



Kidsbase Ltd
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CHILD PROTECTION:

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CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection

On 1 July 2014 the Vulnerable Children Act and other associated legislation passed into law. The Act forms a significant part of comprehensive measures to protect and improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and strengthen our child protection system.

The reforms were proposed in the White Paper for Vulnerable Children and the Children's Action Plan, which were released in October 2012 after significant consultation with the public that resulted in almost 10,000 submissions.

The Children's Action Plan and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 rest on the belief that no single agency alone can protect vulnerable children. For the first time, five chief executives of government agencies are jointly accountable for acting together to develop and implement a plan to protect our children from harm, working with families/whānau and communities.

A number of measures have been enacted to keep our children safe. These include standard safety checking for paid staff in the government-funded children's workforce and new requirements for government agencies and their funded providers to have child protection policies

The Vulnerable Children Act, and two other related Acts amending the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act and the KiwiSaver Act, was developed by a multi-agency team of officials from the Vulnerable Children's Board group of agencies. The measures in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 contribute to the Government's Better Public Services result to reduce the number of physical assaults on children.

The legislative changes are being phased in over several years, together with associated Children's Action Plan initiatives. These include four Children's Teams, with another six Children's Teams to be established during 2015, and development of common competencies for all children's workers.

Altogether, the changes provide a framework for professionals from the different sectors to work better together to help children. By breaking down the barriers to information sharing and cross-sector working, and brokering more targeted service provision, we can ensure children get better access to the services they need.

Our commitment to Child Protection:

This policy fulfils our organisation's commitment to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect and the vulnerability of children in a timely and appropriate way.

Our organisation recognises that there is increasing awareness that abuse and neglect of children can and does happen and is determined to make a positive difference to this problem.

This policy is our organisation's commitment to protect vulnerable children from abuse and neglect through its actions, activities and staff.

This policy provides our organisation with a broad framework and expectations to protect vulnerable children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse or neglect.



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Our policy recognises the important role and responsibility of all of our staff in the protection of children by identifying and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect and appropriately responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

All staff (including contractors and volunteers) have a responsibility to discuss any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, with their manager/supervisor or the designated person for child protection.

Managers/supervisors or the designated person for child protection have a responsibility to ensure that the appropriate authority is notified when a staff member has a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. This extends to ensuring that all known information about the child, young person and their family/whānau is shared in full with the appropriate authority, to determine the most appropriate response.

The policy should also be clear that it is intended to protect all children staff may encounter – including siblings, the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff.

The policy should include principles or values that inform staff decision-making and help promote your organisation's culture of child protection. These will reflect the unique perspective and context of your organisation. You should involve staff and clients/service users in the formation of these principles because a sense of ownership will make the principles far more enduring.

Kidsbase:

Kidsbase will ensure that its' staff are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with children, staff will not be left alone with children. Children will not be taken on outings without parental approval in writing or by phone and will be accompanied by more than one adult. In the case of an emergency every attempt will be made for a child to be accompanied by two adults. Kidsbase has established a set of rules about acceptable touching of children. All adults working at Kidsbase will be made aware of these rules. Apart from toilets and bathrooms Kidsbase will have an open door policy and staff should be aware where all children are at all times.

The programme employment procedures include a thorough examination and checking of each applicant's previous work history and we make contact personally with both referees and some past employers. This will be done with the applicant's consent. Our prime consideration in choosing staff will be ensuring that they have skills and attributes which contribute to the children's safety and health, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development and will not put children at risk of abuse.

Kidsbase encourages employees and volunteers to keep their personal and professional lives separate and we do not encourage the fostering of close personal relationships and/or caretaking activities with children and families outside the work environment. We will, on a regular basis, collectively review our child abuse policies and evaluate our performance in meeting the standards outlined by them.

Kidsbase encourages parents to be involved in our activities. Parents and family are welcome to visit the programme at any time. Our child abuse prevention policies will be made available to all parents. If parents have any concerns about the treatment of a child by any of our staff they are encouraged to make these known. We will ensure that the matter is fully investigated and acted on if necessary. We will use an advisor and mediator from outside Kidsbase if independent investigation or arbitration is indicated.

