

**Version 3**

**Effective Date: 13 September 2023**

**Next Review: May 2026**

**Document Approver: Chief Executive**

**Document Owner: Facilities & Services Team Leader**

## Applies To | Ko Wai Whakahāngaitia

All Staff.

## General Principles | Mātāpono Whānui

Kindergarten Taranaki is committed to the protection and wellbeing of children. Kindergarten Taranaki staff, including teachers play an important role in the prevention, detection, and reporting of suspected child abuse.

The provision of well-defined procedures, practices and reporting will reduce the incidences, and increase the detection, of child abuse:

- To ensure that children are safe from harm.
- To ensure that any suspected abuse is acted upon.
- To provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse
- To support parents and whānau to protect their children.

The safety, health and well-being of the child will be paramount in the implementation of this Policy by all staff within Kindergarten Taranaki. See also ICT and Cybersafety Policy for information about exposure to inappropriate material (e.g., explicitly sexual, or violent nature).

## Related Procedures or Processes and Documents | Pākanga Tukanga me Pukapuka

Safety Checking

Complaint About Non-Compliance

Toileting, Nappy & Clothing Changing

## References | Tohutoro / Huānga ki

Education (Early Childhood Services) 2008.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008: HS31,32,33,34

Children's Act 2014.

Reporting of Suspected child abuse and neglect protocol between the Ministry of Education and Child, Youth and Family for early childhood education services, 2010.

## Display Document | Whakamātakitaki Pukapuka – Yes

## Practice Statement | Whakaharatau Tauākī – Required - No

## Policy Review Cycle | Kaupapa Arotake Hurihangā

This policy will be reviewed every three years and in conjunction with reviews of the related procedures or processes and documents outlined above.

## Definitions | Tautuhi

Child Abuse 'the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person' (refer section 2 Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989).  
Refer to Appendix 2 for expanded definitions and signs of abuse.

## Policy

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1. The interests and protection of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions.
2. Kindergarten Taranaki has a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
3. To this end, Kindergarten Taranaki shall include, as a regular part of its professional learning and development timetable, courses that address issues relating to child abuse and protection.
4. All kindergarten-based staff shall be required to attend specific professional learning and development relating to the protection of children at least once every three years.
5. Teachers shall ensure that the curriculum in their kindergarten provides opportunities for children to gain an understanding about personal safety and positive self-esteem.
6. Before making any notification to any authorities that have statutory obligation to act, a staff member who suspects a child in Kindergarten Taranaki's care has been the subject of child abuse shall first discuss the matter with a Senior Teacher or the Team Leader People and Culture and/or the Chief Executive. No referral to an external agency will be made without the Chief Executive (or in their absence Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.
7. If a staff member suspects child abuse of any kind, they will act according to the procedures below. This process is also detailed in Schedule 1 Child Protection Flow Chart which is attached to this policy.
8. Where a teacher is suspected of child abuse Kindergarten Taranaki will undertake an investigation and will, as required, make a Mandatory Report to the Teaching Council of New Zealand.
9. Where there is an incident of suspected abuse of a child while at the service and this is required to be notified to a specific agency, Kindergarten Taranaki will notify the Ministry of Education at the same time.
10. This policy and procedures will be provided to all new staff upon their appointment to Kindergarten Taranaki. The policy and procedures will be available to all staff in the Controlled Documents Team.
11. This policy and procedures will be on display at the kindergarten and whānau are to be advised of this at their induction to the kindergarten.
12. Each kindergarten is required to develop a supervision practice statement.

## Procedure

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1. Kindergarten Taranaki shall maintain appropriate procedures for screening applicants before employing new staff. Kindergarten Taranaki shall conduct safety checks of all its staff in compliance with The Children's Act 2014. Refer to the Kindergarten Taranaki Safety Checking Policy and Procedures.
2. Kindergarten Taranaki shall provide to teachers, as and when needed, contacts of appropriate agencies that deal with child protection matters and ways staff can build good working relationships with them. Staff are encouraged to share relevant support services information with whānau as appropriate.
3. The Child Welfare Policy shall be displayed on the kindergarten noticeboard; all new parents/caregivers shall be informed of the policy and procedures.
4. Teachers shall maintain a confidential file (this may be in the form of a "Concerns Book/Notebook") in the kindergarten in which to document observations of concern regarding the safety of children.
5. Teachers shall inform families/whānau about any relievers, visitors and students in the kindergarten.
6. Whilst in the care of kindergarten, including outside of sessions hours, children shall always have two adults present.
7. A copy of all court-related custody and protection orders must be kept in the kindergarten. In addition, a copy must be sent to the Senior Administrator and drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive. These documents will be kept in a confidential file.

