



Child Protection Policy



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

This document informs our practices to keep children safe who we provide a service for, or we are involved with. The Policy purpose is to ensure abuse concerns about a child's wellbeing are identified and appropriately responded to.

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.

Scope

- Children we engage with as part of our service provision.
- Children of visitors at our service.
- Children of households our staff visit to provide a service.
- Staff we employ or contract (staff).
- We require that student placements fulfil the requirements of safety checks. They will not provide a service to children on their own.
- Volunteers are appropriately vetted.

Related legislation and Guidelines

- Children's Act 2014
- Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
- Crimes Amendment Act 2007 is this updated version of The Crimes Act 1961
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Application of Harmful digital Communications Act 2015
- The Privacy Act 2020
- Care of Children Act 2004

Identifying Possible Abuse or Neglect, based on Oranga Tamariki definitions:

- **Physical abuse**
Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm.

Examples: Cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing unexplained injuries bruises, abrasions, broken bones, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning, fabricated or induced illness, shaking (of an infant), and use of an object as a weapon (such as a broom, belt or bat).

- **Sexual abuse**
Sexual abuse is any act that results on the sexual exploitation of a child whether consensual or not.

Examples of contact abuse: Touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation,

oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another (person or animal), involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

Examples of non-contact abuse: Exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments, sexting, cyber grooming or grooming behaviours (grooming behaviours are not easily recognised but occur when a person prepares the child or significant others and their environment for the abuse of the child without detection).

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is when the mental health and social and/or emotional functioning and development of a child has been damaged by the way they are treated.

Examples:

- o Patterns of degradation, constant and vitriolic criticism, or repeated negative comparison to others.
- o Deprivation of contact with people significant to the child.
- o Corrupting, exploiting, or actively scaring and threatening the child.
- o A significant period of denying access to cultural, faith or other associations that sustain the sense of normality, identity and self-esteem for the child.
- o Ongoing exposure to whānau or family violence.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is failing to meet the basic physical, social, intellectual and emotional needs of the child.

Examples:

- o Physical neglect: not providing the necessities of life such as adequate shelter, food and clothing.
- o Emotional neglect: not providing comfort, attention and love.
- o Neglectful supervision: leaving the child without someone safe looking after them.
- o Medical neglect: not taking care of health needs.
- o Educational neglect: allowing truancy, failure to enrol in education, or inattention to education needs.

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED OR ACCUSATORY ABUSE OR NEGLECT

RASNZ will respond to allegations of child abuse in a manner which ensures the child's safety is the first and paramount consideration.

In a situation where any staff member believes that a child is in immediate danger, or in a situation where they believe that a third party is not prepared to secure the child's safety by contacting a statutory service, the staff member (in consultation with the Child Protection Champion/Manager/Supervisor) will inform Oranga Tamariki or the Police of their concerns.

CONSULTING ON CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS

Staff will not act alone about concerns of abuse but will consult with their Team Leader and the Child Protection Champion/Manager/Supervisor who will be committed to taking action as outlined in the procedures.

The Team Leaders have overall responsibility for leading this Child Protection response.

There is also a designated Person(s) for Child Protection in each RASNZ Team. Please ensure you are aware of who the Child Protection Champion is in each team.

DOCUMENTING CONCERNS

All concerns and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. All documentation relating to concerns and information will be held in the Child Protection Register.

Records of these Reports of Concern will be kept on the child case file and in the Child Protection Register, held in a secure location in the RASNZ secured office.

All RASNZ staff are responsible for ensuring they adhere to this policy and have undertaken the appropriate child protection training.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**When making a Report of Concern (RoC) to Oranga Tamariki**

Please include:

- Name, ethnicity, date of birth of child
- Caregivers' details
- Address of child
- Referrer name and service
- Date of referral
- Oranga Tamariki/Police office referred to
- Reason for referral
- Factual disclosure of information / observation
- Provide clinicians / staff impression and / or case formulation

Do not:

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself.
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
- Keep the information to yourself or promise the client confidentiality.
- Take any action that might undermine future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers.
- Permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to our child protection lead.

NB – See Flowchart for summary

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING INFORMATION SHARING PRINCIPLES

RASNZ recognizes that all staff must act within the legal requirements of relevant legislation.

