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# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Child Protection Policy Reviewed: Every 3 years and/or when necessary

Date of last review: May 2016

Date of this review: May 2018

Date of next review: July 2020



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# Child Protection Policy

## Rationale

The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers are fully committed to the prevention of child abuse and maintaining the wellbeing and safety of children and young people. Children's safety is our paramount consideration when and if any action is taken against suspected child abuse. We will work collaboratively with statutory agencies such as Police and Child, Youth and Family. We will report suspected child abuse cases to these two agencies and support them in their investigation of abuse and maintain a good working relationships with these statutory agencies.

## Aim

This policy is intended to provide Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers with a framework to identify and manage actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect.

## Scope

This policy outlines the steps the Collective Providers will undertake to ensure children are safe.

This policy applies to all children who are clients of Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers, and to those with whom personnel come into contact in the course of their work with Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers.

It applies to all staff of the Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers including Management and volunteers.

It also applies to any contracted personnel providing support services to families, communities and staff of the Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers.

## Definitions

*"Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person"* (Section 15, Children and Young Persons Amendment Act, 1994)

## Types of abuse

**Physical Abuse:** Is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm, e.g. smacking, hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the child.

**Sexual Abuse:** Refers to any actions or behaviors where an adult forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.

**Emotional Abuse:** Is an act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social and or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person

**Neglect:** The failure to provide for children's needs and wants

#### Core and non – core children's workers

**Core worker:** A children's worker whose work in, or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with a child or children in the course of that work, the person is either:

- The only person present; or
- Is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over the child or children present.

**Non-core worker:** A children's worker who is not a core worker.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

##### **Management Responsibilities**

Worker safety checklists will be undertaken as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. (See section 6)

Each worker safety check will be repeated within 3 years of the previous check.

##### **Staff responsibilities**

Staff must be alert to the signs and symptoms of neglect or abuse and take appropriate action to protect the wellbeing and safety of children and young people, whether the child / young person is directly or indirectly a client / patient of Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers.

All staff members who identify child protection concerns should follow the Aere Tai Collective Child Protection Procedure. See appendix 1.

##### **Staff Safety Checklist**

The recruitment of all staff including volunteers must be carefully chosen and go through the following process to ensure they are safe to work with children. All applicants:

- Must fill in the application form and submitted together with their CV
- All applications will include a form of identity verification eg Driver License/Passport

- Will undergo a thorough reference check and Police Criminal check for suitability and safety to work with children. The existing staff will have their police criminal check reviewed every three years. (NB: The Police Check is a “point in time” check, and results should not be kept and relied on for a long period of time.)
- Will be interviewed in person by an appropriately trained person to ascertain their suitability for a position with children
- Interviews will include questions to gather information on the applicants past attitudes or behaviours towards children, to ascertain their suitability for a position with children
- Will be expected to sign an Employment Contract and Code of Conduct, in which they agree to the requirements of the Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers regarding their behavior towards children. The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers will keep full and complete records under the Human Resource department.
- Offers of appointment will remain conditional until such time as the Police Criminal Check has been completed and is satisfactory.

## Practices

### **Professionalism**

The professional and personal lives between all staff and clients must be kept separate. No staff is allowed to develop any personal relationships with any clients during and after working hours and outside working environments. All staff working with children are encouraged to work under parents/ caregivers’ supervision or any other person recommended. Meantime they will require practicing according to the Code of Conduct which will be reviewed annually to ensure performances and guidelines are met.

### **Responding to suspected child abuse and neglect**

The staff will respond to suspicions and allegations of suspected child abuse in a manner which best ensure children’s immediate long term safety. The designated staff is to record, date and file all observations, impressions and communications about children suspected of being abuse. The staff will not act alone about suspicions but consult with the team leader and other team members. The designated staff can refer the case to the team leader if there is any conflict of interest and will not perform beyond their capacity and expertise. The suspected child abuse will be referred to the Police or Child, Youth and Family in writing and should be done after full consultation with designated officer and General Manager or CEO.

### **Security:**

For circumstances where the safety of the child, family or staff member is at high risk:

- Consult with a senior member of staff
- Arrange appointments with the family at a venue outside of the home
- Visit in pairs, and carry a mobile phone.