### III-treatment of children (Regulation 56)

In compliance with Regulation 56, III-treatment of children, Kindergarten Taranaki will ensure that no staff member engaged in the service, or any other person: —

- a) has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children; or
- b) in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection.

1. Staff accused of breaching Regulation 56 shall immediately be placed on special leave or stood down, as determined by the Chief Executive, pending an investigation.
2. Kindergarten Taranaki will follow the process outlined on the flow chart in Appendix 1 – complaints investigation process.

### Reporting/disclosures

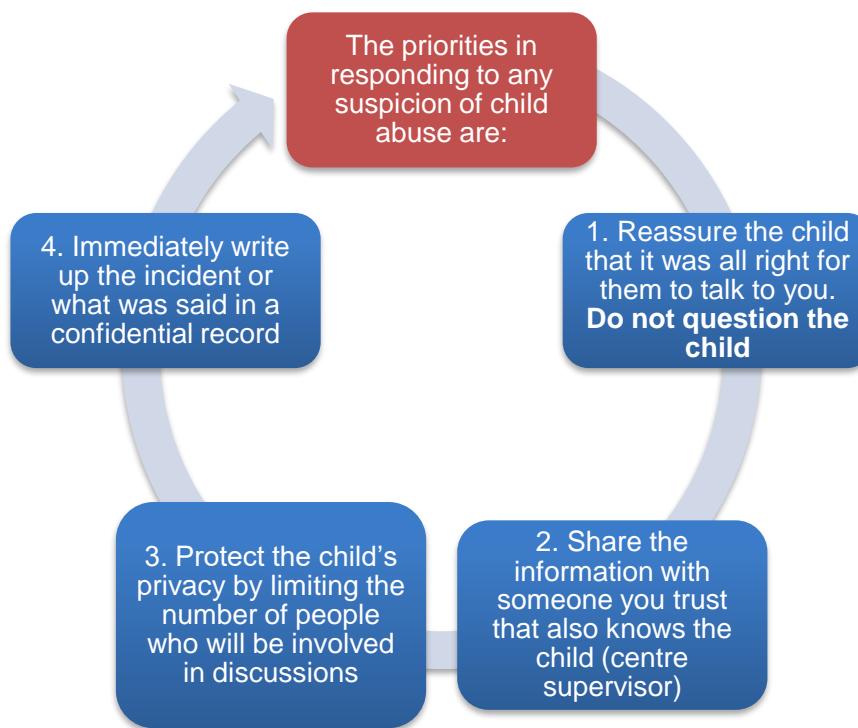
1. Teachers shall consult a Senior Teacher to discuss any concerns that they have regarding suspected child abuse. After that discussion, a recommendation may be made by the Senior Teacher to inform the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture).
2. Following those discussions, the Chief Executive will determine the agencies that need to be notified, including the Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police in accordance with section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (or any legislation in

substitution of that Act).

3. Before making any notification to any authorities that have statutory obligation to act, a staff member who suspects a child in Kindergarten Taranaki's care has been the subject of child abuse shall first discuss the matter with a Senior Teacher or the Team Leader People and Culture and/or the Chief Executive. No referral to an external agency will be made without the Chief Executive (or in their absence Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.
4. A Senior Teacher shall provide support, advice, and guidance to the teaching team when they are dealing with a suspected child abuse case.
5. Teachers shall take seriously any disclosure of alleged child abuse from a child or an adult. Teachers shall act in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the affected child or children. In any action taken, the safety of the child is paramount.

## Immediate Response To Suspicion Of Child Abuse

Retrieved from [www.sexualabuse.org.nz](http://www.sexualabuse.org.nz))



1. Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse:
  - 1.1. Listen to the child. Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
  - 1.2. Reassure the child. Let the child know that they:
    - Are not in trouble.
    - Have done the right thing.

