



Changing Horses Ltd

Child Protection Policy

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Information

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The Children's Act 2014, requires us to have a Child Protection Policy (CPP).

The Act requires our policy to:

- Contain, at a minimum, how we identify and report child abuse and neglect
- Be available to download from our website
- Be reviewed within 3 years.

Our Child Protection Policy goes beyond these minimum requirements and also sets out how we'll build a culture of child protection within Changing Horses.

Document list

- Child Protection Policy (this document)
- Quick-Tour-of-the-Health-Information-Privacy-Code-Rules.pdf
- Accident & Incident report form.pdf
- Safer-Organisations-safer-children
- Changing Horses Child Protection Policy. Police Vetting - who needs checking?.pdf

Introduction

As Changing Horses works directly with children, we are well placed to contribute to the protection of all children. We have a responsibility to ensure that our staff can identify the signs of possible abuse or neglect and are able to take appropriate action.

This policy encourages a culture of child protection that always safeguards and promotes the well-being of children.

We are committed to working with our agency partners and the Children's Action Plan Directorate to build and promote a culture of child protection across our organisation.

Who does this policy apply to?

All employees, contractors and volunteers working for Changing Horses.

What are our child protection principles?

Many of these are principles we encompass in everything we do, some are specific to child protection.

We make the safety and well-being of children our primary concern, with the child at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse or neglect.

We promote a culture where staff feel confident to challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern.

We recognise the importance of the family/whanau and their right to participate in decision-making about their children, unless this would result in an increased risk to the child.

We all know we can report suspected child abuse and neglect to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children or the Police.

Our commitments

To help us act in a way that reflects our principles we make the following commitments:

- To work together to produce the best possible outcomes for the child.
- All policies and initiatives are designed to promote (and be inclusive of) a child protection culture and to work towards continuous improvement in child protection practices.
- To develop and maintain links with iwi, Pasifika and other cultural and community groups to ensure that important cultural concepts (e.g., whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice.
- To have open and transparent relationships with clients and service users, including sharing concerns about child safety issues with the family/whānau unless this would result in an increased risk to the child.

- To support all staff to work in accordance with the policy, to work with partner agencies and community organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and of high quality and to always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- To share information relevant to the child's safety and well-being in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues, the manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection.
- A commitment to meet all existing statutory and contractual obligations, including matters relating to employment.

Policy review

Under the Children's Act 2014 we are required to review this Child Protection Policy every three years.

The review will be undertaken by Jane Weggery and Renée Keenan and will cover an assessment of the implementation and operation of the Child Protection Policy, including:

- the views of staff about the accessibility, relevance and usefulness of the policy.
- whether any serious incidents have occurred, and how effective the policy was at responding to them
- to what extent the policy needs updating to reflect lessons learnt.

Changing Horses Child Protection Policy

This policy was created using the framework outlined by Oranga Tamariki.

Summary

Ensuring the well-being and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse or maltreatment, is a paramount goal of this organisation.

This policy provides guidance to Changing Horses staff on how to identify and respond to concerns about the well-being of a child, including possible abuse or neglect.

The process for responding to a concern about a child is on page 10 of this policy.

The interests of the child will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect.

This organisation commits to support the statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police (the Police)) to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy.

Our Designated Person for Child Protection, Jane Weggery, will be responsible for the maintenance and annual review of this policy, in addition to carrying out the responsibilities outlined in this policy.

Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training.

Changing Horses commits to ensure staff have access to the training they need.

It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.

Purpose, scope and principles

Our child protection policy supports our staff to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect. It is our organisation's commitment to protect children from abuse and to recognise the important roles all of our staff have in protecting children.

This policy provides a broad framework and expectations to protect children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect.

It applies to all staff, including volunteers and part-time or temporary roles and contractors.

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

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies – i.e., Oranga Tamariki and the Police – this policy will also help our staff to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose well-being is of concern.

We recognise that 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.

Contact details for agencies and services in our community are provided as an appendix to this policy.

To ensure that this organisation demonstrates continual improvement in child protection practice, we will work to maintain a good working relationship with child protection agencies and support our staff to protect children from abuse by consulting with experts with specialist knowledge and providing the necessary training options.

We also commit to explore opportunities to work with other providers, including from other sectors, to develop a network of child protection practice in our community.

This policy applies to all staff, including contractors and volunteers.

