

Child Protection Policy

Policy summary

This policy affirms Tuakau Learning Centre's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children. It outlines the procedures to be followed when child abuse is reported or suspected and provides practical guidance on preventative measures to reduce the risk of abuse occurring.

All staff members are required to be familiar with this policy and to adhere strictly to its protocols. Our collective responsibility is to ensure a safe environment where children are protected, respected, and supported.

Purpose statement

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Our foremost priority is the protection of children from abuse and neglect, and we are dedicated to creating an environment where every child feels safe, valued, and supported.

We actively support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children—in the investigation of suspected or alleged abuse, and we will report any concerns to these agencies promptly and responsibly.

We work in partnership with families and whaanau to uphold the safety and wellbeing of their children, recognising the vital role they play in a child's life.

Our environment is one where physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse are not tolerated. We are committed to maintaining a culture of vigilance, care, and respect.

Policy principles

We are firm in our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Our guiding principles are:

- **Child-Centred Approach** - the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all our actions and decisions.
- **Whaanau Engagement** - we recognise and respect the rights of family and whaanau to be involved in decisions affecting their children.
- **Staff Capability** - we are committed to ensuring all staff are trained to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and to respond appropriately and confidently.
- **Collaborative Practice** - we support our staff to work in alignment with this policy and in partnership with external agencies to uphold consistent, high-quality child protection standards.
- **Legal Compliance** - we will always act in accordance with relevant legislation and regulatory responsibilities.
- **Information Sharing** - We are committed to sharing information in a timely and appropriate manner, and to discussing concerns, with colleagues and management to ensure a coordinated response.
- **Safe Culture** - We promote a culture where staff feel safe and supported to challenge poor practice or raise concerns without fear of reprisal.
- **A commitment to develop and maintain links with iwi, Pasifika and other cultural and community groups** and to ensure that important cultural concepts (e.g. whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice.

Management commitment

- There are policies for the appropriate response to, and management of, child abuse and neglect.
- Procedures exist to provide appropriate, adequate support for, and supervision of, staff affected by child abuse or neglect.
- Staff seek advice when child abuse is suspected or identified.
- The Child Protection policy is reviewed 3 yearly and as required.
- There is a training plan that ensures staff receive child protection training upon induction and refresher training at least every 3 years.
- Ensure there are tools in place, and these are accessible to staff for recording care and protection concerns.
- Provide support and advice for staff regarding child abuse and neglect.
- Committed to implementing safer recruitment procedures. Safety checking is completed upon employment (7 step safety check) and every 3 years subsequently (4 step safety check)
- Service layout supports the supervision of children and minimises areas of low visibility
- The service implements a supervision policy that ensures all children are supervised and those adults working with children are supervised by a Person Responsible.

Definitions of terms

- **Child** - Any child or young person aged under 18 years and who is not married or in a civil union.
- **Staff** - Any adult who is employed by or volunteers for Tuakau Learning Centre and any person or organisation contracted to provide children's services for Tuakau Learning Centre.
- **Disclosure** - Information given to a staff member by a child, parent/caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Person responsible** - The Person responsible in accordance with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 or the designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about any child/children, or they want advice around the child protection policy.
- **Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children** - The government agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found in need.
- **New Zealand Police (NZ Police)** - The agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **Safer recruitment** - Following good practice processes for pre-employment checking to manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children's workforce. This relates to and is in accordance with the mandatory requirements under the Children's Act 2014.
- **Child protection** - Activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect

