

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Scope** All RASNZ staff who come into contact with children directly or indirectly during the course of RASNZ work related engagement on any site including but not exclusive to Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, Onehunga office, Community based settings, Dominion Road, Home visits etc.

**Purpose** To ensure professional and ethical practice in accordance with legislative policy in relation to child protection.

The Policy purpose is to ensure a systematic approach by all RASNZ staff members in the observation, identification and reporting of harmful practice towards children and young people.

### Purpose Statement

RASNZ has an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children directly or indirectly in our care. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the protection of the human rights of all children. The safety of the child is our top priority when investigating suspected or alleged child abuse.

### Related legislation and Guidelines

- Children's Protection Act, 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act, 1989
- Privacy Act, 1993
- Victims' Right Act, 2002Crimes Act, 1961
- Domestic Violence Act, 1955
- Health Act, 1956
- Health and Disability Sector Standards Regulations, 2001
- Health Information Privacy Code, 1994
- Vulnerable Children's Act, 2014
- Care of Children's Act, 2004
- Employment Relations Act, 1993
- Health and Safety At Work Act, April 2016

### Terms & Definitions

**Child Abuse** The harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person. [OT Amendment Act 1994, s2].

**Child** Any young person regardless of gender identity under the age of 14 years.

**Young Person** Any young person regardless of gender identity over the age of 14 years but under 18 years.

**Child or young person in need of care or protection**

A child or young person who is being, or is likely to be, abused in any of the ways described in the definition above. [CYP&F Act s14].

**Ministry of Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki: Oranga Tamariki**

**Policy Principles**

- The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- RASNZ is committed to the engagement of the 5P's of child protection:
  - Prevention
  - Paramountcy
  - Partnership
  - Protection
  - Parental Responsibility

RASNZ is committed to the 3R's of child safety:

- Recognise
- Report
- Refuse
- Children and young persons have a right to full emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being and to develop their own potential in an environment which is nurturing and protective and in which they are safe from abuse.
- The protection and nurturing of children and young people are the responsibility of adults. Children are not responsible for abuse inflicted on them by others.
- RASNZ must contribute to the nurturing and protection of children and young people and advocate for them as part of their role to promote, protect and preserve public health.
- RASNZ must adhere to the care and protection of children and young people aligned with the bicultural partnership in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi.
- In relation to RASNZ client demographic; a multicultural approach inclusive of diversity and inclusion of cultural respect will be engaged.
- The whanau/family's primary role in providing for the care, welfare and safety of children and young people must be valued, maintained strengthened and supported by community and health services. However, at all times the child's health and safety is a priority.
- All children and their whanau/families have the right to quality health services for care and protection. These services should be easily accessible, culturally safe, and appropriate, with regard for varying backgrounds and cultural needs, recognising the multiethnic nature of our client population.
- It is particularly important for abused children and young people that services are provided in environments which are safe, comfortable, and appropriate to their needs.
- Effective child protection and child abuse and neglect care strategies require active liaison between disciplines and with statutory agencies and the community. RASNZ must work collaboratively in partnership with relevant services and groups from all

the cultures and communities in which children live. Any staff member failing to comply with the Child Protection Policy will be considered in breach of RASNZ's code of conduct.

### **Identifying possible abuse or neglect**

- To download the Oranga Tamariki signs of abuse and neglect' chart [click here](#). (hyperlink)
- For information about identifying child abuse see: <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/27713-working-together-3-0-45ppi.pdf>
- This resource produced by Oranga Tamariki is for people in social service agencies, schools, healthcare organisations, community and other groups who have close contact with children and families/whanau. It includes useful information about identifying possible child abuse and an assessment framework.
- All RASNZ staff and office sites are to have accessibility to and be able to consult with a RASNZ appointed child protection champion in relation to ensuring child safety is paramount.

### **Responding to suspected or accusatory abuse or neglect**

In January 1995 changes were made to the Oranga Tamariki Act. One of the most significant was accepting an alternative to mandatory reporting.

This involved the formation of Interagency Protocols for the Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect. The RASNZ child protection policy is based on these protocols. This policy will assist RASNZ personnel to appropriately manage disclosed, identify or appropriately enquire in cases of suspected risk to children.

