

McKenzie Centre Child Protection Policy

Rationale:

McKenzie Centre has a responsibility to provide an environment that values and commits to children's safety, by ensuring that there are child protection systems in place, including a procedure for the early recognition of child abuse, neglect and family violence, by responding to suspected or reported child abuse, and through the prevention of child abuse.

Purpose of the Policy:

- We are all responsible for keeping children safe. We are all responsible for the wellbeing of children including identification and response to those at risk of harm.
- To provide McKenzie Centre staff with information, education and resources on how to enhance the prevention of child abuse and neglect and that incidents of suspected and potential child abuse and neglect are identified and responded to appropriately and consistently.
- To promote the well-being of all and especially vulnerable children.
- To ensure public confidence in the safe practices of McKenzie Centre and to reassure parents/whānau.
- To avoid allegations of abuse and to protect and support staff in the event that one is made.

Background Information

Definition of a Child in need of care or protection:

The child or young person is being, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, or seriously deprived (Section 14, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989).

Definition of Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Definition of Family Violence:

Family violence is 'violence against that person by any other person with whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship' (Domestic Violence Act 1995 No 86 (as at 14 July 2017), Public Act). A domestic relationship includes children, partners and family/whānau members both men and women or a person who ordinarily shares a household. The definition of violence includes physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Exposure to family violence or intimate partner violence is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between these abuses and the physical abuse of children.

Recognizing the signs of child abuse:

Refer to the text: AN INTERAGENCY GUIDE TO BREAKING THE CYCLE; Lets stop child abuse together (pg 6-27, revised from 1998 version, 2001). (Saved on z: Policies and Procedures\McKenzie Centre Policies\Child Protection folder)

'Always consider the possibility of abuse and/or neglect when a child has physical injuries, has persistent or new behavioural problems, has failure to thrive or developmental delays and/or unusual patterns of development, or is exposed to unsafe, and/or unrealistic parenting. In cases of suspected or disclosed abuse it is useful to consider that multiple abuse types may be present. A cluster or pattern of signs will provide more support for finding abuse and neglect. However, there can be other possible explanations for signs of abuse.' (pg 7, An Interagency Guide to Breaking the Cycle, 2001).

Always give priority to the safety of the child. If you feel that the child is in immediate danger contact Oranga Tamariki or Police immediately. If the child is not in immediate danger, but you have ongoing concerns for the child, you can still contact Oranga Tamariki or the Police and discuss your concerns and continue to document information. See flowchart.

Children's Team Approach (commenced 2017)

Primary focus of Children's Teams is on children vulnerable to maltreatment and at significant risk of harm. Child maltreatment encompasses a range of acts and omissions by parents and caregivers that are avoidable including physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and psychological and emotional abuse (including exposure to family violence).

Without coordinated services children are likely to suffer lifelong harm, injury or death.

Four Levels of response:

- 1) Universal support that helps improve conditions for all NZ families, e.g. ECE, GP, WINZ
- 2) Early family supports (single agency) e.g. WINZ
- 3) Children's Team approach. Consent required. Voluntary involvement for the whānau. Aimed to prevent at risk children from entering statutory care and protection. Children's Teams work together in partnership with whānau to support them to make changes to their way of life. The child is always the focus. CAN = Children's Action Network – the team around the tamariki. Each CAN will have a Lead Professional.
- 4) Statutory response. Child protection.

Vulnerable Children's Hub 0800 367 687

- First contact point for professionals to raise concerns about vulnerable children whose needs are not serious enough to contact the National Contact Centre or Police.
- Dedicated Vulnerable Children's Hub Social Workers draw from the referrer a range of information to decide the best response and referral pathway. This could be the Children's Team, Oranga Tamariki, Police, NGO or universal supports e.g. ECC.

VIKI - Vulnerable Children's information System.

A web-based case management system that enables secure information sharing by professionals working in Children's Teams.

McKenzie Centre's Response to suspected neglect and/or abuse:

Reporting & Documentation Procedure:

In the event that you suspect abuse through the child's or parents' behaviour or physical signs, stay calm, listen carefully, avoid asking questions or interviewing the child or adult, and record as accurately as possible what is said (word for word if possible). Act on your suspicions; do not leave it to someone else or hope it will not happen again.

