

Policy Statement:

The Y HB is committed to safeguarding children, the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of young people. The wellbeing and safety of all young people is a priority of our organisation and as such, all cases of suspected child abuse will be responded to in a manner which best ensures young person/s immediate and future safety and wellbeing.

The Y HB will not tolerate abusive behaviour of any kind and will promote a culture of child protection by making this policy and the relevant procedures visible to parents/caregivers and the community - including in enrolment information and notice boards.

Definitions:

- **Child abuse** is defined in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”
- **Physical abuse** - any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person
- **Sexual abuse** - includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose
- **Emotional abuse** - any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development
- **Neglect** - Neglect is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child or young person. It is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs
- **Family violence** may be witnessed/experienced by children/young people and involve physical, sexual and emotional abuse

Staff Training

Y HB is committed to ensuring all permanent staff receive Child Protection training and feel confident in how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. All staff are expected to have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and understand how to enact it, staff are to consult with the Programme Supervisor or equivalent about any concerns immediately.

Y HB induction includes:

- The programme policy and commitment to child protection
- Procedures for supervising children/young people and minimising the risk of an allegation of inappropriate behaviour
- Recognising abuse and neglect
- What to do if abusive behaviour is observed
- The process for reporting any concerns
- How to respond to a disclosure of abuse

Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff will be made aware of the signs of potential abuse or neglect (see below)

Staff members are not expected to reach any conclusions about whether abuse or neglect is occurring, or what form it may be taking. They are expected to recognise, consult, and report when something is wrong.

Signs of Potential Abuse / Neglect

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child or young person's emotional, psychological or social well-being and sense of worth is continually impacted negatively.

It can include a pattern of criticising, rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting and terrorising a child. It may result from exposure to family violence or involvement in illegal or anti-social activities.

Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms of abuse occur.

The effects of this form of abuse are not always immediate or visible. The long-lasting effects of emotional abuse may only become evident as a child becomes older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviours or symptoms.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child or young person. 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 or young person
- **Abandonment** – leaving a child or 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 or young person

Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse can be caused from punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.
- Injuries to a child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks, major fractures of the long bones or skull, to its most extreme form, the death of a child.

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose.
- While it may involve a stranger, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts.
- It includes any touching for sexual purpose, fondling of breasts, buttocks, genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, an adult exposing themselves to the child or young person, or seeking to have a child touch them for a sexual purpose. It also includes voyeurism, photographing children or young people inappropriately, involving the child or young person in pornographic activities or prostitution or using the internet and phone to initiate sexual conversations with children or young people.

Responding to Child Abuse

Under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived must report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Only a minority of children and young people actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child or young person's behaviour, words and physical appearance. Abuse of any form must be reported and action taken.

When a child or young person discloses abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child or young person, and also to ensure your actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

There are a number of basic guidelines that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child or young person:

- Do not panic
- Remember the safety and well-being of the child or young person comes before the interests of any other person
- Listen to the child or young person and accept what they say
- Look at the child or young person directly, but do not appear shocked
- Do not seek help while the child or young person is talking to you
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help
- Let them know you need to tell someone else
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened

Write down what the child or young person says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also- on the Safeguarding Children form

Make certain you distinguish between what the child or young person has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure

Sometimes there is no direct disclosure, any concerns about children and/or young people are to be documented on the Safeguarding Children form and all should be discussed with a senior staff member.

CHILD PROTECTION



Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible and make a decision around if a referral is required

Refer to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police as appropriate

After making the referral to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children, or the Police further discuss the matter with your manager or supervisor regarding any additional actions required.

When a child is in immediate danger the staff are to act with urgency and call the police on 111

Staff who are responding to cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. The organisation will offer such support on a case by case basis.

Important notes:

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the child or young person.
- Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child or young person is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.
- If a staff member suspects that child abuse is occurring and believe the appropriate actions have not been taken by THE Y HB management then they have the right to report suspected abuse directly to Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police. The Oranga Tamariki call centre (0508 FAMILY) may be called for advice without identifying children, the caller, the organisation, or making an official notification.

DO NOT

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- Formally interview the child or young person:
 - Never ask leading questions
 - Never push for information or make assumptions
 - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
- Take any action that might undermine future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers
- Permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer

The Y HB will act on recommendations made by statutory agencies concerning the reporting of suspected abuse. Staff will only consult with or inform families about any suspected or

