



Child Protection Policy

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Reviewed	Next Review Date	Approved by
	May 2027	ATWC Board

1. OUTCOMES

The Anglican Trust for Women and Children (ATWC) is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for children and young people who engage with our services. This Child Protection Policy outlines our commitment to

- Protecting the safety and promoting the wellbeing of all children (tamariki/mokopuna), who are receiving services or are associated with adults who are receiving services from any staff member/service of ATWC.
- Assist staff to respond when child (tamariki/mokopuna) abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors of ATWC and should be used to ensure that all staff, volunteers and contractors have an understanding of child abuse and neglect and how to respond whenever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified regardless of whether the child is a client of the organisation.

3. REFERENCES

3.1. Legislation.

- Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989
- Privacy Act 2020
- Crimes Act 1961
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

3.2 Associated ATWC policies and procedures:

- Supervision Policy
- HR policies and procedures including Recruitment, Employee Safety Checking Policy and Disciplinary Policy.
- Client Record Management Procedure

4. DEFINITIONS

Child/Tamariki /Mokupuna	For the purposes of this policy, and to ensure compliance with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, a child is a person under 18 years old.
Child Abuse	Defined in section two of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child.”
Physical Abuse	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.
Sexual Abuse	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts and non-physical contact – for example, sexual grooming. Sexual abuse may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
Emotional Abuse	The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child adversely affects their development, it may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. In addition, it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited, or corrupted.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.
Child protection	Activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect.
Disclosure	Information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
Oranga Tamariki	The agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection.
Report of Concerns	A report can be made by any person to Oranga Tamariki via phone or email when they believe that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), neglected, or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person.

5. PROCESS

5.1. Recruitment and employment

As part of our duty of care, ATWC will ensure that suitable and appropriate employees, volunteers, and contractors are engaged to work with children. As part of this ATWC will ensure there is a robust recruitment process that is in accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, the Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015 and includes:

- creating a role description.
- developing candidate specifications.
- advertising the position.
- an application process.
- interviewing.
- referee checking.
- vetting which may include Police vetting/Ministry of Justice and Oranga Tamariki Consent to Release Information checks.
- Risk Assessment.
- Review of suitability of the role completed every two/three year's dependent on role as described in the Employee Safety Checking Policy including updating vetting and Risk Assessment.

5.2. Training

All new employees, regardless of if they are working directly with children will undertake an induction programme that requires them to read and understand specific material and information about child abuse, including being shown where to access the policy. The aim of this induction is to ensure that:

- Staff understand and accept their responsibility to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Staff are supported to understand ATWC's Child Protection Policy and the requirements specific to their role.
- Staff are trained to recognise and respond to signs of possible abuse and neglect.

Staff who work directly with children or child/family work must undertake a minimum of one-day of child protection training. Content to include:

- the concept of vulnerability and factors that contribute to vulnerability, risk and child abuse
- indicators, signs and effects of child abuse
- how to identify when children and young people are vulnerable to abuse and neglect, and how to intervene early.
- how to identify and respond to children and young people when abuse is suspected or disclosed
- understanding the reporting process and legislative requirements
- where to access support to deal with their own feelings and responses and to access any assistance they may require regarding responding to/reporting child abuse
- information about where staff can refer young people and families for support and help.

ATWC will have a minimum of three staff members defined as a Child Protection Champion. The Champions will be required to undertake more in-depth training ensuring they have the necessary ability and knowledge to provide advice and support to staff as needed.

The Child Protection Champions:

- Will remain informed of current legislative requirements and will advise staff regarding appropriate actions and responses.
- Be readily available for consultation.
- Provide support with appropriate steps to take when an allegation/incident comes to a staff member's attention.
- Be available to support training sessions for staff in the safety and wellbeing of children and young people if required.
- The Child Protection Champion/s will be supported by the Senior Managers, and, if necessary, the CEO.

5.3. Identifying possible abuse or neglect.

Identifying possible neglect or abuse is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people. If you suspect neglect or abuse, it's important to take appropriate steps to report it to the relevant agencies. Physical or behavioural signs act as signals to warn and indicate that something might be happening in the life of a child or young person and must be taken note of. However, it should not be automatically assumed that abuse is occurring; talking to the child/young person or other professionals may reveal something quite innocent. It's important not to dismiss significant changes in behaviour, fears, worries and physical indicators a child/youth is showing.