Notify McKenzie Centre Director immediately. Gather as much information as possible for reporting including consulting with other team members or community agencies (e.g. early childhood staff, Child Matters). Accurately record your observations in the child's client records or a separate digital folder marked CONFIDENTIAL, including; date and time of information, observations, conversations, and where the information was collected. Keep information specific, accurate, objective and non-emotive. Ask any witnesses of any incident to write their individual summary in their own words.

If notification is appropriate; ensure the notification is on McKenzie Centre letterhead, and dated, template located in z:\Policies and Procedures\McKenzie Centre Policies\Child Protection folder. Final collation and notification is to be assigned to the Contact Person. Notifications can be made by phone, email or in writing. See procedure flowchart (page 4).

The Centre Director is to inform Trust Chairperson if a notification has been made except when a conflict may arise, or when safety may be compromised. Centre Director to keep Trustees informed as appropriate.

Within McKenzie Centre

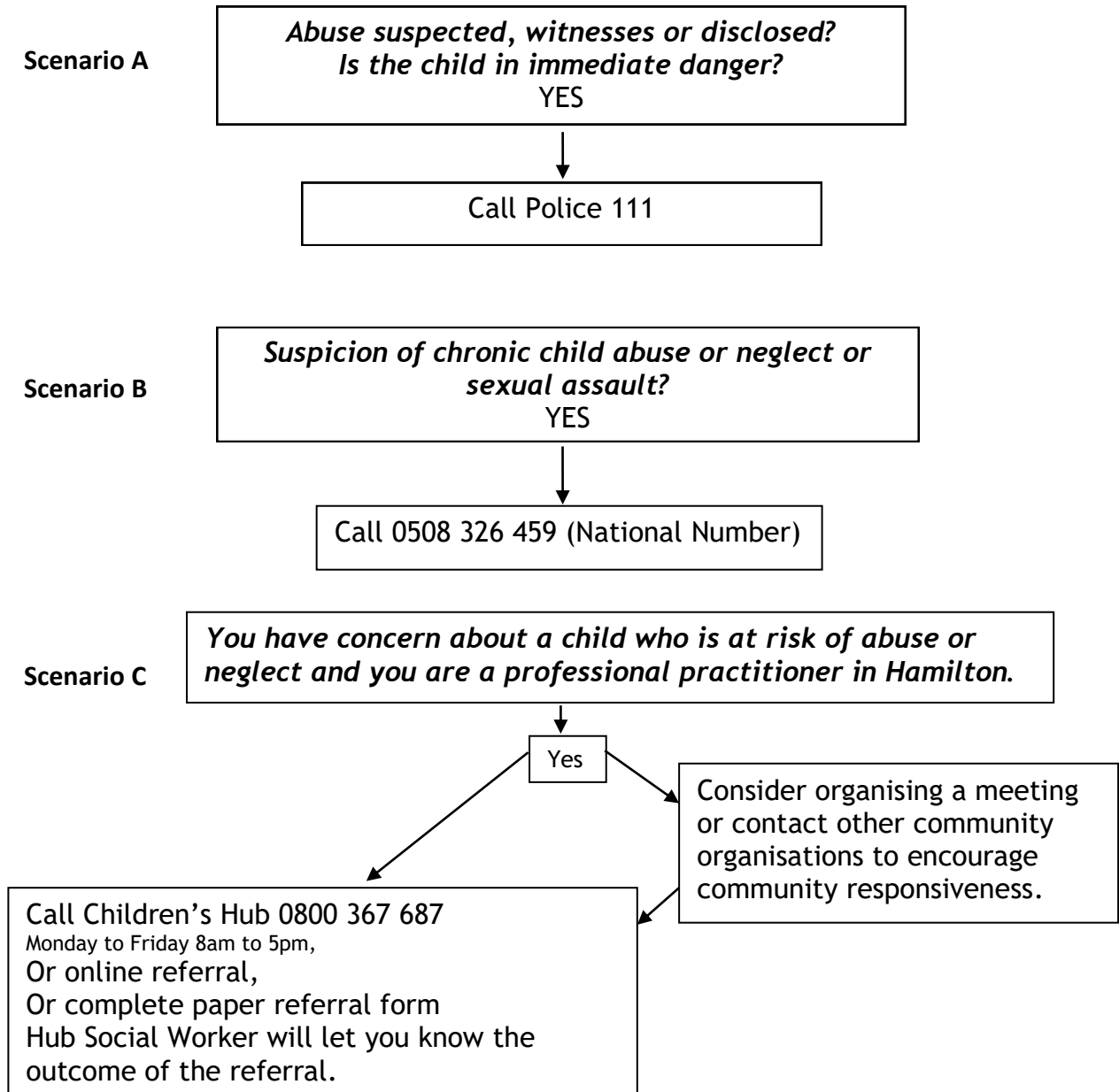
McKenzie Centre practices to keep all children safe: (Universal Support)