Definitions

- **Child** – any child or young person aged under 17 years and who is not married or in a civil union.
- **Child protection** – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Designated person for child protection** – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy.
- **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Oranga Tamariki** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- **New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
- **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
 - Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or

genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

- Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
- **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include: patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse. Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.
- **Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:
 - Physical (not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing).
 - Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
 - Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
 - Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
 - **Educational neglect** (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

Training

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training.

As part of their induction, new staff are made aware of the policy on child protection.

Identifying child abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either a colleague, manager/supervisor or the Designated Person for Child Protection – we shouldn't act alone.

- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall well-being and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.
- We recognise the signs of potential abuse:
 - Physical signs (e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases).
 - 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).
 - The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).
- We are aware of the signs of potential neglect:
 - Physical signs (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., disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).
 - 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).

Every situation is different and staff will consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

This organisation will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki and the Police.

We will only inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after we have discussed this with these agencies.

When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour we write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. This is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled.

Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. We will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

Confidentiality and information sharing

We will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service manager or designated person. Staff should be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act (2017) any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles - i.e., the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act (1993)/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so - such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/ Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki under sections 15

and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act (2017).

The document “*Quick-Tour-of-the-Health-Information-Privacy-Code-Rules.pdf*” should be read by staff

Responding and reporting

- Responding to a child in immediate danger – referral to the Police (phone 111)
- Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse or when there are concerns about abuse or neglect Phone Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) to discuss appropriate next steps.
- Responding to more general concerns about the well-being of a child, where referral to the statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki) is not appropriate – e.g., referral to a family/whānau support agency in the community, such as Social Workers in Schools, Strengthening Families or Whānau Ora is more appropriate.

Reporting

Contacts

If a child is in immediate danger phone the **Police 111**

If you're worried about a child and want to make a referral or report of concern, phone : **Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 459**

or email: contact@ot.govt.nz

The document *Oranga Tamarki - Report of Concern. Child Protection Policy* contains the Report of Concern form for Oranga Tamariki

Or download at : <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/downloads/REPORT-OF-CONCERN-TEMPLATE.pdf>

Internal review

When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour we will write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register.

The register is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled.

The guidelines laid out in the document "*Quick-Tour-of-the-Health-Information-Privacy-Code-Rules.pdf*" are to be followed.

The register is to be maintained by Jane Weggery.

During normal Occupational Health and Safety review, the register is to be reviewed by Jane Weggery and Renée Keenan the information contained is to be only used only in general terms and without identifying parties involved for forming future guidance.

At the time of review all worker, volunteer, core and non-core staff Police Vetting Certificates are to be rechecked (certificate validation is 3 years). See the document Changing Horses Child Protection Policy – Police Vetting - who needs checking?.pdf

Changing Horses employees, contractors and volunteers

The document "Changing Horses Child Protection Policy. Police Vetting – who needs checking?.pdf" defines who needs to be Police Vetted.

Any employees, contractors or workers who meet the criteria listed are required to undergo the Police Vetting process and renew their Police Vetting Certificate every 3 years or as required.

Changing Horses employment contracts are to be modified to include the requirement of a Police Vetting Certificate prior to employment or contract.

The Occupational Safety and Health induction process is to include an overview of the Child Protection Policy.

Links and references

Oranga Tamariki Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Working-with-children/Childrens-act-requirements/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf> 5

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM147088.html>

Oranga Tamariki Guidance website: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/worried-about-a-child-tell-us/>

Report of Concern information: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/how-we-work/how-we-keep-children-safe/report-of-concern/>

Ministry of Education Guidance: <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/pastoral-care-and-wellbeing/childrens-act-2014-requirements-for-schools-and-kura/>

Ministry of Education Guidance: <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/VCAPracticalGuide.pdf>

Ministry of Health - Children's worker safety checking and child protection policies: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/health-workforce/childrens-worker-safety-checking-and-child-protection-policies>

Regulated Services (for children's worker safety checks): <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM6006325.html>

Ministry of Health External Vetting Agency (CV check): <https://cvcheck.com/nz/childrens-worker-safety-check/>

Quick tour of the Health Information Privacy Code: <https://www.privacy.org.nz/assets/Files/Brochures-and-pamphlets-and-pubs/Quick-Tour-of-the-Health-Information-Privacy-Code-Rules.doc>

Police Vetting Information: <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/businesses-and-organisations/vetting>

Police Vetting Forms: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/police-vetting-forms>