### **Responding to allegations of abuse against staff**

The child's safety is the first and paramount consideration when any staff member suspects child abuse. The suspected abuse must be responded to immediately and staff member will report directly to the team leader and management on receipt of complaint. If not, he or she may be liable to suspension from work while investigation is under progress. The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers will not act alone but work alongside and support the Police and CYFS in their investigation of the suspected child abuse. The decision on the suspected staff member will be finalized upon the investigation outcome. All actions taken will be stated in a full report, signed and filed.

### **Relationship with statutory agencies**

The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers will maintain close liaison with the Police and CYF to guide and direct us with laws and regulations which serve to protect children from abuse. The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers will consult with CYF, the Police and with other relevant agencies that have specialist knowledge to help us protect children from abuse. Staff will not act in a way that is beyond their expertise and capacity.

### **Photographing children**

The parents or guardians of the child must consent for the child (ren) to participate in taking photos or videos and should be taken in their presence. The images and videos will be treated confidentially and used only for the research and activity purposes.

### **Communication**

The health or social service team or designated senior staff member of the Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers will inform the parents as soon as practically possible unless there is a risk to the child if doing so. Informing the parents or caregivers should be undertaken in a safe environment e.g. Face to face in the office or via phone. If a family member or someone close to the family is suspected of child abuse, the family will not be informed of our decision to report or consult initially but ensure they are informed by the Police or CYF at the appropriate time.

Referral to the Police, CYF and other agencies must be in writing with a brief summary of the factual incident. A copy must be filed and kept under the client's file. Reporting of suspected child abuse to

CYF should be done only after full consultation between the designated officer, team leaders and general manager or CEO.

Referral to CYF are made by phone or fax. See appendix 2.

A letter to the child's GP must be completed informing him/her of a referral to CYF.

### **Child Protection Alert**

A highlighted quotation of "**Child Protection Alert**" has to be placed on the first page of the child's file and or the parents or caregiver's note to inform others dealing with the client. The child protection concern is still valid even there is no alert on the child's clinical note.

### **Staff support**

The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers provide internal peer support to help staff debrief after dealing with a child abuse case and their stresses are taken into consideration as well. The health team leader is responsible for Registered Nurses and the social service's team leader for Social Workers. (Designated team leader structure may differ within the Collective Providers). The staff will also receive support through the Employee Assistance Programme.

### **Training**

The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers are committed to maintaining and increasing the staff awareness on how to recognize, prevent and respond to child abuse through appropriate training at the level of their position. The child protection policy will be presented to new staff during their induction.

### **Review**

This child protection policy and all its sub policies will be reviewed every 3 years and or when deemed necessary.

### **References**

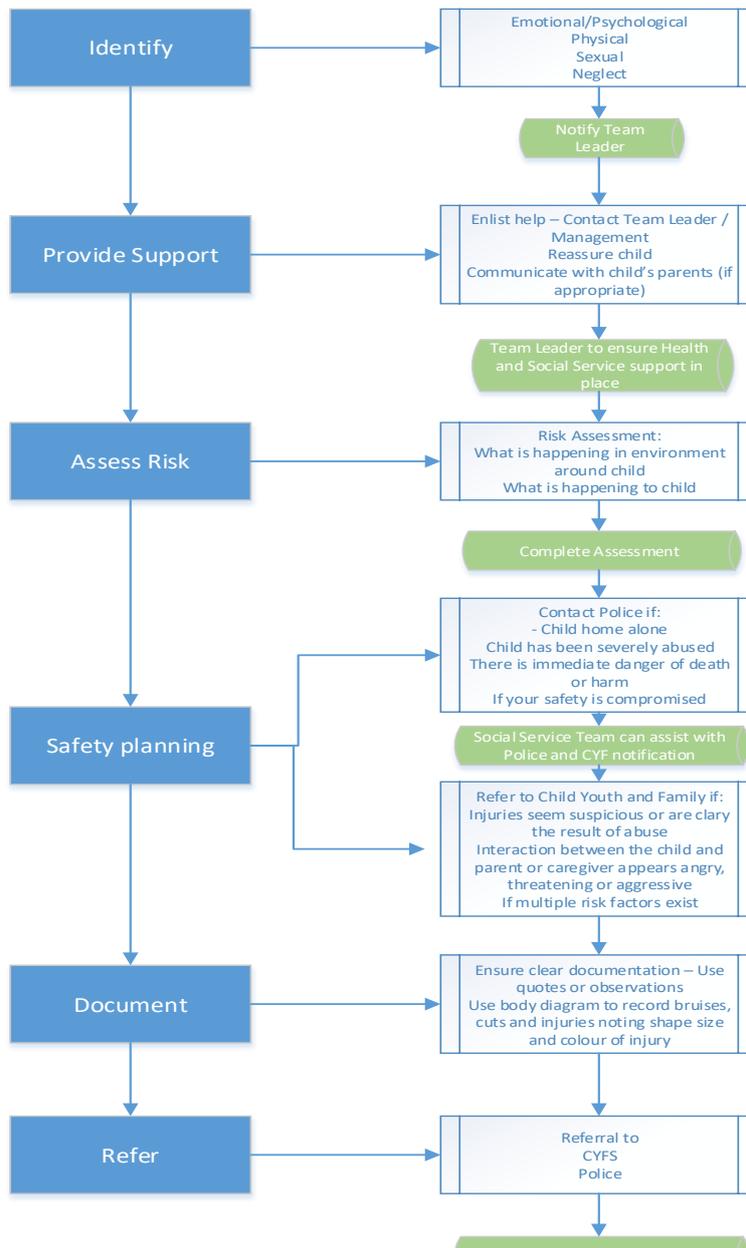
Child Matters "*Creating a safe organization*" <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/225/child-protection-policy>