Definitions of abuse

- **Child abuse** - Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult, and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child.
- **Emotional abuse** - Emotional abuse is a pattern of systematic and purposeful harm aimed towards the child, which damages their psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional functioning or development. This type of abuse is often repetitive and targeted, and it can include:
 - constant degradation or vitriolic criticism
 - humiliation or shaming
 - isolation from family or peers
 - scapegoating (singling out a child for blame or punishment)
 - threatening, corrupting, or exploiting the child
 - denying access to cultural, faith, or identity-affirming experiences
 - exposure to family violence.
- **Neglect** - Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning/development of a child or young person. It is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may include:
 - physical neglect - not providing adequate food, clothing, shelter, or hygiene
 - medical neglect - failing to seek or follow through with necessary medical care
 - emotional neglect - ignoring a child's emotional needs, affection, or support
 - supervisory neglect - leaving a child unsupervised or in unsafe situations
 - educational neglect - child's educational needs are not adequately met.
- **Physical abuse** - Physical abuse is an act that may result in physical harm to a child. This harm may be deliberate or the unintentional result of a deliberate action. It includes both single incidents and patterns of behaviour and may include:
 - bruising, cutting, hitting, or beating
 - biting, burning, or causing abrasions
 - strangulation, suffocation, or drowning
 - poisoning or fabricated illness
 - shaking (especially of infants)
 - use of objects as weapons (e.g. broom, belt, bat)
- **Sexual abuse** - Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older, or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose, and includes,
 - Touching a child in a sexual way
 - Exposing a child to sexual acts or materials
 - Involving a child in the production of sexual images or videos
 - Encouraging or coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour
 - Rape or attempted rape
 - Sexual exploitation, including grooming (online or in person)

Identifying possible abuse or neglect

All staff must be able to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse, and have the confidence to take appropriate action, with the support and guidance of the Person Responsible.

Indicators of abuse

We all have a responsibility in knowing how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect these can be found in the attached *Appendix 1* and at the websites below.

[Identify abuse | Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)

Child Matters is a registered charitable trust that provides guidance, advice, education and support to protect children. Indicators of different types of abuse can be found on the Child Matters website.

[Indicators of Child Abuse | Emotional, Physical, Behavioural](#)

Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

All suspicions, observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Person Responsible as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the child(ren) and ensure that:

- the concern is recorded in accordance with organisational procedures,
- initiate a Report of Concern (RoC) to Oranga Tamariki if there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred, or
- seek advice / consult Oranga Tamariki where evidence is less clear but there is cause for suspicion of abuse.

Oranga Tamariki Contact Details

0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)

contact@ot.govt.nz

0508EDASSIST (0508 332 774)

Responding to disclosures and identification of abuse

Any person has the right and responsibility to contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police if they are concerned that a child may be in need of care and protection.

Any notification made to Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police (specified agencies) requires notification to the Education Review Office at the same time (**HS128**).

Disclosure of abuse

A child makes a verbal disclosure of abuse to an adult in the service.	
Steps	Actions
Listen carefully and calmly	- Allow the child to speak freely—do not interrupt or ask leading questions. - Stay calm and composed, even if the disclosure is distressing. - Use open-ended prompts like “Tell me more about that” or “What happened next?”
Reassure the child	- Let the child know they did the right thing by telling you. - Avoid making promises you can't keep (e.g. “I won't tell anyone”). - Say something like: “Thank you for telling me. I'm going to do my best to help you.” - If the child is not visibly distressed re-engage the child in the programme. - If the child is visibly distressed provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in the programme without adult support.
Do not investigate	- Do not question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify your concern. - Avoid asking leading or suggestive questions. - Leave the investigation to trained professionals (e.g. Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police). - Make no assumptions about what has occurred or who it might involve
Ensure child's immediate safety	- If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111). - Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.
Report immediately	Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions. If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify Oranga Tamariki promptly. Oranga Tamariki contact details: Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)

Record the disclosure	· Write down exactly what the child said, using the child's own words as much as possible. · Note the date, time, location, and any witnesses. · Do not add your own interpretations or assumptions. · Record what actions have been taken (Do not take photos)
Maintain confidentiality	· Share information only with those who need to know. · Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities. · Store all information securely
Follow up	· Ensure the child receives appropriate support. · Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing. · Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.

Identification of abuse

If a staff member identifies suspected child abuse.	
Steps	Actions
Ensure child's immediate safety	· If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111). · Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.
Stay calm and supportive	· Remain calm and composed. · Avoid expressing shock, disbelief, or anger. · Make no assumptions about what has occurred or who it might involve
Do not investigate	· Do not question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify your concern. · Avoid asking leading or suggestive questions. · Leave the investigation to trained professionals (e.g. Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police).

Report the concern	· Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions. · If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify Oranga Tamariki promptly. Oranga Tamariki contact details: Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY) If the suspected abuser is the Person Responsible contact Ajneeta Singh. Where this is not possible contact Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police
Formally document the concern	Formally document the concern as soon as possible, including: · what was said or observed (the facts) · date, time, and location · names of those involved · what actions you have taken. (Do not take photos)
Maintain confidentiality	· Share information only with those who need to know. · Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities.
Follow up	· Ensure the child receives appropriate support. · Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing. · Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.