- Weekly meetings with families at session
- A contact to the family if any unexplained absences
- Team discussion informally and/or formally
- Open discussion with the family if appropriate
- Willingness to respond to any suspicion
- Team support around the child and family
- Professional development and learning
- Refer family within our team or involve other community agencies for support.

In the event of suspicion of child abuse by a McKenzie Centre staff member or Trustee, follow the procedures for recording and reporting child abuse. Centre Director will be notified by staff if they are concerned about the behaviour of another staff member in relation to handling of a child or children.

Whenever inappropriate behaviour management is observed use Behaviour Management Policy strategies. Record this information as a possible concern.

Flowchart



In all scenarios:

- Document and record in child's client records, creating a confidential section if necessary
- Consult – ongoing.
- Gather information from witnesses and other community agencies.
- Talk to other practitioners involved to get a good picture of what's happening in the child's life.
- Notify Centre Director. CD to notify Chairperson, if appropriate.
- Complete any notification as required. Make the referral count: ensure it is accurate, be specific and ensure follow up.
- Information stored securely and confidentially.
- Staff to obtain support and care of self.
- Consider whether to inform the family or not.

Decision to Inform the Family

Consent to refer to the Hub is not necessary. However, best practice is to have a conversation with the family first, as families are more likely to engage if aware of the referral.

Informing the child's family of a notification is ultimately at the discretion of McKenzie Centre team, or on advice from child protection services.

The family, or staff, may need a support person present.

Storage of Information and confidentiality:

Good record keeping is essential.

- All witnesses to an incident will be asked to record an individual summary of the incident for addition to the notification.
- Information to be collated in the child's Client Records, Implementation section, until completion of notification. Files are kept in secure storage.
- On completion of a notification, electronic information will be stored within a password protected confidential file on the server and a paper copy in the Centre Director's confidential file.
- Any request for information from family/whanau or agencies – refer to Privacy Policy, Oranga Tamariki and Police recommendations.

Protection Procedures:

- All staff whether full time, part time or relieving, will be informed of appropriate policy and/or procedures. This occurs at staff orientation and with the regular review cycle of all policies.
- All staff will be clearly identified within McKenzie Centre through either wearing of name badges and/or photos with information stating qualifications, which are displayed near the front entrance of McKenzie Centre.
- All Education Support Workers (ESW) are required to wear name tags with McKenzie Centre logo, while employed by McKenzie Centre, and while working in their appointed early childhood centre.
- All staff of McKenzie Centre will have a comprehensive recruitment process including a formal interview and a risk assessment which includes qualifications, identification and referee check. This includes volunteer workers. A Police Check will be completed and reviewed every three years. Employment is subject to the Police Check and any lack of disclosure of criminal offences can lead to immediate dismissal. This includes volunteer workers. All staff will comply with the standard safety check requirements under the Children's Act 2014.
- Phone calls and meetings regarding concerns are to occur with two staff members on McKenzie Centre premises when reasonably possible. Speaker phones are also available, this is to assist with care and support for the staff member.
- All visitors to McKenzie Centre will sign the 'Visitors book', including their name and organisation. All students and volunteers are required to read and sign a confidentiality form.
- All students and visitors are to be supervised and monitored by McKenzie Centre staff at all times. Students and visitors are never to be left in charge or alone with any child.
- Toileting will be undertaken by parents/caregivers but if McKenzie Centre staff are required to toilet or change a child at McKenzie Centre it should be undertaken by two staff members.
- When an ESW is required to toilet or change a child in the early childhood centre, it should only be done when it is formally specified/recorded in either an interim 'Toileting Agreement' or specified in the child's Individual Plan (IP). See IP Procedures.
- Adults and children in the Quiet/Sleep Room will be visible to those outside the room at all times, i.e. blind over door kept open.
- Staff will not be alone with a child under any circumstance. There will always be another adult present.