Below are some possible signs of neglect or abuse:

1. Physical Signs:

- Unexplained Injuries including things such as bruises, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases malnutrition or dehydration.

2. Behavioural Signs:

- Sudden Changes in Behaviour, fear of a certain person or place, regression, age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, substance abuse, aggression, disengagement/neediness.

3. Emotional Signs:

- Low Self-Esteem, depression or anxiety, unexplained emotional swings sleep problems, low obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness, evidence of self-harm.

4. Neglect Indicators:

- Unkempt appearance, dirty clothes, body odor, lack of Supervision, chronic truancy or poor school attendance, lack of basic educational supplies or failure to enrol in school.

5. Communication and Environmental Clues:

- Unsafe living conditions, inadequate nutrition, isolation, inconsistent stories, limited, exposure to family and/or intimate partner violence.

6. Observing the Caregiver:

- aggressive or controlling Behaviour, isolation, or domination, indifference, or lack of concern, demonstrating a lack of emotional responsiveness or concern for the individual.

5.4. **Supporting children/young person to access support.**

We are committed to providing children and young people with the support and resources they need to stay safe and seek help in times of distress. We recognize the importance of ensuring that they know who to contact and are adequately supported to make contact in the event of harm or threat of harm.

1. Clear Communication

- We provide clear and accessible information to children and young people about who they can contact if they are in danger or feel threatened. This information is readily available at our sites, on our website, in any relevant materials provided to them and is explained to them when engaging with our services.

2. Trusted Support Channels

- Children and young people are encouraged to reach out to trusted individuals within our organization, such as staff members or volunteers, whom they feel comfortable confiding in. These individuals are trained to respond with compassion and take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child or young person.

3. Confidentiality and Trust

- We prioritize confidentiality and trust in all interactions with children and young people. Any disclosures of harm or threats of harm are treated with the utmost seriousness and confidentiality, while also ensuring that necessary steps are taken to address the situation and protect the individual from further harm.

4. Empowerment

- We empower children and young people to advocate for their own safety by providing them with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions and seek help when necessary. This may include education on recognizing signs of harm, understanding their rights, and knowing how to access support services.

5. Collaborative Approach

- We work collaboratively with external agencies, such as child protection services and law enforcement, to ensure a coordinated response to reports of harm or threats of harm. This includes facilitating communication and referrals to appropriate support services to ensure the well-being and safety of the child or young person.

6. Ongoing Support

- Our commitment to supporting children and young people extends beyond the initial contact. We provide ongoing support and follow-up to ensure that their needs are met and that they feel supported throughout the process of addressing any harm or threats they may have experienced.

More comprehensive information can be found at

<https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/abuse-indicators/>

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/worried-about-a-child-tell-us/identify-abuse/>

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.org.nz/>

5.5. Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

In addition to this policy ATWC have clearly documented procedural processes for how we will respond to suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. These process guide staff to understand the steps they are required to take when abuse and/or neglect is suspected and include responding to a disclosure, responding if they observe abuse and making a report of concern.

5.6. Confidentiality and information haring

From 1 July 2019 new information sharing provisions in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 and the Family Violence Act 2018 came into effect to enhance sharing of information between agencies. Professionals (other than Oranga Tamariki or Police) who are concerned about the wellbeing or safety of children and young people can share information with each other if they follow the provisions in the Acts and the principles of the Privacy Act.

Procedure:

- confirm identity and credentials of person requesting information (email request)
- identify specific information required and purpose – is it relevant?
- check information held – do we actually have the information requested?
- discuss with Line Manager and identify way forward
- depending on reason for request and risk to children as judged case by case,
- inform the client that information has been requested, by whom and seek permission (eg, attendance at a programme). In some instances, permission from the client is not necessary, consult with your manager regarding this.
- document all steps in process that you have taken.
- Ensure that all documentation is placed on the client file and/or scanned into client file (eg, email correspondence)

6. DOCUMENTATION

- a) ATWC's Procedure for responding to suspect abuse and/or neglect
- b) Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern Template.
- c) ATWC Report of Concern Register