Staff allegations

When it has been disclosed or observed that a person employed or engaged in Tuakau Learning Centre has allegedly abused or neglected a child the following process will be followed.

Allegations or concerns about a staff member	
Steps	Actions
Ensure child's immediate safety	· If the child is in immediate danger, take steps to ensure their safety and call NZ Police (111). · Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so.
Report the concern	· Inform the Person Responsible as soon as possible and decide on immediate actions. · If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected notify Oranga Tamariki promptly. Oranga Tamariki contact details: Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY) If the suspected abuser is the Person Responsible contact Ajneeta Singh. Where this is not possible contact Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police
Consult/notify appropriate agency	Consult/notify Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police before advising the person concerned. Oranga Tamariki contact details: Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)
Formally document the concern	Formally document the concern as soon as possible, including: · What was said or observed (the facts) · Date, time, and location · Names of those involved · What actions you have taken (Do not take photos)
Implement Regulation 56 Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008	If the Service Provider has reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the services has physically ill-treated or abused a child, after consultation with Oranga Tamariki and/or NZ Police, the Service Provider will take immediate steps to exclude the person from coming into contact with children. (Regulation 56)

Inform the parents/whaanau	Parents / whaanau, whose child/ren have been affected by the staff member's actions, will be informed by the Person Responsible of the allegations. They will be offered support and informed of the actions that will be taken.
Inform the Education Review Office	Any notification made to Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police (specified agencies) requires notification to the Education Review Office at the same time (HS128).
Allegation investigation	An investigation into the allegation will be undertaken, with the guidance of Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police. The investigation will seek to establish if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person has physically or emotionally ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children.
Human Resources process	Implementation of appropriate Human Resources processes will be undertaken. We will follow Tuakau Learning Centre's disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract and relevant statutory obligations
Maintain confidentiality	· Share information only with those who need to know. · Do not discuss the matter with other staff, children, or families unless directed by authorities.
Follow up	· Ensure the child receives appropriate support. · Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing. · Participate in any follow-up actions or meetings as required.

Allegations or concerns about staff will also be made to the Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand without delay, where there is reason to believe a registered teacher has engaged in serious misconduct.

Where a notification is made by the service to as specified agency such as Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police and Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand the service provider must also notify the Education Review Office at the same time.

- A Process Diagram is provided as **Appendix 2**
- An Incident Record Template is provided as **Appendix 3**

Role of the Person Responsible	
Steps	Actions
Gather information	· Ensure you have the written record of what has occurred from all persons involved. · Offer support to the persons involved. · If needed, access guidance and support from the appropriate Agency - Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police.
Report suspected abuse	· Report the suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police. · Seek guidance on how to: · Talk to families /whaanau · Support the child, and · What happens next Oranga Tamariki contact details: Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY)
Things to consider as a Person Responsible	· Ensure child's immediate safety - Remove the child from harm if safe and appropriate to do so. · Consider, Regulation 56 - if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the services has physically ill-treated or abused a child, after consultation with Oranga Tamariki and/or NZ Police, take immediate steps to exclude the person from coming into contact with children. · Inform the parents/whaanau. · Report the serious incident to the Education Review Office (HS128). · Complete an investigation using the report template (link) · Implementation of appropriate human resources processes. · If the person is a registered teacher complete a mandatory report to Teaching Council Aotearoa New Zealand. · Continue to maintain records of additional meetings, discussions and comments. · Seek legal advice where appropriate.

Protected Disclosure

The Protected Disclosures Act 2022 encourages employees to disclose and report information about serious wrongdoing in the workplace. This Act provides protection for those employees from criminal and legal retribution and outlines the internal procedure to be followed when investigating the matter.

Mandatory reporting to Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Teaching Council)

Under the Education and Training Act 2020, Tuakau Learning Centre is legally obliged to make a mandatory report to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Teaching Council) when there is reason to believe a teacher has engaged in serious misconduct. This is to be brought to the Teaching Council's attention early in the process and a conclusive assessment of the circumstances is not required by Tuakau Learning Centre prior to doing this. Failing to make a report is an offence, which carries a fine of up to \$25,000 unless there is reasonable justification.

