Oranga Tamariki directly.

- All concerns or allegations of sexual abuse should be reported to Oranga Tamariki and /or the New Zealand Police.
- Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, should include:
 - A record of facts, including observations with times and dates
 - What was said and by whom, using the person's words
 - What action has been taken, by whom and when.

All decisions, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki or the Police, should be recorded in writing and kept securely in the Child Protection Register with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

Keeping the Child's Family and Whānau Informed

Although the family/whānau and caregivers of the child will usually be informed of concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child, there may be times when those with parental or guardianship responsibilities may not be initially informed. This may happen in circumstances when:

- A member of the family/whānau, or the child's caregiver is the alleged offender
- it is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence
- there is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
- the child does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age, and mental capacity, when they are competent to make that decision. Any decision not to inform the child's family whānau/caregiver based solely on the child's wishes should be made with careful consideration and in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection and an Oranga Tamariki Duty Social Worker.

Relationships with Specialist and Statutory Agencies

The Champion Centre will maintain good working relationships with agencies that have the statutory powers and skills to intervene in cases of abuse of children. This includes maintaining a good working relationship with Oranga Tamariki and New Zealand Police and be familiar with the laws that serve to protect children and young people from abuse.

Champion Centre staff are encouraged to consult with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge to help protect children from abuse.

The Champion Centre will maintain relationships with NGO's and organisations that provide services to children, those with disabilities, and their families and whānau, throughout the country.

Harmful Behaviour by One Child Towards Another

It is important to be aware that children can harm other children. These behaviours are outside of what may be considered the normal range, and can extend to bullying, violence or sexual assault. Therefore, when a child alleges inappropriate harmful behaviour by another child then the child protection procedures outlined in this policy must be considered for both children.

Child Protection Training

The Champion Centre will ensure that all staff will be given appropriate training, covering basic awareness of child protection, in order to protect children and to recognise and respond when children are at risk.

Staff training on child protection will include an overview of signs and indicators of abuse, as well as the procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse. This training will include:

- Roles and responsibility of staff regarding child protection
- Recognising and responding to signs and indicators of actual or suspected abuse
- Ensuring staff receive a copy of this Policy, can understand it, and can follow the procedures for reporting a concern
- All new staff will receive child protection training and will be given a copy of this Policy as part of the induction process.

All other staff and the Designated Person for Child Protection will receive updated child protection training a minimum of every three (3) years.

Safe Recruitment

The Champion Centre is committed to applying rigorous employment and selection processes which emphasise the importance of child protection, and which ensure that every member of staff is safe and suitable to be associated with The Champion Centre, regardless of whether this position is paid or voluntary, permanent, part-time, or casual.

Before making any appointment, The Champion Centre will complete a robust safety checking process to ascertain the candidate's suitability and safety to work for, with, or at The Champion Centre.

Safety Checking Process is detailed in the Children's Act Safety Checking Procedure

Police Vetting

Police vetting of all staff will be carried out a minimum of once every three (3) years. All new offers of employment and employment agreements, regardless of whether these are for paid or voluntary, permanent, part-time, or casual positions will remain conditional until receiving satisfactory results from Police vetting.

Until such time as the Police vetting process has been completed and the results have been received, all newly appointed staff working directly with children will be supervised in their role and will not be permitted to work alone. This procedure is also detailed in the Children's Act Safety Checking Procedure

If the candidate has lived in another country in the last five (5) years, they should also supply a background check conducted in that country.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The safety of a child or young person is paramount, and The Champion Centre has a responsibility to know when and how to share appropriate information with external agencies to protect the safety and wellbeing of children.

All staff are required to adhere to the Privacy Act 2020 and the Information Sharing Provisions under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and the Family Violence Act 2018.

Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 2020 states that the sharing of personal information is allowed if "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat". Wherever possible the family or whānau should be kept informed of what information has been shared, to which agency, and for what purpose.

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and the Family Violence Act 2018 place the wellbeing and best interests of a child as the first and paramount consideration when it comes to the sharing of information. This principle takes precedence over any duty of confidentiality that is owed to the child or their family or whānau, or any person with whom the child is in a domestic relationship with.

Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, and the Family Violence Act 2018, if staff raise a legitimate concern in good faith about suspected child abuse, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against that staff member or organisation.

Related Documents

Children's Act Safety Checking Procedure
Checklist Children's Act – New Employee
Police Vetting Request and Consent Form
Recruitment Checklist

Appendix 1 – Indicators of Abuse

The [indicators](#) for child abuse and neglect fall into three general categories:

Physical indicators

Injuries to a child that occur in a pattern or occur frequently. These injuries range from bruises to broken bones to burns or unusual lacerations and are often unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given.

Behavioural indicators

The child's actions, attitudes, and emotions can indicate the possibility of abuse or neglect. Behavioural indicators alone are much less reliable than physical indicators, as a child's behaviour may be the result of a variety of other problems or conditions. When observing changes in behaviour, look for the frequency and pattern of the new behaviour, as well as a child's age and stage of development. For example, it is normal for younger children to be wary of adults, as they may have been taught not to talk to strangers. Look for a combination of physical and behavioural indicators.

Caregiver indicators

Caregivers who abuse, neglect, or exploit children are either unable or unwilling to provide care and protection in an appropriate way. Those who are unable to provide care and protection may be physically unable due to their own medical or health condition. They may be overly stressed, tired, or working under the influence of drugs or alcohol which limits their abilities. Caregivers who are unwilling to provide children with the appropriate level of care and protection are more aware that what they are doing is wrong but continue to act in that way. These caregivers may not view the child as someone who has feelings and emotions and often have the need to control others or have displaced aggression towards weaker persons.

The indicators alone do not prove child abuse or neglect. Likewise, the absence of indicators does not exclude the possibility that abuse is occurring. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child or young persons, seek advice from the Designated Person for Child Protection, or from Oranga Tamariki.

Emotional Abuse Indicators

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
- Involves child in adult issues such as separation or disputes over child's care
- Exposes child to situations of arguing and violence in the home

Neglect Indicators

Physical indicators

- Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
- Often extremely dirty and unwashed
- Regularly attends school without lunch
- 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 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 use
- Depression

Physical Abuse Indicators

Physical indicators

- 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

Behavioural indicators

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- Wary of adults or a particular person
- Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- Cringing or flinching if touches 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
- Could have vision or hearing delay
- 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 Indicators

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
- 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
- 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

Family Violence Indicators

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 offender:

- 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 perpetrator's own behaviour

Appendix 2 – Flowchart for responding