- A Child Protection Resource box will be available to all staff, family/caregivers/whānau, located in the Staff Library, or websites can be referred to. This will contain appropriate resources and information on prevention and protection from child abuse, including a list of agencies that can be used and the services they provide.
- Staff will provide family/whānau with a parent focus group each term and keep parents informed of upcoming parenting workshops and services available in the community through sources, including the 'Parent Notice-board' in the hallway and the term 'Newsletter'.
- McKenzie Centre will undertake to have at least one staff member trained in child protection issues at all times.
- McKenzie Centre will be aware of and build relationships with community organisations who can assist in the child protection area.
- Staff will be supported in accordance with McKenzie Centre Care of Staff Policy.
- All practicable steps will be taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material for example using technology with an adult present.
- There will be no person on the premises that uses or is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour. If this occurs, then management will pay for transport to return the person to their home.

For legislation around information sharing:

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Information-sharing/information-sharing-Guidance-OT-Act-1989.pdf>

Information sharing to support tamariki wellbeing and safety.

Guidance for sharing information across the child welfare and protection sector.

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. Information sharing provisions.

Relevant Documentation:

Education Act, 1989: Part XXVI.

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 – in particular sections 6, 16 and 17

Oranga Tamariki Legislation Bill 2019

Privacy Act 1993 – in particular Principle 11

Children's Act 2014 – in particular sections 21, 25, 26, 31 and information sharing sections 65A to 65D

Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015

www.legislation.govt.nz

Family Violence Act 2018

Specialist Service Standards Revised March 2013: Engagement

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 and Amendment 2015, HS31 – HS34, GMA7A

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations, Reg 45, 46, 47

Ministry of Children Oranga Tamariki, established April 2017

www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-breach-guidelines

www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Information-sharing/information-sharing-Guidance-OT-Act-1989.pdf>

McKenzie Centre's:

Care of Staff Policy

Child Behaviour Management Policy

Health and Safety Procedure

<https://enrichplus.sharepoint.com/sites/mcke/Shared Documents/Policies - Procedures/Child Protection/Child Protection Policy, June 24.docx> 6

Notification Template

Privacy Policy

Sleep Room Policy and Sleep Checking Roster

Staff Recruitment documentation and procedures

Adopted: September 1999.

Reviewed: 2001, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2015, November 2017, July 2019, June 2020, July 2022, June 2023

Will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner as required.



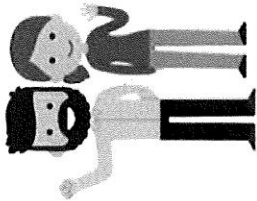
Factors Contributing to Vulnerability

Key Resilience Factors
(Lessen impact of abuse)

- Secure attachment to adult family member
- Warm relationship with a non-offending parent
- High levels of paternal care during childhood
- Lack of abuse-related stress

Child

- Unwanted
- High needs



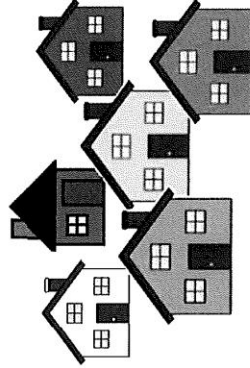
Family Relationship

- Lack of attachment
- Family breakdown
- Violence in the home
- Isolated from extended family
- Lacking a support network
- Isolated in the community and/or discriminated against



Parent/ Caregiver

- Maltreated as a child
- Poor bonding with baby
- Unrealistic expectations of child's behaviour or needs
- Excessive or violent punishment
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Lack of self-control when upset or angry
- Mental or physical problems that have an impact on parenting skills
- Low self-esteem, feeling inadequate
- Socially isolated
- Involved in crime
- In financial difficulties



Community

- Poverty
- High un-employment
- Poor housing
- Lack of services to support families
- Transient neighbourhoods

Services/ Institutional

- Failing to engage & retain family
- Fragmented services
- Lack of service collaboration
- No shared mission
- Lack of information & resource sharing

Societal

- Chronic socio-economic inequality & instability
- Values that diminish status of child/parent
- Acceptance of violence & abuse