

## HEALTH and SAFETY 7.1: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **Rationale.**

Massey Child Care Centre Inc will provide an environment that promotes the protection and welfare of the children, staff, families and whānau.

### **Definition:**

'Child abuse' refers to the harming (whether physical, emotional or sexual), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person including family violence.

### **Aims of Policy:**

The general aims of this child abuse policy are to:

- a. protect children from abuse
- b. respond in ways which keep children safe when abuse is suspected or identified;
- c. protect staff and other adults from being wrongly suspected of child abuse;
- d. reduce stress on staff, caused by responding to suspected child abuse or being wrongly suspected of child abuse, by providing guidance, support and training;
- e. support staff and parents/whānau through the sharing of knowledge, resources and education to assist with the prevention and recognition of child abuse.
- f. support children in developing a positive body image, emotional competence and confidence in creative and expressive communication.
- g. To ensure Massey Child Care Centre meets the requirements of the Vulnerable children's Act 2014 and 2015.

### **The following statements support the aims of the policy**

#### **Professional Learning**

1. We believe the sharing of knowledge is important in the prevention of child abuse. Resource material is available in the Centre and we provide information regarding education programmes provided by the community.
2. We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness and training on how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse by;
  - i. Ensuring that all staff regularly attend a workshop or training session on child abuse.
  - ii. Familiarizing new staff, relievers, students and volunteers with the Centre's policies and procedures regarding child abuse through the induction process.

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**Keeping in Touch with Professional Agencies**

3. We will work with Ministry of Vulnerable Children (mvcot) in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected abuse to the agency.
4. We will continue to network with appropriate services that have specialist knowledge in child protection in order to increase our own knowledge and to strengthen our curriculum, policy and procedural development.
5. Massey Child Care Centre will provide resources and contact details of organisations in the community available to support and counsel families.
6. We will not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise and will be guided by Ministry of Vulnerable Children.

**Responding to Child Abuse**

7. Massey Child Care Centre will respond to suspected child abuse by writing down dated observations, impressions and communications which cause concern, before completion of the work day.
8. This documentation will be held in a secure place and only be available to the Centre Manager, Curriculum Leader, Manager, Team Leader, the key teacher and the Chair of the Management Committee, until such time as the matter comes under official investigation.
9. No staff member will act alone about suspected child abuse, but will consult with the Centre Manager and Curriculum leader who will take immediate action and arrange for consultation with Ministry of Vulnerable Children.
10. Any disclosures or indicators will be acted upon before completion of the work day.
11. Where we suspect that child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe we will immediately report the matter to Ministry of Vulnerable Children.
  - i. Where we suspect abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the family we will not initially inform the family of our decision to report or consult, and will be guided by Ministry of Vulnerable Children.
  - ii. Where we suspect that a staff member has perpetrated child abuse or other person assisting at the Centre, we will report the matter immediately to the Chair of the Management Committee and Ministry of Vulnerable Children who will guide the investigation.
  - iii. Staff members under suspicion will be suspended while the matter is investigated and they will be informed fully of their rights.
12. We will provide children, families, staff and others involved in any investigation of suspected child abuse with support from the appropriate community services.

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**Employment**

13. Our employment procedures and selection process includes thoroughly checking the job applicant's work history and background, and making personal contact with two referees, one of whom will be the most current employer. This is done with the applicant's consent.
14. The applicant's qualifications will be checked and verified before appointment.
15. Any person who is not a registered teacher who has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children during opening hours will be required to undergo a police check every three years.
16. Registered teachers are police vetted when they apply for certification or are renewing their Practising Certificate through the registration and application process (Education Amendment Act 2010).
17. A Safety check will be conducted, including the check of two valid forms of identification and evidence of registration with any organisations such as the Education Council as stated within the Vulnerable Children's Act 2015.

**Supervision**

18. Massey Child Care Centre will ensure that its staff, including relievers, students and volunteers, are well supervised and visible when working with children.
19. Except in an emergency, children will not be taken from the Centre without parental approval in writing [Health and Safety 4.1: Walks and Excursions Policy].
20. We recognise that the care of children involves physical contact. It is normal, natural and desirable for staff to have physical contact with children to comfort, to reassure, and to give them praise, as well as taking care of some of their physical and emotional needs.

**Professionalism**

21. We encourage staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate.
22. Where staff have personal relationships and/or are involved in caretaking activities with children and families outside the work environment, supervision will be the responsibility of the family concerned.

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**Relationships with Parents**

23. Our programme philosophy, which includes a key person system, promotes trusting, respectful relationships with parents and whānau in which open communication is fostered.
24. The Centre programmes encourage parents/whānau to visit and participate in the curriculum.
25. Our Child Protection Policy will be available to all parents/whānau and prospective families.

*Links to:*

*The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014*

*Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015*