

Child Protection Policy

Function: Health and Safety

Business Activity: Unacceptable behaviour (managing)

Approved on: 18 November 2022

Version No: 2.1

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1. Background

- 1.1. This policy requires all Peke Waihanga employees to share in the organisation's commitment to support and protect children and to report situations where they have concerns that a child is being, or is suspected of, being abused or neglected.
- 1.2. There is a suite of Government legislative, policy and service delivery initiatives to improve how we identify and respond to the needs of children.
- 1.3. Under the provisions of Part 2 of the [Children's Act 2014](#), Peke Waihanga (along with other State services and organisations providing government-funded services to children and families) is required to have a Child Protection Policy (CPP) to set out our commitment to building a culture of child protection and to provide information on how employees are expected to respond when they have concerns about the safety and well-being of children.
- 1.4. This CPP is for all Peke Waihanga employees. For the purposes of this policy, 'employee' is defined as all permanent, fixed term, part-time, contracted and volunteers employed/engaged by Peke Waihanga.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purposes of this policy are to:
 - a) Protect the safety and promote the wellbeing of children, who are receiving services from any employee of Peke Waihanga; or are associated with adults who are receiving services from any employee of Peke Waihanga.
 - b) Assist employees to respond appropriately when child abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.
 - c) Assist employees to respond to the needs of the many children who come to the notice of the Peke Waihanga without the presence of indicators of abuse or neglect.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees and should be used wherever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.

4. Rationale

- 4.1. The right of children to be protected from abuse and neglect is a fundamental human right.
- 4.2. The protection of children is a priority for Peke Waihanga, and we accept that we have organisational and individual responsibilities to act to protect the safety of children.

5. Organisational commitment to child protection

- 5.1. Our leadership team will ensure that:
 - a) There is an organisation-wide policy for the appropriate response to, and management of, reports of suspected or confirmed child abuse and neglect and the identification of vulnerable children.

- b) The Child Protection Policy and procedures comply with legislative requirements, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and best practice standards.
- c) Organisation-wide procedures exist to provide appropriate adequate support for an employee that may witness or be dealing with child abuse and neglect.
- d) Peke Waihanga commits to using safer recruitment procedures, including compliance with any requirements in the [Children's Act 2014](#).

5.2 Peke Waihanga will take steps to ensure that:

- all new employees undergo police vetting in accordance with the Children's Act 2014, and the relevant criminal history check for their country of residence (if employed offshore). This vetting is required to be repeated every three years. See [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#), Section 7.15 if police vetting reveal employees have a criminal history.
- all employees are conversant with our Child Protection Policy and related procedures
- all employees understand the statutory referral processes and management of identified or suspected child abuse and neglect
- all employees know how to seek advice when child abuse is suspected or identified
- employees receive information about the policy, access to training and/or resource material and periodic updates appropriate to their areas of work and roles in the organisation
- frontline employees will be able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, identify vulnerable children, and will take appropriate action in response
- relationships with patients/service users are open and transparent. This includes being willing to share concerns about child safety issues with the family/whānau unless this would result in an escalation of risk
- the services Peke Waihanga provides to children and families contribute to improving the wellbeing of children
- lawful and effective information sharing and consistent communication between Peke Waihanga employees and other agencies is the foundation for sound decision-making to keep children safe
- Peke Waihanga will support employees to work with partner agencies and community organisations to best ensure child protection practices are consistent, of a high quality, and always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.

6. Our responsibilities and expectations

Support for employees

- 6.1. To support the implementation of this policy, Regional, Regional Team and National Office Managers will lead an annual discussion with their staff about employee's responsibilities under this policy including how to recognize abuse and neglect in children.
- 6.2. Managers will be supplied with information resources to enable this discussion by the HR Advisor who will select an annual date to remind managers to hold the discussion.

Confidentiality and information sharing

- 6.3. The [Privacy Act 2020](#) and the [Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989](#) allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or

investigated. Note that, under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act, 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 – Ministry of Children or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Responding to a concern

- 6.4. This policy outlines Peke Waihangā's responsibilities and expectations of how employees should respond when they come across situations where child abuse or neglect is suspected or identified. Employees who understand their responsibilities under this policy and act appropriately will make a significant contribution to helping keep children safe.
- 6.5. Statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse in New Zealand rests with Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and the Police. These statutory agencies operate collaboratively under the provisions of a joint [Child Protection Protocol](#) when responding to situations of serious child abuse.
- 6.6. Under this Child Protection Policy, **all employees** are required to:
- know that the policy exists and know where to locate it if required
 - have an understanding of what the policy covers and what to do if they come across child abuse and neglect
- 6.7. If an employee has any concerns about actual or suspected abuse they must act. They should:
- Write a factual account of why they are concerned. This can include what they saw, what they heard, what a child told them, and/or what someone else told them.
 - Promptly seek advice from their Regional Manager about whether to report the concern. If the matter is urgent and the Regional Manager is unavailable, they should seek advice from the Human Resource Advisor at National Office.
 - In situations where a child is believed to be in imminent danger, this should be reported immediately to Police via **111**.
 - The employee's factual account should be given to their Regional Manager who also records what actions have been taken.
 - Any decision to report a concern (or to make any other referrals to appropriate external agencies) is made by the Regional Manager following discussion with the employee raising the concern.
 - To report a concern, contact Oranga Tamariki free on **0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)** to make the report. Alternatively, this can be made on [a Oranga Tamariki report of concern template](#).
- 6.8. In addition, our goal is that frontline employees are able to identify vulnerable children. To enable them to do this they will:
- be able to recognise the potential indicators of abuse or neglect
 - be able to recognise the potential indicators of abuse and neglect of disabled children
 - be aware of the risk that persons and situations may pose to children
 - access available child protection information and training, appropriate to their role
 - generally be able to distinguish between situations that call for a Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki and/or Police and those situations where the child's vulnerability is at the lower end of the risk continuum and where a referral to community social services agencies for support is

more appropriate. If the level of risk/concern is uncertain, employees should contact Oranga Tamariki for advice

- 6.9. Where a report of concern has been made to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and an investigation or assessment is about to commence, Peke Waihangā employees **must not**:
- contact the suspected person for any reason connected with the report of concern.
 - discuss the case with anyone that is not connected directly with the investigation.
- 6.10. The primary focus of this policy is to ensure that employees understand Peke Waihangā’s expectations in relation to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies – Oranga Tamariki and the Police. However, there will be situations where children are considered vulnerable, but where the involvement of statutory agencies will be inappropriate, particularly in situations where the levels of vulnerability or concern are not related to abuse or neglect and where families are actively seeking help. In those situations, employees are encouraged to help families to access other community support services.

7. Specific Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
All Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and adhere to this policy • Be aware of the principles and processes in this policy
Privacy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain informed of current legislative requirements • Advise on all Privacy requirements when sharing information internally and externally on vulnerable children.
Regional Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appropriate refer Reports of Concern to Oranga Tamariki or the Police • If appropriate, contact and refer to appropriate and approved external agencies • Conduct annual discussion with employees about their responsibilities under this policy and recognizing abuse and neglect in children
Peer Support Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure volunteers in the Peer Support programme understand and adhere to this policy
Human Resources Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually reminds Managers to hold a discussion with staff about this policy and ensures they have the information resources to support such a discussion • Ensures this policy is regularly reviewed
Chief Executive and Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employees understand and adhere to this policy • Ensure support, processes and training and in place in Peke Waihangā that support the implementation of this policy
The Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall responsibility for this Policy rests with the board

8. Useful support information

- [Child Matters](#) is a non-profit organisation which works with all sectors to deliver child protection training (including an online course), advice and resources with an aim to reduce child abuse and neglect in New Zealand. There are links to [useful resources on its website](#).
- [How Can I Tell? Recognising Child Abuse](#)
- [Creating a Safe Organisation](#)

9. Legal Compliance

- [Children's Act 2014](#)
- [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act \(Oranga Tamariki\) 2017](#)
- [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- [Crimes Amendment Act 2005 – Protection of Children](#)

10. Key Related Documents

[Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

[Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children template](#)

For Use by National Office Only

Document development and approval

Review period	3 years	Next review date	November 2025
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Interconnected processes and documents affected by this document?			

Version history

Version No.	Version Date	Description of Change
2.1	18 Nov 2022	Added in police vetting requirement and link to Recruitment and Selection Policy in there is a criminal history
2.0	9 July 2021	Reviewed policy, clarity added around reporting and referral process and training
1.0	17 August, 2017	New Policy

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Implementation history	
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