



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

RATIONALE:

Teachers at Akoranga Preschool are made aware of this policy and the issues of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse at the time of their induction. Teachers operate within the national Code of Ethics which sets a high standard for professionals in our field. Under section 6 of the Children's Act 2014 "The interest, safety and well-being of children are paramount."

TE WHĀRIKI:

Wellbeing Goal 3 – Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm

PROCEDURES:

Definitions:

Abuse: *the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child. (Oranga Tamariki Act, 1989)*

Neglect: *the persistent failure to meet the basic physical or psychological needs of a child, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.*

- We will maintain higher teacher/child ratios than those specified by the 2008 Regulations.
- All core workers working alongside or with the children will go through a process that involves police vetting, 2 forms of identification and the signing of a disclosure form informing management of any convictions. This process will happen in interviewing of potential teachers, support staff and all people working with children. Failure to comply may result in non-employment.
- Our playground and indoor play areas are designed with the maximum number of 'open' spaces available
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are able to collect children from the Centre
- Permission from parents is required for their child(ren) to participate in Centre outings
- A complaints procedure ensures issues of concern are dealt with appropriately. Parents are encouraged to express their feelings and concerns in order that the operation of the Centre can be constantly improved
- We realise and accept our own limitations in dealing with issues of abuse. Professional agencies such as the Police and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Service will be involved in suspected cases of abuse. These agencies are sought for their specialised knowledge
- Visiting students are not permitted to change or toilet any child. They are not to be left alone with any child or group of children.
- Relievers will be allowed to change or toilet children and be left alone with groups at the discretion of the Centre Manager

- Staff are encouraged to challenge poor practise professionally and constructively or raise issues of concern with their centre manager without fear of reprisal. If any team members are concerned about ways other team members are interacting with tamariki, they should raise it with the centre manager as above.
- Parents will be notified of the presence of any student or reliever
- Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern teachers may note about a child. Full, relevant, contextual factors are recorded in our confidential 'concern folder'

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

The following measures will be taken by all Kaiako regarding suspected abuse:

- All allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously.
- No Kaiako will act alone regarding suspected child abuse. The centre manager and team leader will be consulted as appropriate.
- Akoranga Preschool will offer support to all those involved in any abuse allegations
- No teacher will act alone regarding suspected child abuse. The Centre Manager will be consulted and she/he will take further action
- Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by law
- If the Centre Manager suspects a child is unsafe, she/he will report it to the Police or Oranga Tamariki. If there is an immediate danger to the child or safety is an issue – act with urgency and contact the necessary professional agencies (OT, Police)
- Staff can at any time contact the appropriate agencies; however, staff are encouraged to notify the centre manager
- If there are any allegations of abuse by an employee, the authorities will be informed immediately, and the employee will be suspended while the matter is investigated. If allegations of abuse are founded, the employee will be instantly dismissed.
- We will offer support to all those involved in any abuse allegations
- All suspicions or observed incidents, or reports of incidents, should be reported directly to the centre manager as soon as possible. The centre manager will immediately take steps to protect the child and record the report. If the centre manager feels there is a reasonable cause to believe a child is unsafe, she/he will report it to Oranga Tamariki – 0508 326 459
- The centre manager will take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This may mean contacting Oranga Tamariki or the police immediately.
- If there is no short-term risk, time can be taken to consult thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision. This decision making will be a priority above other work.
- If staff members feel they cannot go to the centre manager (for example they have concerns about the centre manager's practise or wish to make an allegation involving the centre manager), they will report directly to the team leader.
- If team members have told the centre manager about their concerns for the wellbeing of a child, but do not feel that the centre manager has taken appropriate action, they will inform the team leader.
- To protect the privacy and dignity of the child and Whanau, information will be kept confidential with the persons concerned.

