

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Magic Garden

The purpose of this policy is to establish the actions that are taken to protect children from abuse and neglect.

For the purpose of this policy, abuse is used in the context of adult to child. This could be staff to child or an adult (outside of the centre) to the child.

RATIONALE:

The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority.

Magic Garden is committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with other agencies and organisations to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau, and to ensure child protection policies are followed through.

This policy is aligned with the centre's philosophy.

We recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.

Management ensures that all staff know and understand what abuse and neglect are, and are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.

We are committed to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues, supervisors and manager.

We are committed to promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

Definitions

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."

Child Abuse can be:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

Neglect "is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth.
- Medical - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child.
- Abandonment - leaving a child or young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning.
- Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision.

- Refusal to assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child.”

From Child Matters website: www.childmatters.org.nz

GOALS:

1. To ensure the wellbeing of children in our care.
2. To support families/whānau to protect their children.
3. To provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.
4. To maintain safety checks of all workers at Magic Garden as per the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014.
5. To review this policy and practices annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

PROCEDURES:

The Manager will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct.
- Respect the rights of those involved during any investigation.
- Maintain and increase staff, parental and guardian’s awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse, including learning about appropriate touching. Follow current guidelines on how to respond to disclosures made by children or concerns raised by adults. This will include arranging ongoing training as necessary.
- Carry out staff safety checking (including police vetting) in accordance with the Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015.
- Give no persons, other than employed staff over the age of 17 years, tasks that involve nappy changing, toileting or responsibility for the supervision of children, unless directly authorised by the supervisor.
- Ensure that staff and other adults visiting or working in the centre or acting as parent helpers on trips are well supported and visible in the activities they perform with children. While the centre respects the privacy of our children, staff and visitors, visibility will be given priority to ensure the safety of all concerned.
- Respond appropriately to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection/touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of children must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job.
- Ensure no child is taken from the centre by any staff member or adult, without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency where clearance has been agreed in consultation with the Supervisor or the Owner.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Ensure the centre’s procedures protect staff from unjustified allegations of abuse.
- Ensure the centre has educational and informational resources for children and adults about child abuse.
- Suspend any staff member who is under suspicion until a full investigation can be completed.

What to do if you see or hear about a child whose safety or wellbeing is in immediate danger:

- Contact the Police on 111, or Oranga Tamariki on 0508-326-459.

- If you are concerned that your safety may be put in risk by reporting, and wish to remain anonymous, phone Crimestoppers NZ on 0800-555-111.
- Call a helpline for free, confidential advice and support:
 - Parent Help – 0800-568-856
 - Are you OK? – 0800-456-450 (Family Violence Information Line)

Staff will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Familiarise themselves with this centre policy.
- Immediately notify the manager if they observe signs of child abuse or anyone reports to them any suspicions of child abuse of children at the centre, or a pattern of neglect or concerns is identified. Follow current guidelines on how to respond to disclosures made by children or concerns raised by adults.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct.
- Respond appropriately to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. Give physical contact to a child appropriately. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection/touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of children must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job. Applying sunscreen and/or medication, by teachers, is for the purpose of that task only.
- Never take a child from the centre without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency where clearance has been obtained from the Manager/ Supervisor.

Protected Disclosure

- When a staff member or associate brings a case of child abuse to the attention of the centre or the authorities, the centre will not disclose the name of the person without their permission unless it is to CYF or the Police and is necessary to do so in the interests of the child.

Relate this policy to:

Policies:

- Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Health and Safety Policies
- Excursion Policy
- Personnel Policy
- Communication and Relationships Policy

Regulations and Acts:

- Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 (SR 2008/204)
 - **HS31:** A process for the prevention of child abuse and a procedure for responding to suspected child abuse. Documents are consistent with Child, Youth and Family or New Zealand Police guidelines.
 - **HS32:** all practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008.
- Vulnerable Children Act, 2014 and associated regulations.
- Children, Young Person's and their Families Act, 1989.

References/Bibliography:

- Breaking the Cycle: Inter-agency Protocols for Child Abuse Management
- Prevent Child Abuse: Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services

- How Can I tell? Indicators of Child Abuse and Consent
- Child Sexual Abuse, 2017, Prof Eric Hollis.
- See Ministry of Education child abuse information on:
http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/~media/Educate/Files/Reference%20Downloads/Lead/Files/final_Protocol_MoECYF2.pdf

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