- 1.3. Ask open ended prompts – e.g., “What happened next?” Do not interview the child (in other words, do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue). Do not make promises that can’t be kept, e.g., “I will keep you safe now”.
- 1.4. If the child is visibly distressed provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they can participate in ordinary activities.
- 1.5. If the child is not in immediate danger. Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
- 1.6. If the child is in immediate danger contact the Police immediately. After this contact the Chief Executive (or in their absence the team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher).
- 1.7. As soon as possible formally record the disclosure:
- 1.8. Record:
  - Word for word, what the child said.
  - The date, time and who was present

2. Responding to other concerns
  - 2.1. Where a concern about a child doesn’t amount to suspicion of abuse or neglect, it could be harmful to the wellbeing of the child and their family/whānau to make a notification to the statutory agencies. Instead, we will work in partnership with social service providers in our communities to identify and address the needs of the child.
  - 2.2. The services available in each community will vary and may include a range of government and non-government providers who will be able to help the child and their family/whānau. For example, Strengthening Families, Whānau Ora, Iwi Social Services, Social Workers in Schools, Children’s Teams, family/whānau counselling agencies, budget services and mental health and drug and alcohol services.
3. Where a teacher has concerns about a child’s immediate and imminent safety, they shall:
  - 3.1. Notify the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten Senior Teacher) immediately.
  - 3.2. Notify the Police as advised by the Chief Executive (or in their absence People and Culture team leader or in their absence the kindergarten Senior Teacher)
  - 3.3. Follow the directions given by the Police and/or Chief Executive or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten’s Senior Teacher).
4. Teachers shall keep a record of what has been observed and/or disclosed by the child – a report of the verbal and behavioural observations shall include dates, times and the name of the person making the observations. Any follow-up actions shall be recorded. Teachers shall sign and date the documentation. Critical information must not be held back when a report to the relevant agency is made.
5. Documentation about concerns shall not be held on the kindergarten premises indefinitely. It shall be passed on to the Association at the time the child stops attending.

## Toileting and Care Routines

1. Visitors, parent helpers, caregivers, untrained relievers, and students shall not assist children (other than their own) with toileting or changing clothing.
2. The changing of children's clothing or assisting children with toileting, shall be carried out in a manner that ensures children's dignity is maintained while also ensuring visibility to others.
3. Toileting and clothes changing incidents shall be recorded, including name of child, name of staff member, date, incident, and action taken.

## Alcohol and Drugs (HS33)

1. No person on the premises shall use or be under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour during the kindergarten's hours of operation.
2. Where a person collecting a child is affected by alcohol or any mind-altering substance, creating a disturbance and wishing to remove a child from the premises, then staff members will contact another caregiver on the child's enrolment card to collect the child. If necessary, the police will be rung. At all times the safety of the child, other children and staff is to be paramount.
3. If the Police are to be contacted, then staff should contact the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence their Senior Teacher) immediately.
4. Staff suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or any other substances during kindergarten operational hours shall immediately be placed on special leave or stood down, as determined by the Chief Executive, pending an investigation.
5. Kindergarten Taranaki will follow the process outlined on the flow chart in Appendix 1 – complaints investigation process.

## Inappropriate Material (HS32)

1. All practicable steps shall be taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).
2. If at any time children access or are exposed to inappropriate or objectionable material the incident is to be recorded and reported to the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher) immediately.
3. In the event of a child/ren being exposed to inappropriate or objectionable material the Team Leader People and Culture will initiate an investigation of this matter as a serious incident. Following an investigation into the matter and advise the Chief Executive on the appropriate way the whānau of the child/ren will be notified.
4. In the event of staff accidentally accessing low level inappropriate material (e.g., SPAM emails) the staff member should delete the material.
5. In the event of staff accidentally accessing objectionable material (as described in the Films, Videos and Publications Classifications Act, 1993) the material should be deleted, and the incident recorded and reported to the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher) immediately.

## Accusations Concerning/Involving Kindergarten Staff, Kindergarten Taranaki Management Staff Or Students

In all situations of accusations of abuse by a staff member or student all appropriate external agencies will be advised by the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher).