ALLEGATIONS ABOUT AKORANAGA PRESCHOOL EMPLOYEES:

- If there are any allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of a child by an Akoranga Preschool employee, the authorities will be informed immediately, and the employee will be suspended while the matter is investigated. Procedures to follow will align with the individual's employment agreement and actions stated in the Akoranga Preschool Employee Handbook. The child abuse issue and employment issue will be treated separately with different Akoranga Preschool representatives assigned to each.
- Akoranga Preschool will make a mandatory report the Teaching Council if required.

INFORMATION SHARING:

- The Privacy Act, 2020 and the Oranga Tamariki Act, 1989 allow information to be shared to keep tamariki safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse, will be assured the protection afforded by law that no civil, criminal, or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- The Privacy Act, 2020 allows professionals to share information about children and young people with other professionals when they have a serious concern for their wellbeing. Sharing information must contribute to prevention or reduction in harm or contribute to an assessment of risks and needs for the child.
- All information will be kept confidential with the parties concerned and concern records kept secure.
- Unless it increases the risk to the child, or places team members in a dangerous situation, then the Whanau will be informed if Akoranga Preschool is making a report of concern. This is not to gain consent if a report is being made as legislation allows Akoranga Preschool to share information without the consent of Whanau. If parents object, facts will be recorded along with reasons for decisions made.
- There may be cases where the involvement of statutory agencies is inappropriate and potentially harmful to families. If the centre manager feels there is reasonable concern for the wellbeing of a child, they will work to respond to the needs of this child in a manner proportionate to the level or need and risk, working with external agencies and whānau as appropriate. Regulated child welfare and protection agencies are listed in the Oranga Tamariki Act and includes all health services.

GENERAL CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES:

- Our playground, indoor play areas, sleep rooms and tamariki bathrooms and changing areas are designed to ensure they can be readily observed by supervising Kaiako.
- Office doors are to be kept open if a child is in the room with only one adult.
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are able to collect tamariki from the centre. If a child is to be collected by someone other than the persons on their enrolment form, Whanau/legal guardians are required to give written permission to the management including their relationship to the child.
- If tamariki are picked up by anyone other than their Whanau or legal guardian, Whanau must inform staff.
- Written permission from whanau is required for their child 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.
- Any adult who has not had a safety check completed, will not be left alone with tamariki without a permanent employee, or have responsibility for tamariki.

- There is a zero tolerance for staff members working at the centre under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If any whanau arrives to pick up their child whilst suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will use their discretion to decide if the child is safe to be driven by the parent. Staff can offer to call another family member, but where drivers are non-cooperative, staff should call the police (111).

AKORANGA PRESCHOOL WILL FOLLOW THE 7 POINTS OF EMPLOYMENT BEFORE ANY CORE WORKERS START AT PRESCHOOL

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
7. a risk assessment.

All people who are employed at Akoranga preschool will have worked through these points before employment will commence if applicable.

If employment does not commence a written letter will explain.

TAMAITI CURIOUS BODY PLAY:

- We believe that curiosity about bodies and some sex play among tamariki is healthy and normal. However, Kaiako are there to provide guidelines needed to ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of tamariki is protected.
- Tamariki keep their underwear or nappies on unless they are getting changed.
- Whanau will be notified of any inappropriate sex play involving their child.
- Strategies will be developed in consultation with Whanau should any child engage in unusually regular self-stimulation.
- Kaiako will ensure all team members know of instances of frequent or inappropriate sex play.
- Whanau should advise Kaiako of anything their child says which may point to inappropriate sex play having occurred and vice versa. This will be recorded confidentially in the concerns book.
- We use language that promotes a positive body image and awareness, and how to take care of themselves. Tamariki will be encouraged to have ownership over their bodies and move away from play or say no if they are feeling unsafe and to inform a Kaiako.
- Kaiako will intervene at any point if curious body play is inappropriate, hidden from adults, if there is any coercion, or if the play is frequent.
- Kaiako will consult with external agencies for support if required.

CONSULTATION:

- Who?
- How?
- When?

Date: August 2024

Review Date: August 2026