Child, Youth and Family "*Working together to keep children and young people safe*" <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others/working-together-to-keep-children-and-young-people-safe.html>

Legislation – Vulnerable Children Act 2014  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>

**Procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse**

Procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse February 16, 2015



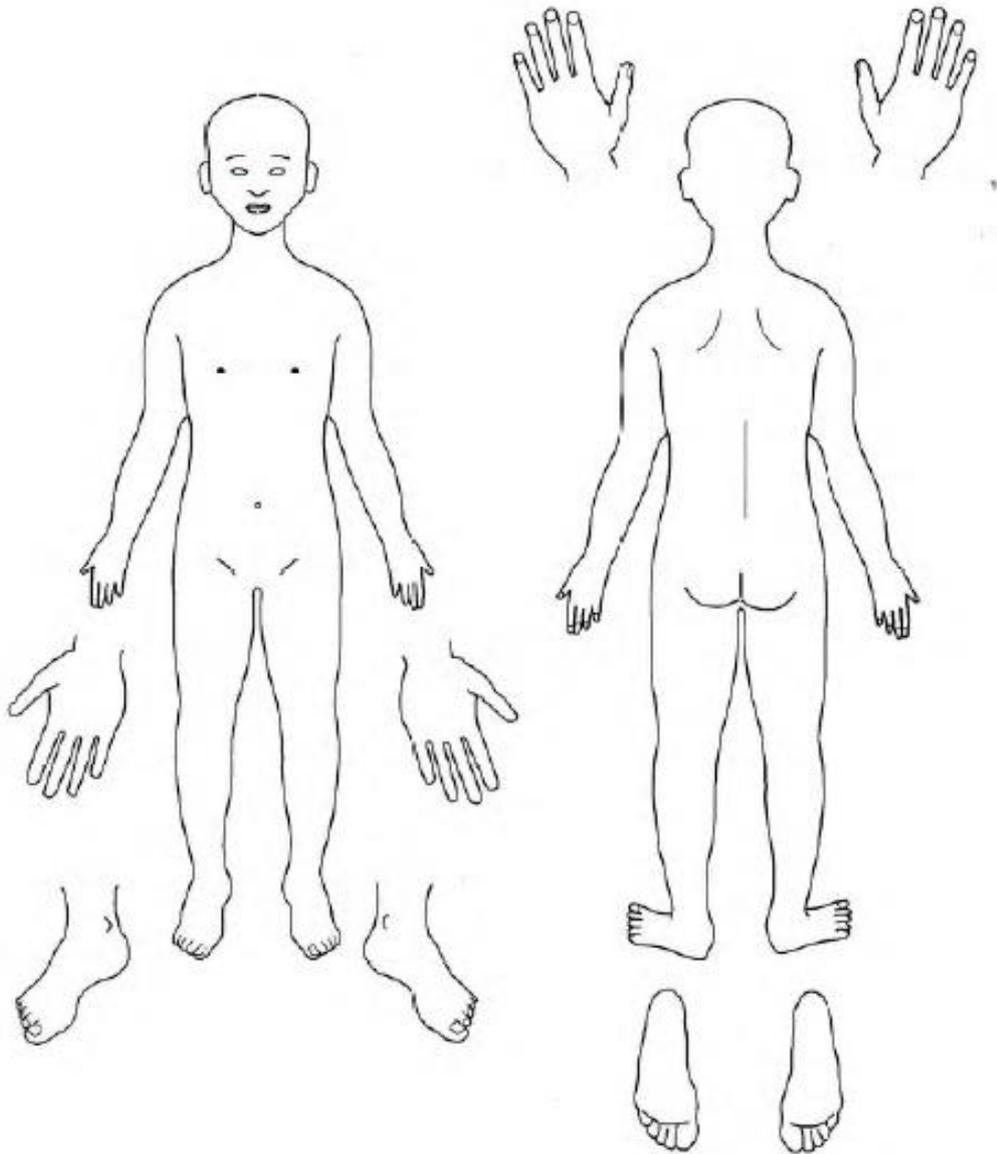
**Body Diagram Template**

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***Name of Child/Young Person:***

**Date of Birth:**

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Used with permission from Dr Patrick Kelly, Director, Te Puaruru Hau, Starship Children's Hospital.

# Child Behaviour Management Policy

## Rationale

The Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers aim is to support and guide all children attending Playgroups, or Early Childhood Education sessions, to manage their own behaviour and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending the service are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

## Aim

This policy is intended to provide Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers with a framework to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviours, ensuring the safety of themselves and others.

## Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

## Scope

This policy outlines the steps the Collective Providers will undertake to ensure children are safe.

This policy applies to all children who are clients of Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers, and to those with whom personnel come into contact in the course of their work with Aere Tai Collective and/or the Collective Providers.

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## Definition

*"Behaviour management is a whole school, (early childhood centre), approach to creating an environment to promote positive behaviour and reduce opportunities for poor behaviour. Behaviour management is also about responding to poor behaviour in a way that not only allows students to take responsibility for their behaviour but provides them with an opportunity to learn and change."*

<http://www.education.gov.pg/quicklinks/documents/edu-policies/TIP-Behaviour-Management.pdf>

## Supporting Positive Behaviour

- Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.

- Role modelling includes: Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, getting down to the child's eye level
- Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate
- Staff will always comfort an upset child
- Play activities will be used to play out challenging situation so children get the opportunity to practice positive behaviour strategies.
- Books and storytelling is used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.
- A range of activities will be available to the group of children which offer a lot of choice to all in order to keep the children active in play.

#### Strategies for Supporting Children

- It is recognised that all children's behaviour has some meaning to the child however at times this behaviour may be difficult or pose a danger to the child or other children.