- Child's safety comes first.
- We must consider sharing information if we think it will protect a victim or if we receive a request. Under the Privacy Act 2020, the giving of information to protect a child is not a breach of confidentiality. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 2020, states that the sharing of personal information is allowed if "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat".
- We can share information with the best intention for safeguarding a child by reporting to another person / appropriate agency that is able to act on it. The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 places the wellbeing and best interests of a child as the first and paramount consideration when it comes to the sharing of information. This principle takes precedence over any duty of confidentiality that is owed to the child or their family/whānau, or any person with whom the child is in a domestic relationship with
- We must only share relevant information. We check that the information is accurate.
- Careful and accurate records for child protection communications and information sharing is mandatory.
- Wherever possible the family/whānau should be kept informed of what information has been shared and to which agency, and for what purpose.
- When a member of staff is contacted for information, that staff member must first refer to their manager or supervisor for clearance before providing the information.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS SIGNALLING CHILD VULNERABILITIES:

- Behavioural concerns such as emotional withdrawal, aggression or anxiety.
- Developmental delays, changes or signs.
- The child talking about, or subtly mentioning, things that may indicate abuse.
- Parents seeming stressed or not coping on the money they have.
- Signs of family violence.
- Drug or alcohol problems within the family.
- Parents not having friends or whānau to help.
- Parental mental health problems.
- Children are left home alone or seem to be neglected.
- Children routinely not going to school.

Staff Training

- New Staff to be prioritised for child protection training when they start working with RASNZ
- All staff to be familiar with the RASNZ Child Protection policy
- Yearly refresher child protection courses for RASNZ staff

Staff Debriefing

Follow RASNZ Policy on Clinical Supervision and Critical Incident Policy.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chief Executive

Date

May 2024

Review Date

May 2026

Flow Chart for Safe Responding to Child Protection Concerns

<p>1. RECOGNISE</p> <p>When abuse is suspected, disclosed, or witnessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take note of signs and symptoms that may be presenting over time.
<p>2. RESPOND</p> <p>Validate and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to what you are being told. Thank them for telling you. • Let them know they have done the right thing and that it is not their fault. • Let them know you will act to keep them safe.
<p>3. CONSULT</p> <p>This step is important to ensure you are not working in isolation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately consult with your Team Leader, Senior Colleague and Child Protection Champion. Review your information to make a decision about the next steps. • Consult with the OT information-line for their advice and guidance. • Contact the OT Refugee and Migrant Social Worker.
<p>4. REFER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with your CP Champion or TL, make a notification to Oranga Tamariki by phone or email. <p>If immediate action is required to keep a child safe, contact the NZ Police – Child Protection Team. <i>In accordance with Child Protection Protocols, the NZ Police will automatically contact Oranga Tamariki.</i></p>
<p>5. DOCUMENT</p> <p>Follow the RASNZ CP Policy about information management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document all steps you have taken in this process in Wild Bamboo. • When you document your conversation with the child, ensure you use their words in your documentation. • Document any clarifying questions you may have asked during assessment.
<p>6. REVIEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police about the progress of the referral and continue to update them if you have received further information. • Review / debrief with the CP Champion how the process has worked for the child, and the whānau. Review how the process has affected staff. • Seek supervision for self-care if additional support is needed.

Contacts for Reporting and Consultation

<p><u>Oranga Tamariki</u> <u>Ministry for Children</u> 24 hours 7 days a week</p>	<p><u>Regional Call Centre</u> https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/worried-about-a-child-tell-us/</p> <p>Anyone who is worried about Tamaiti or Rangatahi can make a report of concern Phone 0508 326 459</p>
<p><u>NZ Police</u> 24 hours 7 days a week</p>	<p>Phone 111 or 105</p>
<p><u>Te Whetu Ora</u> <u>Health New Zealand</u> After hours (all services)</p>	<p><u>Auckland Hospital Operator</u> For sexual abuse ask for the Te Puaruruhau doctor on call.</p> <p>For physical abuse and neglect, ask for the General Paediatrician on call.</p>
<p>During business hours: 8 am to 4:30 pm</p>	<p><u>Te Puaruruhau (Child Protection)</u> https://starship.org.nz/directory-of-services/te-puaruruhau-(child-protection)/</p> <p>Starship Child Health, Central Auckland Phone Main reception: (09) 307 2860</p> <p><u>Puawaitahi</u> An Auckland multi-agency service dedicated to child protection. https://puawaitahi.org.nz/about-puawaitahi/puawaitahi-services/</p> <p><u>Pohutukawa Clinic (18 years +)</u> https://www.adhb.health.nz/our-services/a-z-services/pohutukawa-clinic-akl/</p> <p>A specialist medical service for anyone age 18 or over who has been sexually assaulted or abused.</p>