Transparency and Communication

Where appropriate, individuals making an allegation will be provided with a copy of this policy to ensure transparency and understanding of the process.

Confidentiality and information sharing

All matters related to individual cases are confidential to those directly involved and should under no circumstances be discussed with other staff, other parents, children or any other person outside of Tuakau Learning Centre.

The Privacy Act 2020 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 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 NZ Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Staff may be required to share information about children and their wellbeing with authorised government agencies such as Oranga Tamariki, the New Zealand Police, the Family Court, legal representatives, and registered health professionals. All requests for information must follow the Tuakau Learning Centre's formal procedure to ensure compliance with privacy legislation and the protection of children's rights. Information will only be shared when the request is made in writing, appropriate identification and purpose are confirmed, and where necessary, written consent from the child's parent or caregiver is obtained. All responses must be factual, impartial, and approved by the Person responsible before release.

Best practice: Inform parents of your intention if it is safe to do so. However, parental consent is not required to transfer this information as it will be used to prevent harm to a child. Where parents object, the facts should be recorded and note the reasons for your decision to transfer information.

Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

Tuakau Learning centre recruitment/Human Resource policy/procedures reflects a commitment to child protection by including comprehensive screening procedures in accordance with the Children's Act 2014.

Tuakau Learning centre ensures that all staff working with children, are employed in accordance with this Act as stipulated in the staff recruitment policy. Safety checking is a central part of this and will be carried out in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be employed.

Details of the safety checking process are fully detailed in the services Human Resource Policy or Safety Checking Procedure.

Training, supervision and support

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all staff can develop and strengthen their knowledge of:

- the detail of this policy.
- the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
- roles and responsibilities around record keeping and reporting.
- responsibilities to children.
- limitations of their role.

Tuakau Learning Centre commits to bi-annual staff training and consistent review of our child protection policy and reporting processes to ensure they are effective and fully understood by all staff.

Review of this policy and the procedure will also be undertaken after an incident that requires this policy to be implemented. Review will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and the implementation of the procedures by those staff involved.

Tuakau Learning Centre will ensure that all staff have access to necessary training, resources and/or advice to ensure they can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:

- understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse
- how to reduce the risk of child abuse
- understanding and complying with legal obligations regarding child abuse
- working with outside agencies on child abuse issues
- planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk
- conducting conversations appropriately with a child, parent and whaanau.

Understanding this policy and initial training will form part of our induction programme for new staff.

Volunteers and practicum students

Volunteers/students are welcome in the service.

- At no time will a volunteer or student be left alone with a child. They will always be supervised by the Person Responsible or a registered teacher.
- Volunteers/students will not be placed on nappy changing duty.
- Where we rely on a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to carry out the safety check for students on our behalf, we will obtain a letter from the TEO confirming this. If any components of the safety check have not been completed by the TEO, we are responsible for completing these.
- We always complete the identity check and risk assessment, even if these have already been completed by the TEO. A separate letter should be obtained for each named student teacher.

Safeguarding culture (suggestions of practice)

Staff working in the service are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children. We maintain a supervision plan that ensures an awareness of our learning environment and clear lines of sight.

The supervision plan ensures effective deployment of staff to keep children safe.

- Children's bathroom doors remain open and there is some visibility from other parts of the service, while also respecting children's privacy.
- Physical contact of children during changing or cleansing must be for the purpose of that task only and no more than is necessary. Encourage children to take care of themselves if possible.
- Bathroom/baby change door to remain open when children are in the room
- Sleeping rooms to have glass windows
- Office door to be kept open if a child is present
- Centre Trips/Excursions to any private home or building are only to be undertaken with more than one staff member and/or adult present.
- Never photograph a child's ano-genital area, even as a record of your concern.
- Visitors to the service will not perform care-taking tasks with children or be alone with them.

Alcohol/Drugs

Tuakau Learning Centre has a zero tolerance for staff being under the influence of drugs and alcohol, staff will be excluded from the licensed premises while any suspicion is investigated. Suspicions involving a registered teacher will be reported to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

If any parent arrives to pick up their child and is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will use their discretion to decide whether the child is safe to be driven by the parent. Staff can offer to call another family member, but where drivers are non-cooperative, staff should call the NZ Police (111).

