

Early Childhood Learning Centre

Child Protection Policy

Categories: Health and Safety

Last Modified: September 2020

Review Date: September 2022

Rationale

Children have a right to be kept safe from harm.

Purpose

To ensure that children are protected from harmful effects of physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect*.

Guidelines

1. Ensuring staff are safe to work with children
 - a. Management will undertake pre-employment checks, including police vetting in accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, of all staff as part of the recruitment procedures. If there is a suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.
 - b. Management will police vet all staff who are not registered with the Education Council, every three years.
 - c. Staff will not leave the Centre with children unless ratios and guidelines in the Excursion Policy are adhered to.
 - d. Staff are aware of and sensitive to responding to children to ensure that the safety of children is paramount at all times.
 - e. The following people are allowed to undertake toileting and nappy changing routines:
 - The child's parents
 - ECLC teachers employed by the University on a continuing basis
 - Approved long-term relievers
 - Students on teaching practice who are supervised by their associate teacher
 - f. The design and layout of the Centre ensures that all staff are visible and supervised at all times.
2. Ensuring professionalism
 - a. Staff are encouraged to keep their professional and personal lives separate.
 - b. Staff are not allowed to work or volunteer as babysitters for parents/caregivers due to potential conflict of interest.
 - c. Permissions to pick up child from the Centre:

- At the time of enrolment, parents/legal guardian can include, on the Enrolment Form, the names of other persons 14 years old and over who can collect the child. Changes to this can be made on the Change of Details form at any time by the parent / legal guardian.
 - Parent / legal guardian must provide a written consent/note if another person 14 years old and over who is not registered on the Enrolment form or Change of Details form is collecting the child. Staff will not release the child to the person without written consent from the parent / legal guardian.
 - d. Staff should be aware of strategies for protecting themselves from suspicion of abuse or acting in a manner inappropriate to their professional conduct as an employee of the University.
3. Any staff member is required to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. The report can be made to the Team Leader, the Manager, Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police. A log is to be kept of each incident.
4. Responding to suspected abuse or neglect
- a. All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents should be made directly to the Team Leader or Manager as soon as possible, and steps taken to protect the child(ren).
 - b. If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of child abuse has taken place, a member of the staff team shall notify Oranga Tamariki and/or the police.
 - c. In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies (i.e., Oranga Tamariki and the Police), this child protection policy will also help staff to identify and respond to the needs of children whose wellbeing is of concern.
 - d. Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.
 - e. A record of events must be kept of each incident.
5. Procedures when staff respond to child abuse (to be read in conjunction with point 4)
- a. If a staff member suspects that a child is being abused by a family member or other adult, they should
 - Document all their concerns.
 - Give the written report to the Team Leader or Manager.
 - Refrain from questioning or interviewing the child.
 - b. The Team Leader or Manager will observe and review the evidence presented.
 - c. If observations and the report suggest abuse and/or neglect may have occurred, the Team Leader or Manager will contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.
 - d. All staff involved will maintain strict confidentiality at all times.
 - e. The Team Leader and Manager will document all information related to the concern and the procedures taken to deal with the concern.
 - f. All information and documents will be kept under lock and key.
6. Procedures when parents respond to child abuse (to be read in conjunction with point 4)
- a. If a parent suspects a child is being abused by a family member or other adults, they should inform the Team Leader, Manager, Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.
 - b. If a parent contacts the Team Leader or Manager regarding suspicion of child abuse by a staff member, there will be an immediate investigation.

- c. The staff member concerned will be dealt with according to the terms and condition of their employment.
- d. The Team Leader or Manager will document all information related to the complaint and the procedure taken to deal with the complaint.
- e. The staff member concerned will be advised of the support they can seek, e.g., from NZEI, a lawyer of their choice, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

7. Confidentiality and information sharing

- a. The Privacy Act 1993 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (previously Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act) allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act, 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 may 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.

8. Persons excluded from the Centre:

- a. Any person who uses or is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs¹ during Centre operation hours will be asked to leave the Centre.
- b. Any person who is in a physical or mental state that poses a risk or danger to children and/or staff will be asked to leave the Centre.
- c. Any person who has been convicted of committing a crime against children will not be allowed into the Centre.

9. Protecting children from inappropriate material

- a. Teachers will supervise children during computer and Internet use to ensure that children are not exposed to content of a violent and/or sexual nature, or inappropriate material.
- b. Teachers will screen donated magazines and remove materials that are of a violent and/or sexual nature, and/or inappropriate.

10. Staff training

- a. Management will provide up-to-date information and training to staff on responding to and recognising the signs of child abuse.
- b. Appropriate agencies will be contacted for information and support for staff when required.

11. Parent support and education

- a. The Centre will support parents/caregivers through education (e.g. parent evenings or external workshops / information), and make available brochures and/or relevant materials when appropriate.
- b. The Centre has an open door policy which encourages parents/caregivers to visit the Centre
- c. and their children at any time.

¹ Drugs refer to any substance that has a detrimental effect on a person's functioning or behaviour.

***Definition**

Abuse is harming a child:

- physically (eg, giving them hidings)
- emotionally (eg, yelling or swearing at them, shaming or rejecting them)
- sexually (eg, involving them in sexual activities).

Neglect is failing to meet a child's physical and emotional needs – that is, not giving them the care, supervision, love and attention they need to grow up safely and happily (eg, failure to provide food, warm clothing or health care).

[Source: Ministry of Health]

Related documents

- Excursion Policy
- Enrolment and financial policy
- Suspected Abuse Incident Report Sheet
- Procedures for raising a concern
- UC Code of Conduct
- UC Staff Disciplinary Policy
- [Vulnerable Children's Act 2014](#)