



Child Protection Policy

Document Control

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1 Introduction

St John of God Hauora Trust is committed to the prevention of child abuse, and the care and protection of all children and associated community members.

2 Key Definitions

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill- treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person as outlined in Section 2, Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Act, 1994.

Caregiver is an employee of St John of God Hauora Trust.

MVCOT is the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki.

3 Scope

This policy applies to St John of God Hauora Trust, Community, Youth and Child Services.

4 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and protection of children and associated community members. It is also to provide guidelines for caregivers to ensure correct and effective processes are in place when there are concerns for the safety and/or well-being of children and associated community members.

5 Policy

5.1 Police Vetting

- All caregivers and volunteers will undergo police vetting as stipulated within the St John of God Hauora Trust Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy and a copy of the verified documentation will be retained on their Human Resources file.
- Any other people (other than caregivers) entering any Community, Youth and Child Service site (including Little Owls Preschool) will not be left unsupervised with children; this includes trades people, contractors, student teachers and relief teachers. These people will be required to sign in and out of the visitor's book situated either in the main reception and/or Little Owls Preschool.

5.2 Training to Recognise Abuse

- As part of their induction, new caregivers are made aware of the programme policy on child abuse. Teachers will be made familiar with all policies including child protection and positive behaviour guidance, and will be encouraged to keep their knowledge up to date through on-going professional development in these areas.
- Caregivers will be expected to undertake professional development to ensure they are aware of the warning signs of all types of abuse in order to be able to identify abuse.

- MVCOT are able to give advice over the phone at any time, phone '0508 FAMILY'. This organisation is committed to maintaining and increasing caregiver awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training.
- St John of God Hauora Trust will encourage caregivers who work directly with children to complete specific training with regards to **Child Protection** in their first year of employment. Caregivers will undertake refresher training every three years.

5.2.1 Recording Abuse

- If there is safety, health or well-being concerns for a child, caregivers will take written records on the Event Notification form. These forms will be completed in a factual and timely manner (the same day) by the caregivers concerned, and will be co-signed and discussed with their direct line Manager. All information will be kept private and forms will be kept in a locked file and will be destroyed along with the child's other personal records at the appropriate time. The incident/concern will be discussed with parents/whanau (the same day) and their response will be recorded on the event notification form.
- **Blank body templates** are also available to be used alongside the event notification form.
- **Document evidence of visible injuries.** Photos will be taken, if possible, to support the body template records and could be used as evidence if need be.

5.2.2 Verbal Disclosure

- If a child verbally discloses abuse to a caregiver, the caregiver will ensure they keep in mind their professional role.
- Social Workers and Teachers recognise that it is **not** their responsibility to question the child or investigate.
- As advocates for the children, the child will be believed and all information they convey will be documented.

5.2.3 When to Contact Authorities

- If there are immediate or ongoing concerns for the safety of a child, MVCOT or the Police will be contacted. This will be done by any Manager from our Community, Youth and Child Service site once the Regional Manager has been informed, reviewed the information available and approved for the notification to occur. Clear documentation will be completed and a hard copy record kept on file.
- St John of God Hauora Trust recognises that any caregiver has the right to contact MVCOT at any time to make a notification of suspected abuse. This would be independent from any action taken by the centre.
- St John of God Hauora Trust respects the statutory role of MVCOT and the Police. We will work professionally with them and release any information lawfully requested by them in order to enable them to investigate any concerns.

5.3 Allegation of Abuse of Caregiver

- If an allegation of abuse is made against any caregiver, the St John of God Hauora Trust's Complaints Process will be followed.
- Under no circumstances should the child making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require programme management to contemplate removal of the employee from the programme environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract.

- All actions will be undertaken discretely and as confidentially as possible.

5.4 Child Safety

- Little Owls Preschool will be promoted as a safe place.
- Clear visibility will be ensured at all times especially during care routines such as nappy changing. Only permanently employed Teachers and long term relievers will be responsible for carrying out such routines.
- In accordance with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 no child will be subjected to alienation, physical punishment, the removal of adequate food, water, warmth or shelter, or any other behaviour management technique that is of the detriment to the child's well-being.
- Caregivers will not allow whanau to behave in any way that is detrimental to a child's sense of well-being, for example by name-calling, shouting or smacking. Where appropriate, caregivers will offer support and guidance to whanau on appropriate behaviour management.
- Parents/whanau will not act towards each other in any way that is damaging to the well-being of children, for example by arguing in the Little Owls Preschool or car park. Caregivers will ask these people to leave the premises immediately.

5.4.1 Inappropriate Material

- All practicable steps will be taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material.
- All books, music, movies and websites used will be checked for appropriateness before the children are exposed to it.
- Caregivers will not use any centre computer to access websites or other material that is not appropriate for the early childhood environment.

5.4.2 Teacher Child Ratios

- Legal ratios will be adhered to at all times. This may mean that both classrooms operate within the same space until there is the adequate number of caregivers. For example, in the morning before all caregivers arrive.

5.4.3 Professional Boundaries

- Teachers will uphold clear professional boundaries and will not form personal relationships with the children or their whanau outside of usual centre operations, **for example**, babysitting children.

5.5 Children Leaving Little Owls Preschool

- Little Owls Preschool will ensure that no child leaves the centre with any person who does not have day to day care for the child or is not authorised in writing to take the child. This authorisation has to be given by a person who has the role of providing day to day care. In some circumstances, telephone permission will be sufficient where there is no practicable way for written permission to be given. Verbal consent will only be accepted by parents or caregivers who the Centre regularly has contact with.
- Where there is a Parenting Order in place, Little Owls Preschool must receive a copy of any documentation before not allowing access to a child to any person. If a person who is forbidden access to a child arrives on site, all steps to deny access will be made and the person will be asked

to leave the centre. If there are concerns for the safety of the child or caregivers, or the person refuses to leave, the Police will be contacted immediately. The Licensee or Manager Early Childhood Education (Canterbury) will be notified as soon as possible if the Police are called.

- Teachers will not remove children from Little Owls Preschool under any circumstances, unless for the purpose of an excursion (for which permission will have been sought prior), or during an emergency situation (for example, a Civil Defence evacuation).

5.6 Recruitment, Selection and Appointment

- All caregivers will undergo Police Vetting and Security Checking as stipulated within the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy.
- Police Vetting will occur every two years for all caregivers based at Community, Youth and Child Services.
- If a caregiver and/or volunteer does not meet the police vetting and security checking criteria required for a Core Worker under the Vulnerable Children's Act, an exemption will be required.
- It is the personal responsibility for the proposed caregiver and/or volunteers to seek exemption and a copy of the exemption submitted to the Regional Manager for approval.

5.7 References

- www.mvcot.govt.nz
- How Can I Tell? Recognising Child Abuse Resource Booklet
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act, 1994

6 Related Documents

- St John of God Hauora Trust Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy
- St John of God Hauora Trust Formal Complaint Handling Procedure
- St John of God Hauora Trust Event Notification Policy
- St John of God Hauora Trust Early Childhood Education Excursions Policy
- St John of God Hauora Trust Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern