

Child protection policy

Christopher and Robin Early childhood centre is committed to the protection of children and the prevention of child abuse. This policy is written under the principle that children attending our daycare have a right to feel safe and comfortable.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

This policy is written in accordance with the following legislation:

- *Education Act 1989
- *Children, young persons and their families Act, 1989
- *Crimes Act, 1961
- *Domestic Violence Act,1995
- *Health Act,1956
- *Health and Disability Sector Stds Reg,2001
- *Privacy Act,1993
- *Health Info Privacy Code,1994
- *Vulnerable Childrens Act,2014
- *Care of Children Act,2004
- *Employment Relations Act,2000
- *Human Rights Act

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, and updated regularly in light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislation and associated policies. This policy will be placed on the wall of the office at Christopher and Robin Childcare and be available online.

Scope:

This policy covers all staff of Christopher and Robin who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed or

contracted by Potential Plus Education, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Christopher and Robin. This includes teaching and non teaching staff either onsite or at another setting.

The Children's, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989 defines child abuse as "the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person".

Principles:

This Child Protection Policy confirms the commitment of Christopher and Robin to the protection of children and proceeds to:

- *Outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide
- *Define child abuse
- *Outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of abuse or ill treatment is known or suspected
- *Establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff
- *Explore the implications for staff training

Christopher and Robin will ensure that:

- *Staff are selected with the principles of this policy in mind.
- *Staff are appropriately trained in issues of child protection
- *Staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures and guidelines.

Christopher and Robin recognises that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting children from harm. Overall responsibility, implementation and review of this policy rests with the Manager of the centre.

All services provided by Christopher and Robin for the safety and wellbeing of children adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation: and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Responsibilities:

Any member of staff, paid or voluntary, may directly witness child abuse or have allegations, made by a child or an adult, relayed to them. There may also be disclosures of abuse that have occurred prior to attending daycare.

Sustained abuse and neglect of children, wherever it occurs, can have major long term effects on all aspects of children health, development and well being and their ability to sustain stable and meaningful relationships in the future. It is the intention of Christopher and Robin to ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children at all times. This is achieved through consistent and agreed protocols regarding child protection, as well as the regular undertaking of awareness raising training.

Each member of staff must:

- *be aware of, and alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- *record factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention.
- *appropriately seek advice and support from their Designated Person for Child Protection who will then contact external agencies if appropriate.
- *work in co-operation with the parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety of the child.

It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Oranga Tamariki and the police.

Role of Centre Manager:

- *Ensure the needs and rights of children come first ie: the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount.
- *Receive information that suggests potential or actual risk of harm to a child who attends Christopher and Robin irrespective of whether the alleged abuse is current, past or likely to occur. The manager will advise and support staff and on the basis of the initial detail, will make a decision as to whether or not to delegate to the Designated Person for Child Protection for further action.
- *Delegate to the Designated Person for Child Protection appropriate action and responsibilities as concerns are raised.
- *Make any referrals to Oranga Tamariki as appropriate

- *Ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately. No investigations will occur without appropriate consultation and a decision whether a response from Oranga Tamariki or the Police is required.
- *Ensure that allegations or complaints (against staff) are appropriately referred to the Education Council of Aotearoa NZ (EDUCANZ)
- *Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is effectively implemented.
- *Ensure that all staff are aware of, have access to, full copies of the procedures for reporting child abuse.
- *Ensure that all staff are recruited and employed in accordance with the guidelines identified in the Employment Policy to identify those people safe to work with children.
- *Ensure that all staff receive child protection training.

Role of Designated Person for Child Protection

- *Ensure the needs and rights of children come first.
- *Ensure and safeguard clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection cases. These must contain all available information relating to the cause for concern and any subsequent action taken, including when it has been decided not to make a notification to Oranga Tamariki or the police. These records will be kept separate from enrolment records for the purpose of confidentiality.
- *Establish a close link with the relevant local agencies to ensure clear and effective communication and be a recognised contact within Christopher and Robin for agencies to contact regarding concerns.
- *Ensure that all staff are supported appropriately when dealing with child protection concerns.
- *Consult with the Centre Manager regarding all child protection concerns. Keep a register of support agencies for parents, staff and self to utilise if necessary.

Procedures

All staff will respond to concerns of child abuse by following the identified procedures, consulting appropriately and collaborating with external agencies. The procedures below will help staff with:

- ***The identification of abuse**

***Handling disclosures, whether verbal or behavioural, from a child.**

***Reporting Procedures**

Identification of abuse: If the designated person for child protection is unavailable for advice and guidance then staff should consult with the centre manager. At any time staff may seek advice from Oranga Tamariki (0508 Family) regarding child protection concerns.

Further information regarding signs and indicators of abuse is included in the booklet "How can I tell?" (Child Matters). Copy in office.

Handling disclosures from a child

If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff it is important that staff take what the child is saying seriously. Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. Any incidents, concerns or suspicions must be reported following the procedures set out below.

Reporting procedures:

All concerns of potential, suspected or alleged abuse must be brought to the attention of the designated person for child protection. If unavailable then consultation should happen with the centre manager. A decision will be made as to whether to seek further advice or notify Oranga Tamariki or the police.

When reporting an incident staff should:

*Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection

*Record in writing all conversations and actions taken.

Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must include the following:

- Record of facts, including observations, with time and date
- What was said and by whom, using the person's words
- What action has been taken, by whom and when.

Keeping the child's family informed and involved

Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibilities may

not be initially informed. This may happen when:

- *The parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator.
- *It is possible the child may be intimidated into silence.
- *There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed.

Sharing information and confidentiality

The safety of the child is paramount. At times a child is unable to speak for or protect themselves therefore Christopher and Robin has a greater responsibility to know when and how to share appropriate information with external agencies to protect the safety and wellbeing of children.

Giving information to protect children better is not a breach in confidentiality. Where ever possible the family/whanau should be kept informed on what information has been shared and to which agency, and for what purpose. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 1993 states “disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat”.

Should Christopher and Robin be contacted with a request for information or access to interview a child then the following procedure will be followed:

- *Confirm the identity of person requesting information
- *Notify the Centre Manager and Designated Person
- *Identify specific information required and purpose
- *Check information held – does Christopher and Robin have the info requested?
- *Centre Manager to provide permission.
- *Depending on the reason for the request, and risk to children as judged case by case inform the family that info has been requested, by whom and seek permission. If this is a child protection issue, permission from the family is not required.

Document all steps in the process. Ensure that all documentation is placed on the child’s file.

Action to be taken by the Designated Person:

Concerns regarding alleged or suspected abuse will first be raised to the Designated Person for Child Protection. If further guidance is required then consultation will occur with the centre manager. A decision will be made whether this information needs to be escalated to Oranga Tamariki. All

decisions taken, including if the concern **does not** require notifying Oranga Tamariki must be recorded in writing and kept secure in a Child Protection file with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

Safe recruitment of Staff

All appointments (permanent, fixed term, student, casual or volunteer) to positions that have direct and/or frequent contact with children will be conditional on a safety check, including a Police Vet.

Staff Training

All teaching staff will receive basic child protection training appropriate to their role. This will include an overview of signs and indicators of abuse, and also the procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse and the procedures for reporting a concern. At induction, staff will be provided with the booklet "How can I tell" and a copy of the Child Protection Policy. The designated Person for Child Protection will undertake more intensive training. All staff will receive updated training every three years as a minimum.

Supervision of Staff and access to children

The management team of Christopher and Robin will ensure that staff and other adults visiting or working in the service are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children. This includes safe viewing windows into spaces where intimate caretaking is required. Opportunities for staff to be alone with children are kept to a minimum.

Professionalism

Christopher and Robin encourage staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate. It discourages close personal relationships with children and families outside the work environment.

If asked to babysit by parents staff must let management know. This is for the safety of both the children and the staff member involved.

Allegations against staff

Christopher and Robin has a duty of care to the children it provides services to. A failure to report a significant concern about a child is a breach of that child's human rights.

Allegations against a staff member, a volunteer or a representative of another agency must be taken seriously and reported to the Centre Manager and/or

Designated Person who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined in this policy. Concerns may be raised a number of ways eg:

- *Directly by staff hearing or observing issues or behaviour of concern.
- *Direct disclosure by the child
- *Indirect disclosure eg: through artwork or friends
- *Complaint from parents/caregiver or whanau
- *Reports by other colleagues or agencies
- *An anonymous report

It is **not** the responsibility of staff to investigate allegations of child abuse. Allegations against staff will be discussed with the Directors where a decision will be made if a notification to Oranga Tamariki is appropriate.

In all child protection cases Christopher and Robin will cooperate fully with both Oranga Tamariki and the Police.

If the police decide to undertake a criminal investigation then the staff member may be suspended without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.

If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or inappropriate behaviour may have occurred. The allegation may represent poor practice by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures,

A complaint or allegation against a member of staff may require a report to Education Council of Aotearoa NZ (EDUCANZ)

All staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children. All staff have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in those standards by others. Any concerns or reasonable suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Centre Manager. A person tendering his or her resignation or ceasing to provide their services will not prevent an allegation of abuse against a child being followed up in accordance with these procedures.