All staff will authorise the release of details via Police Vetting and sign a declaration about their criminal record. This is subject to the provisions of the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004.



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Kidsbase is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children, with the well-being and safety of the children being our primary goal. The following policy and code of behaviour are a means of achieving this.

The interests and welfare of the child will be the prime consideration when any decision is made about a child suspected of being abused. Kidsbase supports the roles of statutory agencies, i.e.: the Police and Child, Youth and Family (formerly CYPFA), in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspicion of abuse to these agencies.

Staff should note that Section 15 of the CYP&A Act 1989 provides that any person may report instances of suspected or known abuse to CYF's.

Section 15: reporting of ill-treatment or neglect of child – Any person who believes that any child has been, or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a social worker¹ or a member of police.

¹Social worker is defined in the CYPF Act as a Department of Child Youth and Family Services social worker

Kidsbase will maintain a good working relationship with Child, Youth and Family and will be familiar with the law that serves to protect children from abuse. We will consult with the Department and with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge. We will not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise.

Kidsbase will respond to suspicions of child abuse by recording all observations, impressions and communications about children suspected of being abused.

No staff member should act alone about suspicions and consult with management who will be committed to taking action and arranging for consultation with appropriate agencies. However any staff member has the right to report a case of suspected abuse to the police or Child Youth & Family if they feel the child's immediate safety is threatened.

Kidsbase will act on recommendations made by relevant agencies and Child, Youth and Family concerning the official reporting of the suspected abuse and on the consulting of families. At no time will we regard ourselves as having the child's parent's permission to consult or report.

If we individually or collectively suspect that a staff member or other person within Kidsbase has perpetuated child abuse, we will not collude with or protect that person or Kidsbase but promptly report the matter to the management and statutory authorities. The suspected member of staff will be prevented from having further access to children during any investigation and will be informed fully of their rights.

Children, families and staff involved in the investigation of allegations of child abuse will have support and we will refer them to appropriate support agencies in the community for support.



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Responding to Suspicions of Child Abuse

The following guidelines must be followed if a staff member suspects child abuse:

- Trust your instincts
- Remember a child's well-being comes first
- Look for signs of abuse
- Document the facts
- Contact Child, Youth and Family immediately and discuss your concerns

What if a child or young person discloses abuse?

- Don't panic
- Listen
- Do not **interview** the child about what they have said
- Write down what the child says
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing
- Tell them that they will get help
- Tell your supervisor or operator as soon as possible
- Contact Child Youth and Family or the Police
- Look after yourself
- If nothing seems to be happening, contact Child Youth and Family again

Can I stay anonymous?

- Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality
- State whether you wish to remain anonymous
- You may be called to give evidence but this is very rare
- No court action can be brought against a person reporting child abuse or neglect unless the information was supplied in bad faith (section 16 CYPF Act)

For all advice on suspected child abuse contact:

Child Youth and Family call centre

www.cyf.govt.nz

0508 FAMILY 0508 326 459

Definitions:

Abuse – the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation of any child.

b. **Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

c. **Child** – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.

d. **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.

e. **Designated person for child protection** – the manager/supervisor or designated person



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responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about the child protection policy.

f. **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

g. **Child, Youth and Family** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing a statutory response to children found to be in need of care and protection.

h. **New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work, including investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

i. **Children's services** – any organisation that provides services to children or to adults where contact with children may be part of the service. These organisations should have child protection policies. Organisations that provide services to adults who may be caring for or parenting children should also consider developing a policy, e.g., adult mental health and addiction services.

j. **Safer recruitment** – following good practice processes for pre-employment checking which help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children's workforce.

k. **Standard safety checking** – the process of safer recruitment that will be mandatory for organisations covered by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

l. **Workforce restriction** – a restriction on the employment or engagement of people with **Children's workforce/children's workers** – people who work with children, or who have regular contact with children, as part of their roles.

Abuse and Neglect Definitions:

a. **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

b. **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.



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c. **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.

This can include:

Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others.

Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.

Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.

d. **Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious.

Neglect can be:

Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).

Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).

Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).

Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).

Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention)

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Child Youth and Family call centre

www.cyf.govt.nz

0508 FAMILY 0508 326 459

Code of Behaviour for Kidsbase Staff

Kidsbase expects staff to be supportive, non-abusive and to present themselves as a positive role model. Many children have affectionate natures and express themselves freely. Regardless of the situation and child's culture and nature, staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact.

To minimise the risk of actual or alleged abuse in a programme, we are committed to raising awareness of all staff Working with children, to help staff avoid being put in any inappropriate or risky situations.

In making physical contact with children, adults should be guided by the principle that they will do so solely in order to meet the child's physical or emotional needs. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Children should not be asked to take care of adult physical or emotional needs.

If a child initiates physical contact in seeking of affection, reassurance or comfort it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child's developmental stage and needs. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection or touching on a child.

The physical contact of children during changing or personal cleaning must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for that job. Children should be encouraged to take care of themselves to the limits of their ability.

- Staff should avoid being alone with a child.
- Staff must be aware of where all children are at all times.



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- Management should ensure employees, volunteers and visitors are never alone with a child or group of children.
- Staff may not smoke in front of the children, in the building or programme areas.
- Clothing should facilitate job performance (i.e. be appropriate for participating in activities, be safe, be appropriate for role modelling to children).
- Personal visitors and telephone calls shall not interfere with responsibilities of supervision.
- Staff must realise their individual emotional and physical limitations and request support and/or relief when necessary.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Staff medication must be labelled and stored out of reach of the children.
- Children should not be present when staff uses the toilet and bathroom facilities for personal needs.
- “Adult” topics of conversation should not take place within hearing of the children.
- Staff should maintain a professional relationship with families with respect to confidentiality, objectivity and conflict of interest.
- Except for an emergency, children must not be taken from the programme without parental consent.
- If a staff member is implicated as being responsible for the abuse, contact with the Programme Directors shall be made immediately, by the staff member. The Directors shall ensure that the interests of the staff member (refer to NZEI guidelines) and those of the child are met.

The following guidelines must be followed if a staff member suspects child abuse:

- In the first instance suspicions should be directed to the programme Supervisor who will in-turn direct these to the programme Director – staff are expected to follow the Kidsbase reporting process, however any person, including staff has the right to report suspected abuse directly to Child, Youth and Family or the Police if they feel the child’s immediate safety is threatened (Section 15 CYP&F Act).
- Trust your instincts
- Remember a child’s well-being comes first
- Look for signs of abuse
- If abuse is suspected, or a child discloses abuse, document the facts on the “Suspected Child Abuse Recording Form”, it is very important to record any incidents and observations or what the child has said and not ask questions.
- Contact Child, Youth and Family immediately and discuss your concerns 0508 326 459

Failure of staff to adhere to this “Code of Behaviour” will result in the following discipline procedure:

- Should any investigation be deemed necessary the staff member will be stood down on full pay until the outcome of the investigation is known.
- The Employer may terminate this agreement summarily and without notice for serious misconduct on the part of the Employee. Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to:
- dishonesty
- harassment or abuse of a work colleague, parent or child
- serious or repeated failure to follow a reasonable instruction
- actions which seriously damage the Employer's reputation



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Visitors

All visitors are asked to sign in & out when visiting Kidsbase, this register will be at the front entrance of the programme.

Visitor stickers will be available so as to clearly identify people who are not parent/caregivers of the children attending the programme, eg contractors etc.

All visitors are asked to approach the programme Supervisor upon entering the programme; this is clearly written on the entrance programme signage. As a policy the programme Supervisor will approach all visitors upon entering to ascertain the reason for their visit.

Training:

Child protection training must be done by an approved Child Youth and Family provider

All other training can be done through the Oscar network/in-house or through an alternative provider

All information booklets from these courses will be available for staff to reference.

Core Module training of the below 4 Core Programme Modules will be carried out for all staff on an annual basis or when new regulation requires.

- Behaviour Management
- Health & Safety
- Emergency Procedures
- Child Care & Protection