- For minor behaviour issues e.g. children fighting over a toy a six steps to conflict resolution approach will be used:
  - Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
  - Acknowledge feelings – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don't have the language to explain how they feel leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them "you both look very sad and upset"
  - Gather information – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
  - Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
  - Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together (or for younger children give a solution) - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but its giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.

- Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

#### Managing Moderate behaviour Issues

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place
- Staff will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be used with the child
- The matter will be discussed in detail with the child’s family

#### Managing Challenging behaviour Issues

- If a child’s behaviour is considered dangerous to themselves or others a staff member will carefully remove either the child or the other children from the room. This is in order to protect all using the service. The child will be given time to become calm and a staff member will help guide them with their behaviour.
- The key worker will record the incident and discuss with the family.
- If a child’s behaviour is ongoing or becomes severely challenging the service will implement the following strategies:
  - The staff will carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and plan out going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
  - The child’s key worker will carry out a number of observations to try establish a trigger of the behaviour.
  - All observations will be discussed with the family.
  - A plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
  - If necessary the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
  - If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
  - All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
  - All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child’s record in a locked cabinet.
  - The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situation which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.

Practices Prohibited

- Corporal or physical punishment
- Any practices that are disrespectful, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful.

## References

Child Matters "*Creating a safe organization*"

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/225/child-protection-policy>

Child, Youth and Family "*Working together to keep children and young people safe*"

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others/working-together-to-keep-children-and-young-people-safe.html>

<http://www.education.gov.pg/quicklinks/documents/edu-policies/TIP-Behaviour-Management.pdf>

Legislation – Vulnerable Children Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>