

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY MAGIC GARDEN

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all possible actions are taken to protect children from abuse and neglect.

### **RATIONALE:**

Magic Garden is aligned in centre philosophies, policies and practices and is committed to an approach where:

- Children are treated with dignity and respect.
- Children are entitled to physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Provision is made for a safe environment free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse
- Support is provided for families to protect their children.
- Commitment is given to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. Where protection is not adequately provided by adults responsible for the child, the safety and wellbeing of the child is given priority.
- Others may need to investigate suspected or alleged abuse to ensure the child receives adequate protection.
- Failure to protect children may lead to lifelong damage to children.

### 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.”

**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: [childmatters.org.nz](http://childmatters.org.nz)*

### **GOALS:**

1. To ensure that information, discussion, trusting relationships and clear procedures will strengthen the ability of staff, parents and children to work together to adequately protect all the children who attend the centre.
2. To maintain safety checks of all workers at Magic Garden as per the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014.

3. 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.
- Immediately investigate and fully and objectively record in writing, any reports of incidents, allegations or suspicions of child abuse. The Manager will, where appropriate, seek the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Child, Youth and Family, Policy and/or other professional agencies in order to conduct a full investigation.
- Report suspected child abuse to the Police or Child, Youth and Family (CYF) (see *ECC Process for Reporting Child Abuse*).
- Inform parents, after discussing the best way to do this with Police or CYF advisors. If a family member or close associate of the family or whanāu is suspected of child abuse, the parent(s) may not initially be informed, but the centre will ensure that the information is disclosed by an appropriate person at an appropriate time.
- Suspend any staff member who is under suspicion until a full investigation can be completed.
- Carry out police vetting checks in accordance with the Education Standards Act 2001 and Vulnerable Children's Act on staff before appointing them.
- 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 obtained from the Manager or Supervisor, in the Manager's absence.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Ensure the centre's procedures protect staff from unjustified allegations of abuse.
- Ensure the centre has resources for children and adults about child abuse.

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.
- 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:

- Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Health and Safety Policy (includes Excursion Policy for the Over Three Centre)
- Personnel Policy
- Communication and Relationships Policy
- 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).
- Vulnerable Children's Act, 2014.
- Children, Young Person's and their Families Act, 1989.
- 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

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](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/~media/Educate/Files/Reference%20Downloads/Lead/Files/final_Protocol_MoECYF2.pdf)

**Approved**      September                      2015

**Next Review**      \_\_\_\_\_                      2018