

 <p>Montessori STARS</p>	<h2>Policy</h2>
	Policy Category: HEALTH & SAFETY
	Date Created: December 2022
	Policy Name: REG46/HS31 Child Protection Policy

Purpose

Montessori STARS is committed to tamariki protection and prevention of child abuse and neglect, and our responsibilities under the Children's Act, 2014. The interest, safety, and well-being of tamariki is paramount, and all staff at Montessori STARS have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of tamariki in our care and community. We provide a safe environment free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse, and a culture where employees feel confident to raise issues of concern, keeping the tamariki at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse. We support whānau to protect their children.

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 the centre) to the child. Abuse relating to child-to-child or child-to-adult is not within the scope of this policy.

TE WHĀRIKI Well-being/ Mana atua - Goal 3: Tamariki experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

Procedures:

Child Abuse is defined by the Ministry of Children, Oranga Tamariki as “any child or young person that has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived”. **Child Abuse can be:**

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect.

Child 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 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

Relationships with Parents

- ✧ We will form reciprocal relationships with parents and be aware of issues that make life extra hard for parents (see attached examples).
- ✧ In order for children to be safe from abuse and or neglect, both parents and teachers need a shared understanding of what abuse is and how it can be prevented.
- ✧ We will monitor situations and offer help and support to parents/families/whānau to protect their children where we can.

- ✧ We recognise the rights of family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- ✧ Montessori STARS will have our Child Protection Policy accessible for all parents/family/whānau to read and review.
- ✧ Montessori STARS is committed to work with other agencies where necessary to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau.

Management and Kaiako will:

- ✧ Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child
- ✧ All Management and staff have completed the required Child Protection Webinar from the Ministry of Education and copies of completion are in the foyer.
- ✧ Maintain confidentiality. Failure to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and processed accordingly
- ✧ Maintain and increase parental awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse, including learning about appropriate touching
- ✧ We are committed to supporting each other to work in accordance with this policy, and work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and of high quality.
- ✧ Management will carry out and document all staff safety checking (including Police Vetting) in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Core Workers) Regulations 2015. Management will get external agency to carry out their Safety Checks.
- ✧ 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
- ✧ Ensure that any persons and other adults visiting or working in the centre are well supported and visible in the activities they perform with children. While Montessori STARS respects the privacy of our children, Kaiako 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 Sharon Anderson, Owner/Director
- ✧ Maintain appropriate records and always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- ✧ Ensure the centre's procedures protect all staff from unjustified allegations of abuse
- ✧ Ensure Montessori STARS has educational and informational resources for children and adults on child abuse
- ✧ Be committed to promoting a culture where all staff feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- ✧ Should a neglect or abuse situation occur or come to the attention of Montessori STARS, and should a report/referral to Oranga Tamariki or the Police be made, any staff member is also under an obligation to report the matter to the Ministry of Education (HS34).
- ✧ Read and adhere to our Child Protection Policy

Any person can report suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and will not be prevented from doing so, the Service Provider (Sharon Anderson) will be consulted as appropriate.

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

The following measures will be taken by all kaiako regarding suspected abuse:

- ✧ All allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously.
- ✧ If any team member sees a tamaiti being abused, observes signs of abuse, or a tamaiti reports being abused, we will follow the reporting process for child abuse, as detailed below
- ✧ If a child makes a verbal disclosure of abuse to a team member, that staff member will have a conversation with the child to reassure the child, and they will tell the child that they believe them. Team members can use open ended prompts, such as 'tell me more' to gather information, but will not interview the child, ask leading questions, put words into their mouths or ask them to give more information than they are willing to share. (More information about responding to and caring for vulnerable children can be found in our Child Protection Guidance in the Employee Handbook).
- ✧ Disclosures can also come in the form of behaviour, or through comments from other children and adults, and in these cases written observations will be documented and discussed with Sharon Anderson, Owner/Director.
- ✧ Written documentation is kept on any issue or incident of concern in a note book for staff to add to confidentially.
- ✧ **Any person can report suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and will not be prevented from doing so.** Sharon Anderson will be consulted as appropriate.
- ✧ All suspicions or observed incidents, or reports of incidents, should be reported directly to Sharon Anderson as soon as possible. Sharon Anderson will immediately take steps to protect the child and record the report. If Sharon Anderson feels there is reasonable cause to believe a tamaiti is unsafe, she will report it to Oranga Tamariki - 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459).
- ✧ If there is no short-term risk, time can be taken to consult cohesively with all staff thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision. This decision making will be a priority above other mahi.
- ✧ If kaiako feel they cannot go to Sharon Anderson (for example they have concerns about Sharon's practice or wish to make an allegation involving Sharon), they will report directly to Laura Newell.
- ✧ If kaiako have told Sharon Anderson about their concerns for the wellbeing of a child, but do not feel that Sharon has taken appropriate action, they will inform Laura Newell.
- ✧ To protect the privacy and dignity of the tamaiti and whānau, information will be kept confidential with the persons concerned.
- ✧ Montessori STARS will offer support to all those involved in any abuse allegations.

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

HS31: There is a written child protection policy that meets the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. The policy contains provisions for the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect, and information about how the service will keep children safe from abuse and neglect, and how it will respond to suspected child abuse and neglect. The policy must be reviewed every three years.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED:

1. A written child protection policy that contains:

- a. provisions for the service's identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect;
 - b. information about the practices the service employs to keep children safe from abuse and neglect;
- and

c. information about how the service will respond to suspected child abuse and neglect.

2. A procedure that sets out how the service will identify and respond to suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

HS32: All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).

HS33: No person on the premises uses, or is under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour during the service's hours of operation.
Governance, Management and Administration: Professional Practices

GMA7A: All children's workers who have access to children are safety checked in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Safety checks must be undertaken and the results obtained before the worker has access to children. The results of the safety checks must be recorded and the record kept as long as the person is employed at Montessori STARS.