### **Consultation**

- o Do not make decisions about suspected child abuse on your own (except when the child or young person is in immediate danger): ensure discussions with the appropriate line manager occur no later than 24-hours following awareness of any incidents.
- o Discuss the case with your team leader and child protection champion.
- o If neither of these people are available consult with Clinical Director or CEO if Clinical Director is unavailable.

### **Cultural Consultation**

Involve an appropriate staff member of the same ethnicity (if appropriate in relation to community boundaries and confidentiality) as the child/young person in the decision-making consultation wherever possible.

### **Guidelines for Consultation and Timing of Action**

Consider the following factors:

- the nature and severity of abuse
- the child's immediate safety including emotional safety (i.e. physical safety from alleged abuser, general health status, suicidality)
- whether abuse has been observed/ disclosed or is suspected/indicated

- timing of last incident of assault
- previous interventions
- level of support from whanau/family or significant others, and the appropriate timing for contacting them
- obtaining culturally appropriate input
- the need for statutory intervention
- the contact person's initial assessment
- appropriate and accurate documentation

**Documentation**

All available information should be recorded immediately and accurately in the clinical record.

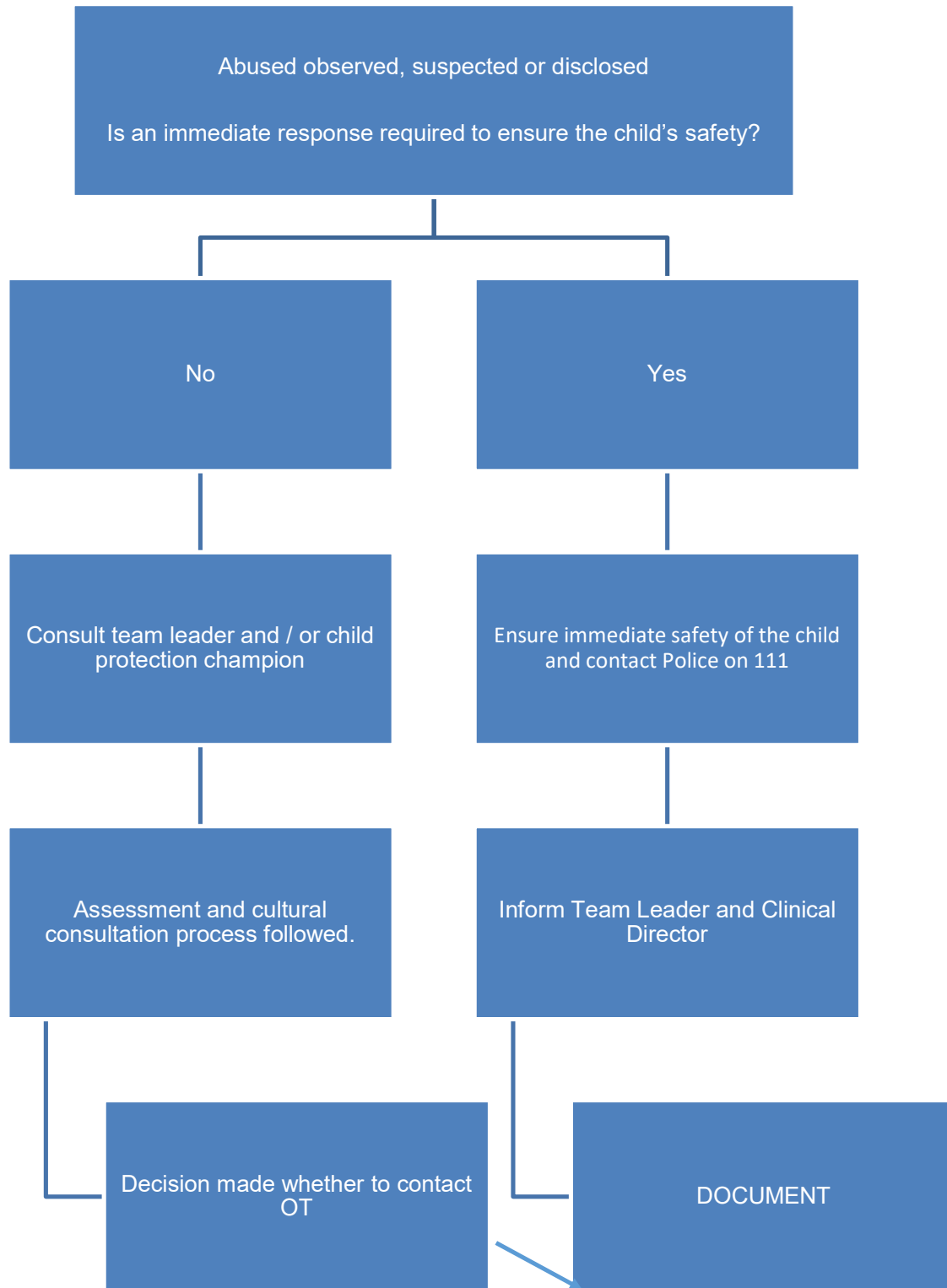
Ensure entry is legibly signed with time and date. In cases of disclosure:

