

Wellington City Mission Policy Document

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Child protection

"I feel safe and know who to tell if I don't feel safe."

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea.
I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea.

Our intent

Safety and protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect is central to our kaupapa and is everyone's business. When a young person is being hurt, at risk of harm or where they are hurting someone else, inaction is not an option.

When dealing with child protection concerns we will implement our practice principles, this and related policies and support families appropriately.

The Aorerekura family violence Entry to Expert Workforce Capability Framework will guide how we develop our capability to respond to sexual violence and family violence.

Requirements

Staff training and checks

Staff training will align with the Entry to Expert Standards of Te Aorerekura National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence. It will be responsive to the skills and knowledge of staff and to nature of our mahi. But, at minimum, all staff and volunteers will have training in:

- how to identify and respond to common signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, and
- the process for notifying concerns of child abuse and neglect under section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

Background checks will be undertaken with staff and volunteers/kaiawhina that are appropriate to their role and responsibilities. If working regularly with tamariki/rangatahi, staff will be child safety checked.

Provide information

Information will be given in an accessible way to those we work with so that they understand:

- how to recognise abuse and raise and report concerns about abuse within WCM
- how we prioritise the safety and best interests of tamariki/rangatahi
- our feedback and complaints process
- when and why we will report concerns to Police, Oranga Tamariki.

If appropriate, whānau will be provided with information about child abuse, alternative discipline strategies and/or parenting support services and programmes.

Safe practice and early intervention

Staff/volunteers must use safe practices with tamariki/ rangatahi, follow our policies and access advice from internal and external colleagues about safe practice, as necessary.

Prevention of abuse will be a key focus along with a holistic approach to individual and whānau wellbeing.

Tamariki/ rangatahi must not be physically punished, disciplined or treated in any way that is degrading, humiliating or likely to cause fear or anxiety. Alternative methods must be used to manage behaviour eg behaviour supports.

Staff will be alert to and consult with management, or an appropriate colleague, if there are any signs a child or associated person is suffering or perpetrating abuse. This includes disclosures and incidents of coercion or control that together might indicate a pattern of abuse.

Staff will report abuse concerns in accordance with our policies (eg Responding to abuse, exploitation and neglect.)

Allegations against staff

Allegations against staff about abuse must be immediately forwarded to management or to the next level up if an allegation is against management. The Responding to allegations against team members policy will apply.

Collaboration

Relationships will be built with organisations and practitioners who work with victim-survivors, people who use violence and can support a holistic response for clients/whānau of diverse cultures and identities.

System issues

Policies and practices will be periodically reviewed to identify and check for gaps, which may contribute to or mean risks of child abuse are undetected. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as necessary.

Accountability

"Settlement agreements" will not be used if an abuse allegation is substantiated against a team member and the agreement would be contrary to protecting tamariki/ rangatahi from abuse.

Reasonable care will be taken to ensure that non-disclosure agreements and confidentiality clauses cannot be used to prevent appropriate disclosure and responses to abuse concerns.

Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Level 2, Community wellbeing 1.0-4.0; Client services & programmes 1.0-3.0, Health & Safety, 2.0

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights 1.5

Children's Act 2014

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Family Violence Act 2018

Helpful links

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Te Aorerekura, Specialist Family Violence Organisational Standards

Te Aorerekura, Entry to Expert Family Violence Capability Framework

Working together to support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau

Child Matters, Empowering People & Organisations with Proven Safeguarding and Child Protection Strategies

Whistleblowing

Let's talk videos

Background and Child Safety Checks

Review

Date: November 2024

Next review: by October 2026

Responsibility: Chris Stewart

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