Explicit material

At Tuakau Learning Centre, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for all children. In alignment with Te Whāriki and the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, we strictly prohibit the use, display, or distribution of any explicit, inappropriate, or harmful material within our service.

We ensure that all learning resources, digital content, and environmental displays are carefully vetted. Staff are trained to identify and report any concerns related to inappropriate content, and we maintain clear procedures for addressing such issues.

This policy reflects our dedication to upholding the rights of children to learn in an environment free from exposure to material that is not suitable for their age or stage of development.

Relevant Legislation and Regulations

Core legislation

- Education & Training Act 2020
- Children's Act 2014
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008 (For centre-based HS128 and GMA106)
- The Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulation 2008 - Regulation 56
- The Code of Professional Responsibilities & the Standards for the Profession

Supporting legislation

- Privacy Act 2020
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Care of Children Act 2004

References used in this policy

- Child Matters 2014
- Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand
- Child, Youth and Family - Working together to keep children and young people safe

Review of the policy and procedures

A review of this policy will occur no less than once every three years.

Further things to consider under safe practices

- Staff working on their own with children (outside, beginning and end of day)
- Baby sitting for families
- Isolating children in regards to sickness/illness and behaviour with one staff member
- Visitors / parents / caregivers responsibilities and expectations
- Child Pickup and drop off - age of person able to pick up and drop off, process/expectations for people outside of the enrolment form to pick up/drop off.
- Children picked up and dropped off by Van service.
- AI - the use of AI to write learning stories / assessment and other documentation - considering the sharing of personal information.

Next Review Date: *July 2027*

Signed: _____

Licensing criteria for ECE services 2008 - GMA106, GMA109, HS125, HS126, HS127

Appendix 1

The list of behavioural indicators provided is only indicative, and not exhaustive. These signs should never be used in isolation to make assumptions about someone's behaviour. Instead, they should be considered as part of a broader context, and any concerns should be addressed through proper child protection procedures.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused	• Delayed physical development - Noticeable delay in growth or weight gain/loss not attributed to medical conditions • Frequent psychosomatic complaints - Headaches, stomach aches, or nausea without a clear medical cause • Sleep disturbances - insomnia, nightmares, or excessive fatigue • Appetite changes - Sudden loss of appetite or overeating. • Poor hygiene - Consistently dirty, unkempt appearance. • Regression in developmental milestones - Bedwetting, bed soiling, thumb-sucking,
Behavioural indicators that child or young person is being emotionally abused	• Excessive withdrawal or fearfulness - Appears anxious, timid, or overly compliant, avoids eye contact or physical closeness • Extreme behaviours - Displays aggression, defiance, or hostility, exhibits overly passive or clingy behaviour • Developmental delays - Struggles with language, social, or emotional development, appears behind peers in cognitive or emotional maturity • Difficulty forming relationships - Has trouble making or keeping friends, shows distrust of adults or authority figures • Self-harm or suicidal thoughts - Engages in risky behaviours or talks about self-harm. • Overly responsible or parent-like behaviour - Takes on adult roles or responsibilities, appears overly concerned with pleasing others • Frequent absences or reluctance to go home - Regular non-attendance, expresses fear or anxiety about returning home
Indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse	• Constant Criticism or Belittling - Regularly insults, mocks, or undermines the child's self-worth, uses sarcasm or harsh language to shame or control • Excessive Control or Domination - Dictates every aspect of the child's life without allowing autonomy, discourages independent thinking or decision making. • Emotional Manipulation - Uses guilt, fear, or love withdrawal to control the child, blames the child for adult problems or emotions • Unrealistic Expectations - Expects the child to meet adult standards or responsibilities • Inappropriate Role Assignments - Treats the child as a confidant or partner in adult matters, relies on the child for emotional support or caregiving • Isolation and Rejection - Prevents the child from forming friendships or socialising. • Threatening or Intimidating Behaviour - Uses threats of harm, abandonment, or punishment to control, forces the child to witness abuse of others • Lack of Empathy or Responsiveness - Ignores the child's emotional needs or distress, fails to comfort or support the child in times of need