Appendix A

Terms & Definitions

Child (Specific to different Acts)	<p>A person who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the age of 18 years (Children’s Act 2014) • Under the Oranga Tamariki Act – Child is 0-14 years and a young person is 14-18 years • Crimes Act 1961 – Child is under 17 years • Under the age of 25 years and is receiving transition support from Oranga Tamariki under Part 7 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. • United Nations Convention for the Rights of Children 1989 – under 18 years
Child protection	A reactive approach to address suspected or known cases of abuse and neglect
Child protection lead	<p>Our child protection lead is a staff member in a leadership position at our organisation. The child protection lead has had training in child protection and information sharing related to child protection.</p> <p>This staff member is responsible for child protection staff training and for being in charge of our child protection processes. Safeguarding Children provides training in all areas of child protection.</p>
Children’s Teams	<p>In some areas, coordination of services for children at risk of harm has transitioned from Oranga Tamariki Children's Teams to community-based organisations.</p>
Children’s worker	<p>Means a person who works in, or provides, a regulated service, and the person’s work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may or does involve regular or overnight contact with a child or children (other than with children who are co-workers); and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes place without a parent or guardian of the child, or of each child, being present.
Core children's worker	<p>Core children's workers are employed by the state sector or government-funded organisations to provide regulated services. In the course of that work, the person is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the only person present, or is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present. <p>Examples of roles that may meet this definition are doctors, teachers, nurses, paediatricians, youth counsellors and social workers.</p>
Oranga Tamariki	The agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
Designated person for child protection	Our child protection lead is responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about this policy and procedures.
Disclosure	Information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
Non-core children's worker	A children's worker who is not a core worker. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are non-teaching school workers, general hospital workers, and many social and health workers.
New Zealand Police	The agency responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger. Working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work.