### ***Kindergarten Staff/Kindergarten Taranaki Management staff***

- Staff accused of child abuse shall immediately be placed on special leave or stood down, as determined by the Chief Executive, pending an investigation.
- Kindergarten Taranaki will follow the process outlined on the flow chart in Appendix 1 – complaints investigation process.

### ***Students***

- Students accused of child abuse shall immediately have their placement at the kindergarten suspended.
- The Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher) shall contact the training provider to inform them of the situation and work through the appropriate investigation process. This may be the process outlined in Appendix 1 or a process as determined by the training provider.

## Guidelines for Communications with External Agencies

These guidelines should be applied to communications by staff with:

- Oranga Tamariki
- The Police
- Lawyers appointed by the Court as "Lawyer for the Child"
- Lawyers representing families in custody disputes
- Court Appointed Psychologists
- Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income
- Schools
- Other ECE services

The Head Teacher of the kindergarten where the child attends is primarily responsible for the handling of communication with external agencies unless they have delegated this responsibility to another teacher.

The Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher) must be consulted and their direction sought before any notification of suspected child abuse is made to any agency or third party and before any information regarding a child is provided to any agency.

## Initial Requests For Information From External Agencies/Individuals

The Head Teacher shall inform the person requesting the information that they will refer their request to the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher). For example if a person phones the kindergarten and says “I am requesting information about John Smith, does he attend your kindergarten and do you have any concerns about him?” the Head Teacher will respond by saying “Thank you for your query, our process is that any information shared regarding children must be cleared with our Chief Executive before we are able to provide information, can I take your name, position and number and I will call you back.”

The Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence a Senior Teacher) will advise the staff member to:

- Contact the person concerned to confirm that they have the correct authority to request information. Ask for confirmation of the agency they work for and their credentials
- Provide a copy of all information requested, to send this to a Senior Teacher for review and final approval
- Advise the staff member to proceed once the Senior Teacher has confirmed the request for and reviewed the information requested.
- Information shared by the Head Teacher about alleged child abuse or by the kindergarten with an agency shall be factual and conversations shall be documented, and a copy retained by the Head Teacher.
- If the information is shared over the telephone, the Head Teacher shall ensure that there is another Kindergarten Taranaki staff member present during the conversation.
- Kindergarten Taranaki may request copies of correspondence from the agency/ individual of any documents or information obtained from its staff about suspected child abuse.

## Sharing Information With Schools And Other ECE Services

Before sharing written information with schools and other ECE services, regarding concerns about a child in relation to child protection, a staff member shall first discuss the matter with a Senior Teacher and the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten’s Senior Teacher). No written information, other than information relating to teaching and learning, will be shared to a school or ECE service without the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten’s Senior Teacher) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.

## Completion of Gateway Assessments

Teachers will contact the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten’s Senior Teacher) if they are asked to complete a Gateway assessment. Support will be given to teachers by the Association to complete such a document.

## Visits to the Kindergarten

1. If external agency staff contact the kindergarten and are wanting to interview children who are attending our kindergartens, the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and

# Child Welfare Policy/Te Oranga Tamariki Kaupapa Here

Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher) must be informed about this request immediately.

**Note:** In most cases the external agency will ring ahead if they wish to visit and make a suitable time, agreed upon by the teacher/s. However, in some instances, social workers, lawyers, or the Police may require immediate access to the child. Immediate access should be given, however, the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Team Leader People and Culture or in their absence the kindergarten's Senior Teacher must still be informed by the kindergarten.

2. Head Teachers will explain to external agencies that to meet Kindergarten Taranaki policies children can be interviewed if a kindergarten staff member is present or can observe the engagement. The child's interests and needs are paramount.