Indicators of Neglect

Physical indicators that a child or young person is being neglected.	• Poor hygiene - Consistently dirty or unwashed appearance, strong body odour or untreated head lice • Inappropriate clothing - Clothing that is unsuitable for the weather (e.g., no coat in winter), ill-fitting, torn, or excessively worn clothing • Unmet medical or dental needs - Untreated injuries or illnesses, obvious dental decay or infections • Malnutrition or hunger - Noticeable weight loss or failure to thrive, constant hunger. • Persistent Skin Disorders - Nappy rash, skin infections. • Fatigue or listlessness - Appears constantly tired or lacking energy, falls asleep frequently or struggles to stay awake • Developmental delays - Not meeting physical, emotional, or cognitive milestones, difficulty with motor skills or speech • Frequent accidents or injuries - Repeated minor injuries that may suggest lack of supervision, unexplained bruises or marks
Behavioural indicators that child or young person is being neglected	• Frequent Absences or Tardiness - Regularly nonattendance or arriving late without explanation. • Persistent Hunger or Stealing Food - Eats excessively when food is available • Is very demanding of affection or attention • Overly Adult or Caregiver Behaviour - Takes on responsibilities beyond their age (e.g., caring for siblings), appears overly independent or self-reliant • Delayed Development - Struggles with speech, motor skills, or emotional regulation, appears behind peers in learning or behaviour • Emotional Manipulation - Uses guilt, fear, or love withdrawal to control the child, blames the child for adult problems or emotions • Unrealistic Expectations - Expects the child to meet adult standards or responsibilities • Inappropriate Role Assignments - Treats the child as a confidant or partner in adult matters, relies on the child for emotional support or caregiving • Isolation and Rejection - Prevents the child from forming friendships or socialising. • Threatening or Intimidating Behaviour - Uses threats of harm, abandonment, or punishment to control, forces the child to witness abuse of others • Lack of Empathy or Responsiveness - Ignores the child's emotional needs or distress, fails to comfort or support the child in times of need • Low Self-Esteem or Apathy - Shows little interest in activities or achievements, appears indifferent to praise or criticism • Frequent Illnesses or Injuries - Often sick or injured without receiving proper care, may not have access to basic health services

Indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate neglect	• Failure to Provide Basic Needs - Does not ensure the child has adequate food, clothing, shelter, or hygiene, ignores the child's medical or dental needs • Lack of Supervision - Leaves the child alone or in unsafe situations for extended periods. • Disengagement or Indifference - Shows little interest in the child's emotional well-being or development, rarely interacts or communicates with the child • Inconsistent or Erratic Parenting - Frequently changes caregivers or living arrangements. • Failure to Support Education - Does not ensure the child attends regularly, shows little concern for academic progress or education engagement. • Exposure to Harmful Environments - Allows the child to witness domestic violence, criminal activity, or substance abuse, fails to protect the child from dangerous people or situations • Involving the Child in Adult Responsibilities - Relies on the child to care for siblings or manage household tasks.
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Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical indicators that a child or young person is being physically abused.	• Unexplained Injuries - Bruises, burns, fractures, or cuts in various stages of healing, injuries with clear patterns (e.g., belt marks, handprints) • Frequent or Recurrent Injuries - Regular appearance of injuries without a reasonable explanation, caregiver explanations may be inconsistent or implausible • Developmental Delays - Hearing, vision and language delays. • Fear of Physical Contact - Flinching or recoiling when approached, reluctance to be touched or examined • Wearing Concealing Clothing - Long sleeves or pants worn even in warm weather, possibly to hide injuries • Delayed or Inadequate Medical Attention - Injuries left untreated or medical care not sought in a timely manner • Signs of restraint - Marks on wrists, ankles, or other areas suggesting the use of restraints
Behavioural indicators that child or young person is being physically abused.	• Fearful or Anxious Behaviour - Appears afraid of going home or being around certain adults, flinches or cowers when approached suddenly • Aggression or Withdrawal - Displays aggressive behaviour toward peers, adults or animals, may be unusually quiet, withdrawn, or overly compliant • Reluctance to Change Clothes or Participate in Physical Activities - Avoids activities that require changing clothes, may try to hide parts of the body • Regression in Development - Reverts to earlier behaviours such as bedwetting or thumb-sucking, shows signs of emotional distress or developmental delays • Hypervigilance - Constantly alert or on edge, as if anticipating danger, difficulty relaxing or concentrating • Disclosures or Hints of Abuse - May talk about being hurt or punished harshly, makes indirect comments that suggest fear or pain • Avoidance of Physical Contact - Resists hugs or physical closeness. • Sudden Changes in Behaviour • Inconsistent or Implausible Explanations for Injuries - Provides vague, changing, or unlikely reasons for their injuries
Indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate physical abuse.	• Aggressive or Controlling Behaviour - Displays anger or hostility toward the child in public • Inconsistent or Implausible Explanations for Injuries - Provides vague, changing, or unlikely reasons for the child's injuries, avoids discussing the child's physical condition, may blame the injury on another person. • Reluctance to Seek Medical Help for the Child - Delays or avoids taking the child to a doctor or hospital, may refuse consent for medical treatment • Minimizing or Denying Harmful Behaviour - Dismisses concerns raised by others about the child's wellbeing, claims injuries are accidental or blames the child