CHILD PROTECTION

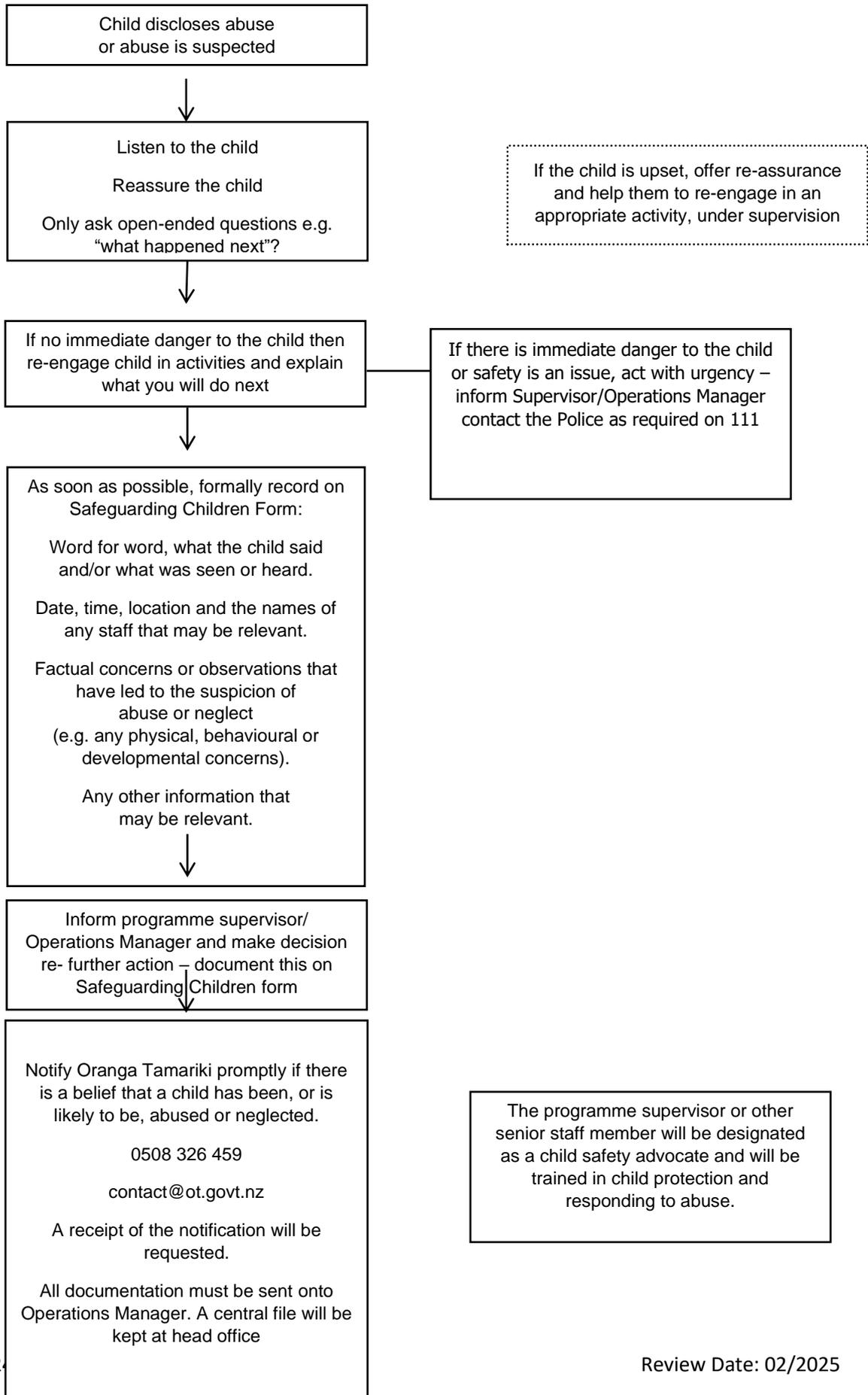


actual abuse, after consulting with the appropriate statutory agencies and if they advise it is safe to do so.

When notifying any statutory agency, a receipt or acknowledgement of the notification will be requested. All information or notes concerning the notification will include date, time and name of the person receiving the notification.

Staff will respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour by writing down observations and communications on the Safeguarding Children form. This will be kept separate from other programme records and enrolment information and locked away. When one of these forms is completed the Operations Manager is to be informed straight away to determine next actions.