- ensure verbatim reporting
- attain facts with open ended questioning
- do not be suggestive or provide options for answering of questions

**Talking with Children, Young People, Whanau/Families**

- Do not attempt an in-depth interview of a child or young person, especially regarding sexual abuse.
- Simply record what they have said and reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by telling an adult maintain an open and non-judgemental approach.

**Reporting Process for suspected, reported, and alleged child abuse**



**MRRRC Child Protection Process**

- For staff members working from the RASNZ site in Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, adherence to the site wide child protection process is mandatory.
- If you have suspected child abuse concerns at this site, please ensure the MRRRC Child protection process detailed in the flowchart (see index 1) is engaged with strict adherence.

**Allegations or Concerns about Staff**

- If a staff member is suspected, the child protection process remains in accordance with standard procedures.
- If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, consult with Oranga Tamariki or the police before advising the person concerned.
- On addressing the matter with the person concerned inform them of their right to seek legal advice and provide them with an opportunity to respond.
- The person concerned should also be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow standardized disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.

RASNZ commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerns the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection and will not be engaged by RASNZ.

**Safe Recruitment of Staff**

- Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- This will include but is not exclusive to:
  - o an interview with more than one staff member
  - o reference checking
  - o police vetting if there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.

**Referral to Statutory Agencies**

Oranga Tamariki 24 HOURS

Regional Call Centre: 09 9123820

NZ POLICE

Auckland Central: 09 379 4240

**Minimum Information**

- Name, ethnicity, date of birth
- Address of child
- Referrer name and service
- Date of referral

- Oranga Tamariki/Police office referred to
- Reason for referral

**Staff Debriefing**

Follow RASNZ Policy on Clinical Supervision and Critical Incident Policy.

**Contacts for Consultation**

<p><b>Oranga Tamariki</b> 24 hours 7 days a week</p>	<p><b>Regional Call Centre:</b> Phone 09 9123820 0800 FAMILY can also be used</p>
<p><b>NZ Police</b></p>	<p>Auckland Central: 09 379 4240</p>
<p><b>Auckland District Health Board</b>  After hours (all services)</p>	<p><b>Auckland Hospital Operator</b> For sexual abuse ask for the Te Puaruruhau doctor on call; for physical abuse and neglect, ask for the General Paediatrician on call.</p>
<p>During business hours: 8.30am – 5.00pm</p>	<p><b>Te Puaruruhau</b> Multidisciplinary assessment and follow up of all kinds of abuse and neglect in children and young people up to the age of 17 years and sexual abuse for young people up to 19 years of age. 0-17 years - Phone 307 2860 or 025 817 754 17 - 19 years - Phone 307 2894 <b>Social Work Dept.</b> Green Lane Hospital and National Women’s Hospital Phone 630 9860 <b>Community Child Health &amp; Disability Service</b> Community Health Services, for multidisciplinary health and social assessments, monitoring and follow-up of children and young people up to age 17 years. Phone 357 2260</p>

Signed



**Chief Executive**

**Date** May 2024

**Review Date** May 2026

**Appendix 1: OBSERVATION LOG & MRRC Child Protection Procedure**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>Child/Children Age</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Observed by Name, Agency &amp; Contact Details</b>





**Flow Chart for MRRC Child Protection Process**