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators that a child or young person is being sexually abused	• Injuries to Genital or Anal Areas - Bruising, bleeding, swelling, or pain in the genital or anal region, difficulty walking or sitting • Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) - Diagnosis of an STI in a child or young person, genital discharge, itching, or sores • Clothing may be damaged or show signs of trauma • Frequent Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) or Yeast Infections - Especially when recurrent and unexplained by medical conditions, unexplained pain or discomfort • Excessive washing or refusal to bathe
Behavioural indicators that child or young person is being sexually abused	• Sexualized Behaviour or Knowledge Beyond Age - Engages in sexual play or uses sexual language inappropriate for their age, demonstrates knowledge of sexual acts that is not age-appropriate • Sudden Changes in Behaviour or Mood - Becomes withdrawn, anxious, depressed, or fearful, exhibits mood swings or emotional instability • Avoidance of Specific People or Places - Shows fear or reluctance to be around certain individuals, avoids places such as bathrooms or sleep rooms • Regression in Development - Returns to earlier behaviours such as bedwetting, thumb-sucking, or clinginess. • Difficulty with Relationships and Trust - Struggles to form healthy relationships with peers or adults • Loss of interest in activities
Indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse.	• May be unusually over-protective of a child - may consistently intervene in the child's interactions with others • Is jealous of a child or young person's relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child or young person - may express resentment or discomfort when the child bonds with others. • May favour the victim over other children - may give the child special privileges, gifts, or attention that are not extended to others. • Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child or young person which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones - may touch the child in ways that are inappropriate, overly intimate, or make others uncomfortable and may use affectionate gestures that are not typical in a professional or caregiving context e.g., stroking, prolonged hugging, or touching near private areas.

Indicators of Family Violence

Physical indicators that a child or young person is being exposed to family violence	• Unexplained injuries or frequent bruises • Regression in toileting or sleeping habits • Frequent illness or complaints of headaches/stomach aches without medical cause • Delayed speech or motor skills • Poor concentration or memory
Behavioural indicators that a child or young person is being exposed to family violence	• Fearfulness or anxiety, especially around certain adults or in specific settings • Aggression or withdrawal - children may lash out or become unusually quiet and reserved • Hypervigilance - constantly alert or jumpy, as if anticipating danger • Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness • Difficulty forming relationships with peers or adult • Isolation from peers or reluctance to go home • Overly protective of other siblings or parent • Mature or parentified behaviour - taking on adult responsibilities or roles
Indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate family violence.	• Neglect of children's needs - Failing to provide emotional support, supervision, or basic care due to stress or fear. • Inconsistent discipline - Harsh punishment or complete lack of boundaries. • Using children as pawns - Involving children in adult conflicts. • Fearful or avoidant interactions - Children may show fear around the adult or avoid physical contact • Frequent disruptions - Multiple relocations, school changes, or unexplained absences.

Appendix 2

Responding to and reporting child abuse or neglect

If: you see a child being abused you observe signs of abuse or neglect of a child a child discloses abuse to you someone tells you of a concern

Act immediately if you see a child being abused!

Respond to the child's needs	• Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. • Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child - seek medical help if appropriate.
Listen to the child if they disclose abuse or neglect	• Listen to the child • Do not question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify your concern. • Reassure them you will take action to keep them safe. Remember you are not an investigator - leave that to Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police.