Responding to a disclosure/concern about Child protection

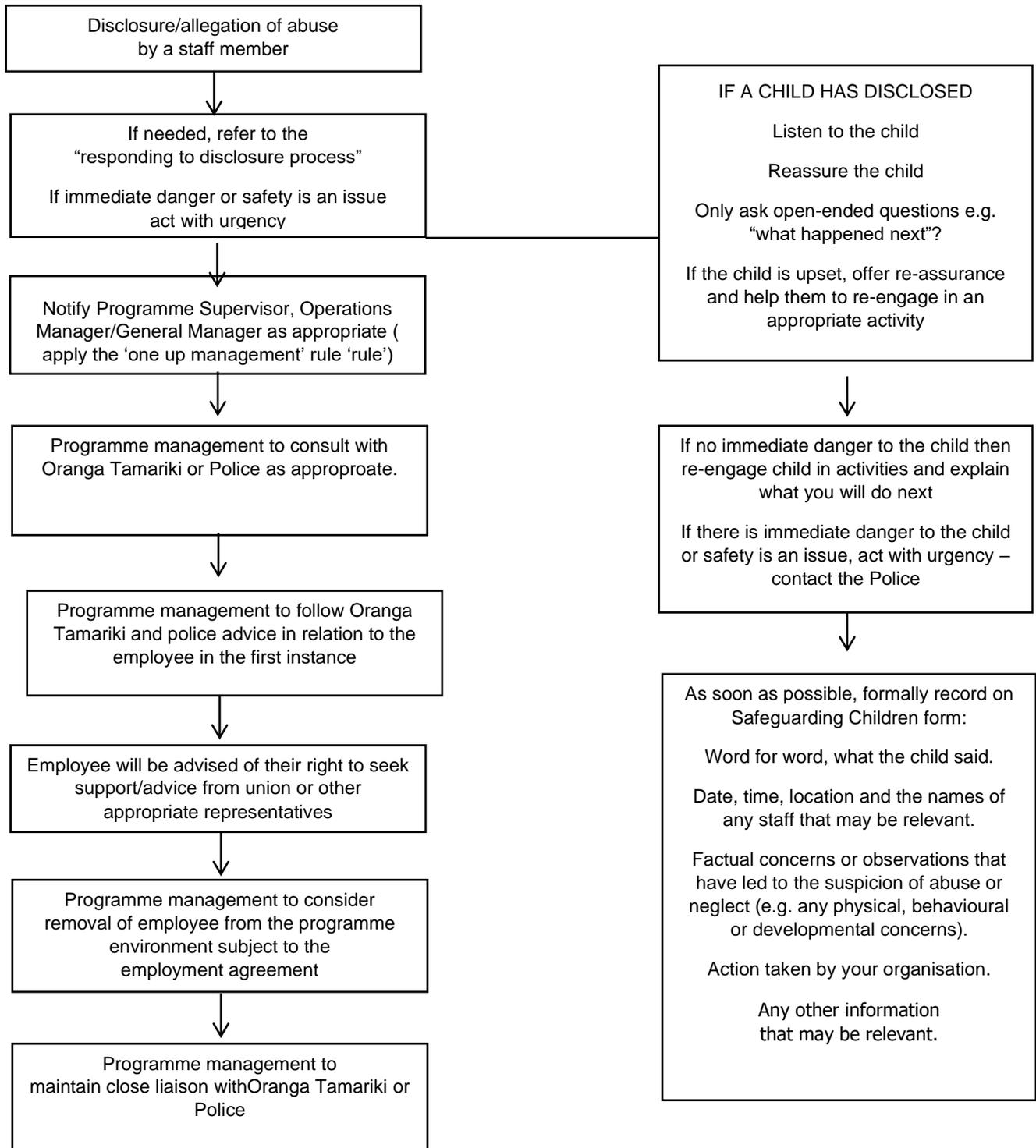


CHILD PROTECTION



When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid/ unpaid in any role), the matter will be reported promptly to the Supervisor, Operations Manager and/or General Manager. Any concerns relating to the General Manager can go to the Board.



Confidentiality and information sharing

This organisation will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before information about an allegation is shared with anyone.

In general, when collecting personal information about individuals, privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.

Staff may disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

Parents will be informed about this limitation to confidentiality in the programme enrolment information

Child and staff safety – supervision and conduct guidelines

These specific guidelines are concerned with minimising the risk of allegations of inappropriate conduct. They should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Behaviour, which outlines a wider range of staff behaviour guidelines.

All staff should be aware of situations where they could be alone with children/young people. These situations are to be avoided

An open-door policy for all spaces should be used as much as possible (i.e. not for toilets). Staff will be aware of where all children/young people are at all times and check to ensure what they are doing is appropriate

Staff will watch for situations where children/young people are out of sight together (play huts, storage areas, toilets, etc.) and intervene to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour

Except in an emergency, children/young people will not be taken from the programme by staff without parent/caregiver consent

Visitors to the centre will be monitored at all times by programme staff

All volunteers and outside instructors will be monitored by the paid programme staff

Touching will not be initiated to gratify adult needs;

Children will not be asked to take care of adults needs, physical or otherwise;

If a child initiates contact in seeking of affection, reassurance or comfort it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child's developmental stage and need;

It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection and touching on a child;

Children will be encouraged to take care of themselves to the limits of their ability; If children have soiled themselves, and there is a need to have private areas touched or examined (in the case of injury), the parent/caregiver will be phoned immediately and asked to attend to their child's needs if possible. If this is not possible, two staff of an appropriate gender will assist the child.

In some situations, a child or young person may require more regular physical and or personal care assistance. Advice and assistance will be requested from parents/caregivers

and specialist personnel. Programme management will negotiate with all involved regarding appropriate procedures for giving this assistance

SUPPORT

Agencies who could provide support for young person and/or whanau include, but are not limited to:

- Birthright Hawkes Bay
- Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga
- CAFS (Child, adolescent, and family service)
- Oranga Tamariki
- Family Works
- Dove
- WIT (Whatever it Takes)
- Napier Family Centre
- Awhina Whanau Services

SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

Community Setting Should there be an immediate threat to the child or any other person's physical safety:

Dial 111 for urgent police response.

Make notification to Oranga Tamariki - mark it urgent and contact both Oranga Tamariki National Call Centre and local office

Support for Staff Members In any case where staff have been involved in reporting and or management of child abuse and neglect, it is recommended that they obtain support from either a colleague/clinician/or the EAP Programme