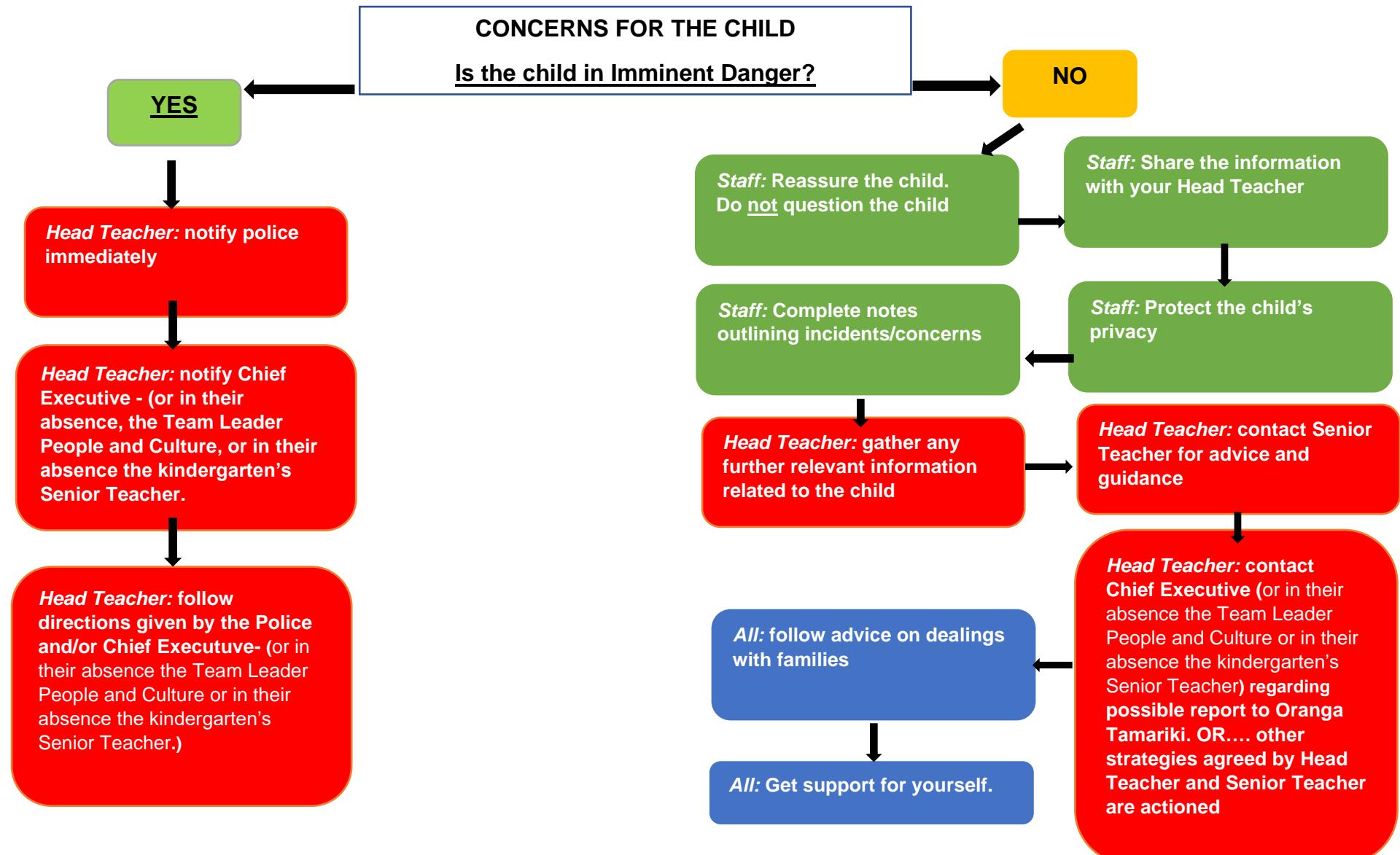
It should be noted that there may be times when the kindergarten is required to follow the advice of the visiting agency concerned.

## Flowcharts

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Concerns for the Child.