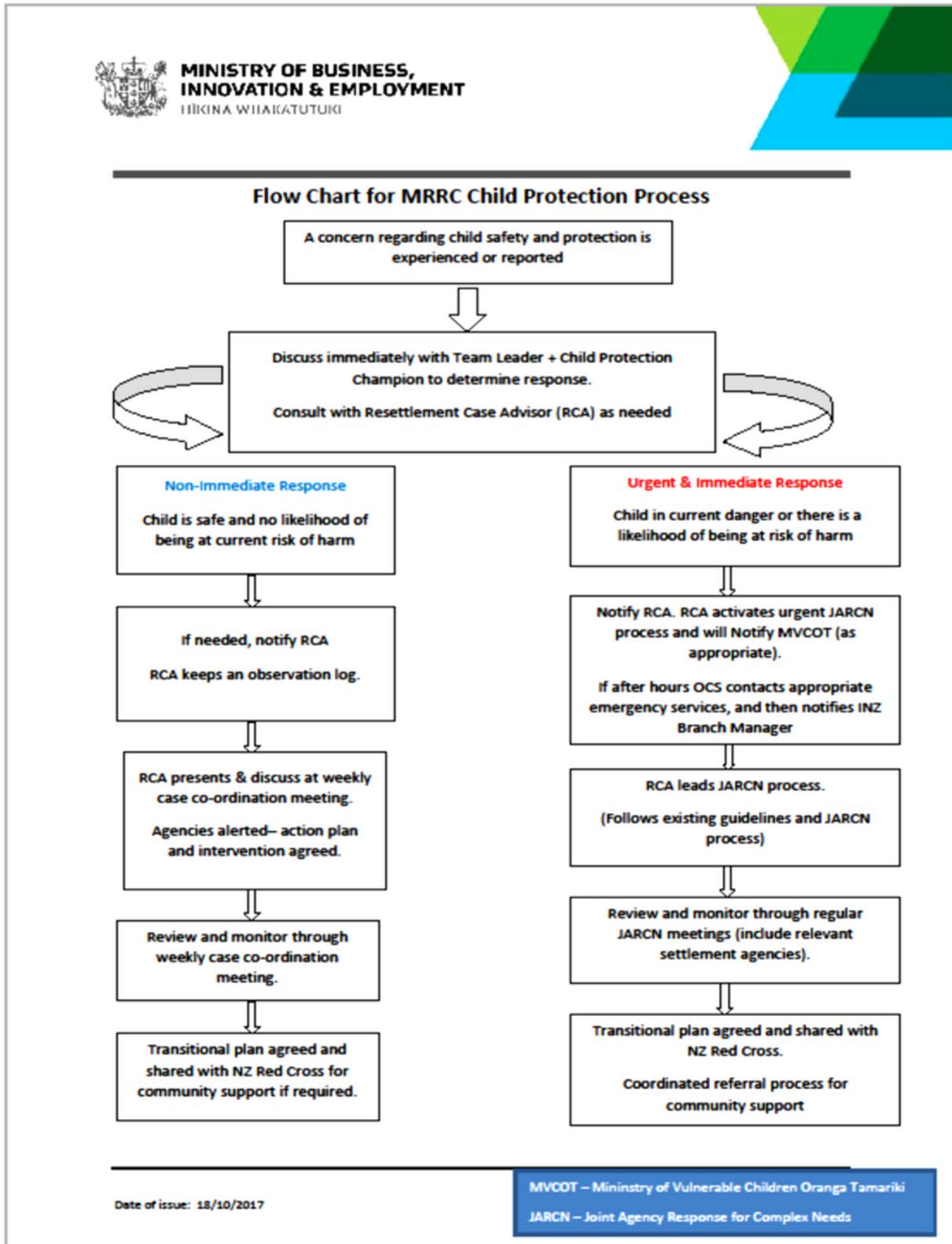
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
Regulated services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided at a publicly funded medical practice or facility, including blood and cancer centres, treatment centres, outreach clinics, and mental health services. Services provided through medical practices belonging to primary health organisations (PHOs). Services provided by health practitioners. Home-based disability support services. Residential disability support services.
Safe-guarding	Is a preventative approach to child protection by minimising or eliminating harm to a child.
Tamaiti	Child in te reo Māori.
Tamariki	Children in te reo Māori.
Rangatahi	Young people te reo Māori.

Appendix B

RASNZ Child Protection: OBSERVATION LOG

Client / Incident Details	Observation	Observed by Name, agency & Contact Details
<p>Case Number:</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Time:</p>	<p>Observation / Disclosure Details:</p> <p>Individuals involved:</p>	<p>Clinician Name:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Action Steps:</p>

Appendix C



Appendix D

OVERVIEW: Our Processes for the Safe Recruitment of Staff

- Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015. people who have been convicted of serious offences (specified in Schedule 2 of the Act) are prohibited from being employed as a children's worker.
- Our organisation does not support exceptions.
- Before offering a position, this will include but is not exclusive to:
 - o Identity verification – confirmation of the identity of the children's worker, sighting required documents, eg, passport, driver's licence or by using an electronic service, such as the RealMe identity verification service.
 - o Reference checks – obtaining information from two or three referees about the person's recent work experience and conduct.
 - o Interviews with the person and gathering information about their work history.
 - o Third party checks with their professional registration body or licensing authority (as appropriate).
 - o Police safety checks – Police safety check forms are available from the [New Zealand Police website](#).
 - o We provide applicants with a New Zealand Police vetting service request and consent form to complete and sign.
 - o Risk assessment – assessing the risk the person would pose to the safety of children if employed in a children's worker role.

Ensuring safety checks are in place for core and non-core children's workers

Periodic safety checks include the following steps:

- Confirmation of any name change by the worker in the past 3 years and provision of any official documents associated with any name change.
- Police vet that is VCA (Vulnerable Children Act) applicable.
- Checks with their professional registration body or licensing authority (as appropriate).
- Risk assessments.
- We have legal protection from liability when we share information unless we share in bad faith.

Oranga Tamariki's helpline and email address provide support for agencies and practitioners on the information sharing laws in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and the Family Violence Act 2018. They can give us general advice on the information sharing process and how to use the guidance documents.

Phone: 0508 463 674

Email: infosharinghelpline@ot.govt.nz

Site: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/information-sharing/>