Every children's worker must be safety checked every three years. Safety checks may be carried out by the employer or another person acting on their behalf.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED:

1. A written procedure for safety checking all children's core workers before they have access to children that meets the safety checking requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
2. A record of all safety checks and the results

Children's Act 2014 and associated regulations.

National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP)

Objective 1: Learners at the Centre – Learners with their whānau are at the centre of education

Action 1: Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive and free from racism, discrimination and bullying

Implications and/or Risks for the centre

Failure to protect children will not only lead to lifelong damage for children, it will also seriously damage the reputation of Montessori STARS, our Kaiako and the reputation of all Early Childhood Centres.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	Sharon Anderson
Date:	July 2023
Review Date:	July 2026
Consultation Undertaken:	Staff meetings, Educa for Parents

Signs of Abuse and Neglect (Oranga Tamariki)

The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below, may indicate abuse or neglect. However they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child or young person's situation.

The Child - Consider physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect				
Recognise disclosure as a sign of abuse				
Recognise Physical Signs	Record Parent, Caregiver or family signs	Observe Behavioural Signs	Child/family Vulnerabilities	Identify Developmental Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises and welts • Cuts and abrasions • Scalds and burns • Fractures • Head injuries • Sexually transmitted infections • Failure to thrive and malnutrition • Dehydration • Inadequate hygiene and clothing • Poisoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to family violence • Unrealistic expectations • Terrorising • Corrupting • Isolating • Humiliating • Dependency • Closure • Flight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Withdrawal • Anxiety, fear and regression • Sadness • Overly responsible • Obsessions • Substance abuse • Suicidal thoughts/ plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addictions • Mental health • ORANGA TAMARIKI history • Age of parents or child • Attachment • Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global development delay. • Specific delays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motor ○ Attachment ○ Speech and language ○ Social cognitive ○ Vision and hearing ○ Unusual developmental patterns

From Oranga Tamariki website: www.mvcot.govt.nz

Issues in the home - Issues in the home that teachers or centre staff might become aware of, that might lead to abuse and neglect include:

- Parents with money problems, being out of work
- Overcrowding or housing struggles
- Children with special needs
- Parents with a history of depression or other mental illness, stress, isolated from friends, family and whānau
- Parents separating.

- Early signs that can lead to abuse and or neglect can be:

- Parent has a drug, alcohol or gambling problem
- Parent does not engage with their child or has a difficult relationship with them
- Child doesn't have enough clothes on and is often cold and hungry
- Child has unexplained or changeable emotions (eg, withdrawn or depressed), child seems scared of a particular adult
- Parents frequently yell at, swear at or shame a child

Scale document up

REFOCUSING PROCESS FOR TAMAITI ABUSE

You see a tamaiti being abused, OR you observe signs of abuse in a tamaiti OR a tamaiti reports being abused.

RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE TAMAITI

- Ensure the tamaiti is safe from immediate harm. Call the police if the tamaiti is in immediate danger.
- Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the tamaiti – take to hospital if appropriate.
- Listen to the tamaiti and reassure them.

Are you a staff member?

CALL THE POLICE IF THE TAMAITI IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Are you in charge?

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR MANAGER

If the suspected abuser is your manager, inform the Childspace Principal or Childspace Director.

You can also contact Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459 OR the Police Child Abuse Team.

PREPARE WRITTEN RECORD

- Record
- Date, time and place of observation/reporting of abuse.
 - Names of anyone present.
 - What happened or was alleged. Be clear.
 - What the tamaiti said or did – exactly.
 - Any physical or behavioural signs of abuse.
 - What immediate action was taken.

GIVE THIS TO YOUR MANAGER/CONTACTED PERSON

PERSON IN CHARGE

GATHER INFORMATION

Ensure you have a full report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support. Get them to sign the report. Tell them what actions you will take. Ring Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or the Plunket line (0800 933 92) and discuss your concerns. Oranga Tamariki will tell you if you need to do a formal report about your concerns.

REPORT ABUSE

Ring Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459 and tell them:
(If it is an emergency, ring the Police Child Abuse Team)

- Your own name and contact details.
- Name of tamaiti/tamariki (also known as/nicknames).
- Date of birth (if known).
- Ethnicity (if known).
- Name of caregivers, mātua and other family members and current living situation.
- Current legal custodians.
- Reasons why it is believed that the tamaiti has been abused.
- Other significant background information.
- Any concerns for your physical safety in making this notification.

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – get timeframe.

Work with Oranga Tamariki to decide how and when mātua are told.

INSIDE SERVICE

- Maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki/police and discuss any actions you want to take with them first.
- Discuss with Oranga Tamariki/police who will tell the suspected abuser of the allegation and whether the suspected abuser should remain on the ECE premises. *
- Recommend the suspected abuser seeks support from their union or lawyer.
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or event relating to the complaint(s) and/or allegations and follow-up action is taken and documented.
- Get employment/legal advice where appropriate.

OUTSIDE SERVICE

- You are most likely to suspect the abuse is by a mātua but you cannot assume this. If you are concerned about the tamaiti going home, tell Oranga Tamariki or the police this.
- While the tamaiti is in your care, ensure the tamaiti is not at risk of being further abused.

ATTEND TO HEALING OF YOUR COMMUNITY

If there is disruption to the ECE service or community, negative impacts on other tamariki and/or staff, or media interest contact SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAUMATIC INCIDENT COORDINATOR for support on 0800 84 8326.

Seek support for Childspace employees and yourself.

Note *If a centre manager or owner knows of alleged abuse and another incident occurs by the offender at the centre, the owner of the centre is liable for failing to provide a safe educational environment for tamariki.