## Child Welfare Policy/Te Oranga Tamariki Kaupapa Here



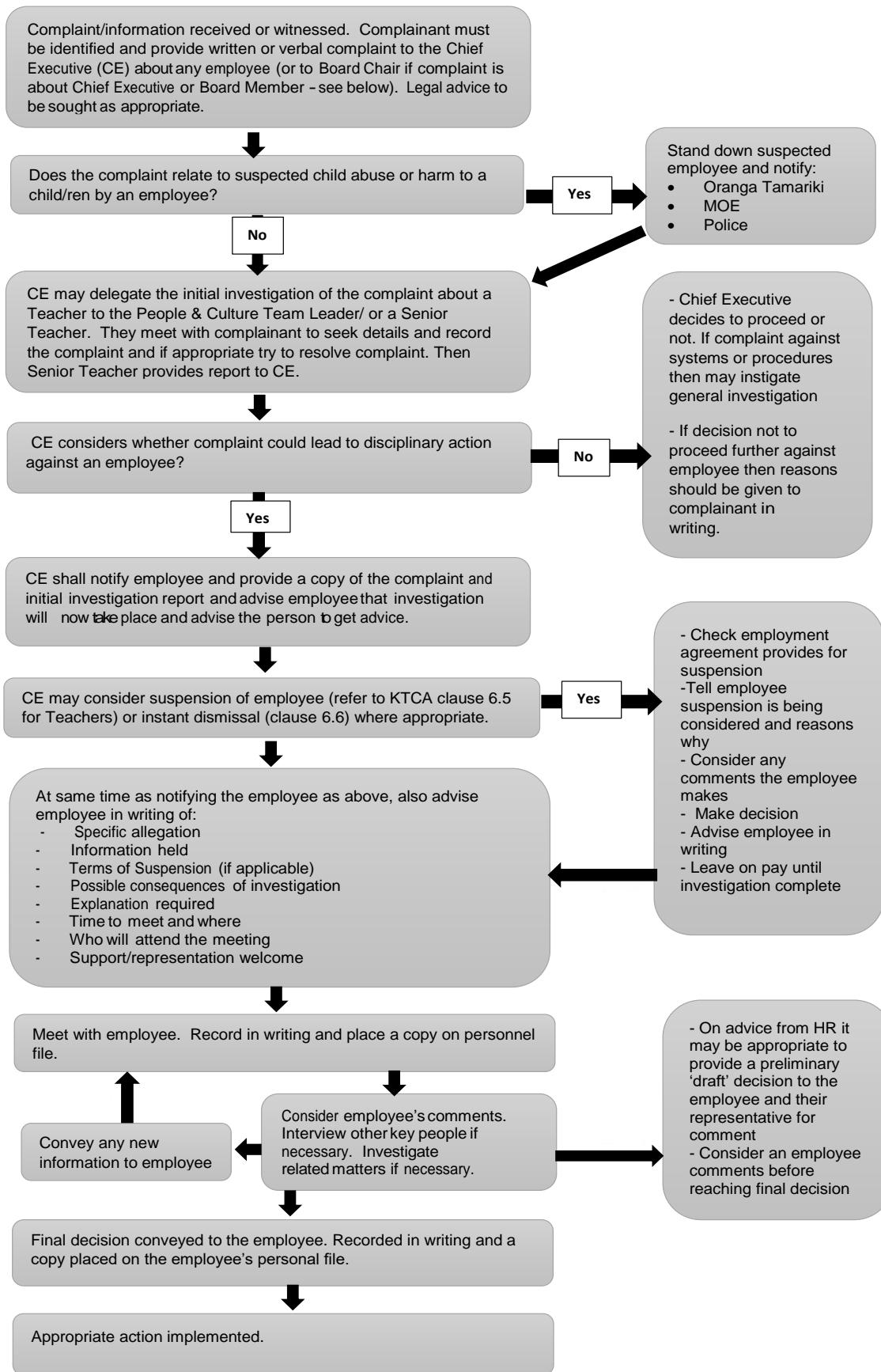
## Appendices

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1. Complaints Investigation Process
2. Identifying Possible Abuse Or Neglect
3. Clues to Child Abuse

# Child Welfare Policy/Te Oranga Tamariki Kaupapa Here

## Appendix 1 Complaints Investigation Process



The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee should be made in consultation with Oranga Tamariki and the Police. This will ensure any actions taken do not undermine any investigations being conducted by the external agencies.

The policy should include a commitment against using, 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection.

## Appendix 2: Identifying Possible Abuse Or Neglect

(retrieved from [www.sexualabuse.org.nz](http://www.sexualabuse.org.nz))

Child Abuse is defined in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Emotional abuse occurs when a child’s emotional, psychological or social well-being and sense of worth is continually battered. This includes confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment that may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. We also include exposure to Family Violence in this category.

### ***Neglect***

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning/development. It is a failure to provide for a child’s basic needs.