Call the police on 111 if the child is in immediate danger

If you are a staff member

Immediately inform the person responsible	If the suspected abuser is the person responsible, inform the Service provider. Where this is not possible, contact: • Oranga Tamariki 0508EDASSIST (0508 332 774) or email contact@ot.govt.nz; or • contact the Police. Anyone can report suspected abuse or neglect of a child.
Prepare a written record and give it to the person responsible	• Date, time and place of observation/report of abuse. • Names of anyone present. • Word-for-word what the child said. • Any physical or behavioural signs. • Record what actions have been taken. Do not add your own interpretations or assumptions or take photos.

If you are the person responsible

Report the concern or disclosure of abuse	• If a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected contact Oranga Tamariki promptly on 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774)
Gather information	• If concerns are reported to you - Ensure you get a complete, signed report from the person who identified the abuse or neglect. • If needed contact Oranga Tamariki or Police for support and guidance to help prepare your report. • Provide the notifier with appropriate support and explain the actions you intend to take. • Act promptly to report the concern or disclosure abuse
Report the concern or disclosure of abuse promptly	• If it is suspected that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected contact Oranga Tamariki promptly Ph 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) or contact@ot.govt.nz and make a formal report. • Ask for advice and guidance about how to approach whaanau or caregivers about the report. • Ask what the next steps are and a timeframe for follow-up.

Notify MoE	Email a summary of the report to the Education Review Office as required by HS128. If your report was verbal, forward the acknowledgement received from Oranga Tamariki. Let us know if you need any further support from us.
Support the child	- Ensure the child receives appropriate support. - Continue to monitor the child's wellbeing.

Additional steps if the person suspected of abusing or neglecting a child is employed by the service

Exclusion and notification to NZTC:	- If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the service has physically ill-treated or abused a child take immediate steps to exclude the person from coming into contact with children. (Regulation 56) during the investigation. - If the concern involves a Certificated Teacher, notify the Teaching Council immediately — don't wait until your investigation is complete. - Recommend the teacher seeks advice from their union or lawyer.
Inform the parents/whaanau	- Inform parents/whaanau, whose child/ren have been affected by the staff member's actions of the allegations. - They will be offered support and informed of the actions that will be taken.
Complete an investigation	Using the incident record template - see appendix 3
Seek legal advice	Seek employment/legal advice where appropriate.
Keep records	Ensure all records are kept securely. Share information only with those who need to know.
Healing the community	Contact the MoE's Traumatic Incident team for support on 0800 848 326.

Incidents and Complaints Report

The purpose of this form is to inform the Education Review Office of the steps Tuakau Learning Centre has taken to date in following up an incident/complaint

Report prepared by (Name and position):	
Date:	

Summary

Nature of incident/complaint	
Location of incident/complaint	
Persons Affected	
Date/time of incident/complaint	
Date/time discovered	

Incident/Complaint Overview

At.....(time) where.....who(child/ren)	
What happened	

Incident/Complaint Overview

Leaders/Head Teachers	
Teachers (unqualified)	
Teachers (qualified)	
Others (ESWs, teacher aides, student teachers, whaanau etc)	

Persons involved in the investigation

Service provider contact	
Manager/s	
Leaders/Head Teachers	
External organisations, agencies, teams	

Background (Provide the background/context to the situation)

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Allegations/Incident/Complaint (Clearly state what has occurred and any breach of regulations and/or criteria using succinct bullet points)

Actions undertaken (Specify all actions taken by the service provider to investigate the complaint/incident. Add appropriate reports/letters as an appendix)

Risk/Mitigation (Identify any risks to the situation - some examples below in italic)

Risks (some examples below)	Mitigation
<i>Harm to others</i>	<i>Depends of the situation - the steps you will take to prevent further harm</i>
<i>Potential media coverage</i>	<i>Prepare a media statement and nominate a spokesperson</i>
<i>Reputation of the service</i>	<i>Be as open as you can about things without breaching confidentiality</i>

Outcomes or recommendations (Clearly state the outcome of the investigation and specify any actions taken or to be taken)

External organisations informed

- Ministry of Education
- WorkSafe
- Teaching Council
- Ministry of Health
- Police
- Oranga Tamariki
- ERO
- Local Council
- Internal Affairs
- MBIE
- Privacy Commissioner
- Commissioner for Children
- Other _____

Attachments

1.1

1.2

MOE