### ***Physical Abuse***

Physical abuse can be caused from smacking, punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family, and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

### ***Sexual Abuse***

Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose. There are 2 different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

- Contact abuse involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes: sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not; rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus; forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity; making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.
- Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing. It includes: encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts; not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others; meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them; online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images; allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images; showing pornography to a child; sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation).

## Appendix 3: Clues To Child Abuse

### Physical

(retrieved from [www.sexualabuse.org.nz](http://www.sexualabuse.org.nz))

#### **Physical abuse**

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions
- Suspicious locations include: Face, lips, gums, mouth, eyes torso, back, buttocks, back of legs, external genitalia
- Bruises of different colours in different stages of healing
- Shape of suspicious injuries
- Clustered, form regular patterns
- Teeth marks, hand prints, fingertips
- Imprint of article (e.g. belt)
- Unexplained burns
- Small circular burns
- Immersion burns
- Burns showing a pattern (e.g. iron)
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, torso
- Unexplained injuries
- Fractures of skull, facial bones, spine
- Dislocations of hip or shoulder
- Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
- Bald patches resulting from hair pulling
- Any fractures in infants

#### **Sexual abuse**

- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the anogenital
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in the anogenital area
- Blood in urine or stool
- Pain experienced in urination or bowel movement
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Urinary infection

#### **Neglect**

- Inappropriately dressed for season or weather

- Is often very dirty or unbathed
- May have severe untreated nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders resulting from lack of hygiene
- Inadequately supervised
- Left with inappropriate care-giver
- Has unattended health problems
- Malnourished
- Inadequate housing
- Non-organic failure to thrive

#### **Emotional abuse**

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints
- Non-organic failure to thrive\*
- Appears pale, emaciated, has sunken cheeks
- BMI extremely low (e.g. wrinkled buttocks)
- Dehydration (skin may feel like paper)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
- Falling behind significant milestones
- Malnutrition
- Dressed differently to, or has deprived physical living conditions to, other children in the family

\*Non-organic failure to thrive has traditionally been regarded as due primarily to maternal rejection and neglect. However, a more balanced view of the mother-child relationship should be taken. The basis on which intervention is made should be direct observation of the parent and child relationship in as many different environmental contexts as feasible, especially during feeding.

Behavioural (retrieved from [www.sexualabuse.org.nz](http://www.sexualabuse.org.nz))

## Behavioural

(retrieved from [www.sexualabuse.org.nz](http://www.sexualabuse.org.nz))

### **Physical abuse**

- Cannot recall how injuries occurred
- Offers inconsistent explanations
- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
- May cringe or flinch if touched
- May display a vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Indiscriminate affection-seeking behaviour
- Extremely compliant or eager to please
- Tries to protect parents or caregiver
- Acts out negative behaviour or language in play
- Frequently provokes punishment
- Dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- Afraid to go home
- Describes abusive situations
- Regressive behaviour
- General sadness
- Could have vision or hearing delay
- Is aggressive to animals or other children

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others, e.g. demonstrates explicit sex acts
- Age-inappropriate sexual drawings or descriptions
- Unusual or sophisticated sexual knowledge
- Refuses to go home, or to another's home for no apparent reason
- Discloses or describes sexual activity or hints at it
- Comments like "I've got a secret" or "I don't like uncle"
- Fear of certain people
- Fear of certain places (bathroom, bedroom)
- Regressive behaviour

### **Neglect**

- Developmental lags, possible global delays
- Demonstrates lack of attachment to carers

- Demonstrates indiscriminate attachment to other adults
- Is left at home alone or unsupervised
- Demanding of affection or attention
- May steal food
- Has a poor social skill
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene
- Disclosures from child

### **Emotional abuse**

- Developmental lags, possible global delays
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self-destructive behaviour
- Overly compliant
- Displays extreme attention-seeking behaviour
- Extreme inhibition in play
- Models negative behaviour in play (spanking, yelling at dolls)
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints
- Nightmares, poor sleep patterns
- Antisocial behaviour
- Lack of self-esteem
- Obsessive behaviours
- Appears generally sad

# Record of Incident or Allegation

## Forms

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1. Contact Details for External Agencies.
2. Record of Incident or Allegation.