

Safer organisations, safer children

**Using child protection policies to build
safer organisations**

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I. Introduction

The Children's Action Plan

The Children's Action Plan provides a framework to protect children. It is a living document that will continue to evolve as New Zealanders work together to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

These guidelines focus on developing or refreshing your organisation's child protection policies and practices, and are a key element in building safe organisations.

Other workforce initiatives under the Children's Action Plan include guidelines focussing on safer recruitment (vetting and screening) and the development of a framework of core competencies for those working with children.

Why these guidelines are needed

The Children's Action Plan includes a commitment to introduce guidance for organisations on how to identify and respond to potential child abuse and neglect.

These guidelines also support the requirements for child protection policies in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, which places obligations on organisations contracted or funded by state services to have child protection policies, to review their policies, and (in some cases) to report on these requirements regularly.

More information on the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and the Children's Action Plan can be found at: childrensactionplan.govt.nz

These guidelines contain information on what a good child protection policy should contain, along with links to high quality resources that to provide useful additional information.

High quality child protection policy and practices, supported by an organisational culture of child protection, maximise the opportunity for vulnerable children to receive the help they need quickly and within a safe environment.

Who these are guidelines for

Child protection policies, supported by an organisational culture of child protection, are important for any organisation that provides services to children or to adults where contact with children may be part of the provision of the service.

What a child protection culture looks like

An organisation with a culture of child protection is open and accountable, understands the needs of children, and makes their safety and security a priority.

Organisations with cultures of child protection are ones where:

- Child-centred decision-making informs actions taken by recognising the vulnerability of children.
- There is a culture of staff constructively challenging poor practice, and staff who feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- Organisations work towards continuous improvement in their child protection practices.
- Concerns about the safety of children are taken seriously and responded to quickly.
- There are clear policies and procedures in place that are accessible to staff, along with sources of advice on good practice.
- Staff receive the training they need to respond to the needs of children accessing the service, including understanding the signs and symptoms of potential abuse or neglect, and responding appropriately where a concern is raised or an allegation is made (including ones involving staff).
- Staff understand safe practice. For example, when and how to touch, comfort, or discipline children; and what is expected of them when they are alone with a child.
- The organisation uses safer recruitment procedures.

How these guidelines help

These guidelines are intended to take your organisation through the process of developing or reviewing a child protection policy. They include:

- An introduction to child protection policies, and a description of the key features of high quality ones.
- A short checklist to help identify any gaps in your organisation's current child protection policy.
- A template that may be helpful to organisations that have identified gaps in their policies, or who need to write a new policy.
- Detailed guidelines to help develop or review your current child protection policy.
- Links to important documents that provide more information on key areas for organisations to utilise when developing detailed policy content.
- A range of example child protection policies developed using these guidelines.

Organisations should also feel comfortable using additional resources beyond the scope of this document that are relevant to protecting the safety of children accessing your service.

Developing child protection policies

The process of developing a policy is unique to every organisation. We suggest the following starting points:

- Consider if designating a responsible person for your organisations child protection policy is appropriate.

A Designated Person for Child Protection has a key role as the champion for improving child protection practices within your organisation, and will also be a source of advice and expertise for staff seeking assistance. They should be either a manager/supervisor or someone within your organisation knowledgeable on child protection issues. They would also be the primary point of contact for escalating any concerns or allegations of child abuse or neglect.

- Collect all existing policies together in one place, and check whether any guidance (in addition to this document) has been made available specifically for organisations in your sector.
- Bring staff into the policy-making process early on to ensure that the child protection policy reflects their work environment. This will help staff understand why the policy is being developed, and have a sense of ownership over the process and resulting policy.
- Review your organisation's current child related policies and practices. Putting these into one document and assessing it against the checklist (page 9) will provide a strong foundation for developing a child protection policy.
- Consider whether your organisations child protection policy should include specific statements on expectations for staff concerning:
 - (i) Being alone with children.
 - (ii) Physical contact, including comforting children in distress, and helping children to dress or use the bathroom (if a necessary part of service delivery).
 - (iii) Taking children off-site, to the staff member's home, or having children in cars.
 - (iv) Communicating with children, including use of telecommunications technology.
 - (v) Appropriate and inappropriate relationships with children, including over-familiarity, providing gifts, and fostering infatuation.
 - (vi) Policies on safe restraint and isolation practices.
 - (vii) Any other high risk situations relevant to delivery of services by your organisation.

Turning policies into an organisational culture

The existence of a written policy does not establish a safe environment for children. Instead, it should be part of an organisation-wide commitment to a culture of child protection.

The following advice can help your organisation to increase its commitment to child protection:

- **Create the need**– tell the story of why focussing on child protection is important for your organisation. Complying with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, or the need to maximise opportunities for children to receive help, are both important drivers you can point to.

- **Make sure that the right people are involved** – organisational leaders need to be involved and to strongly promote child protection. People across your organisation with a wide range of roles and responsibilities need to also be involved throughout the policy writing process.
- **Communicate simply and clearly** about the focus on child protection, the reasons for it, and what it means for staff – use positive and empowering messages (“This policy will help us to do our job and keep children safe”; “This policy will help keep us safe while we do our job”).
- **Empower staff** – provide orientation and training opportunities on the child protection policy, and reward staff who demonstrate commitment and follow the policies and practices.
- **Make the process manageable** – identify priority areas and provide additional support in these areas. Even simple actions, like putting a copy of the policy up in a shared area, can go a long way to demonstrating a commitment to focus on child protection.
- **Make the policy stick** – incorporate demonstrated use and understanding of the child protection policy into personnel management, leadership and recruitment within your organisation.
- **Continually review** – annually review your policy and practices to ensure that the document is updated so that it reflect changes or improvements in your organisation, stays relevant, and is regularly reconsidered as part of organisational life.

Ultimately, child protection policies and practices must be living documents. This means that to be effective, they need to be incorporated into daily business processes, including recruitment and orientation, training and professional development.

Examples include ensuring that:

- **Recruitment policies** and practices include confirming identity, obtaining references and if there is a chance that the worker may have unsupervised access to children staff, a Police Criminal Record check (including regular volunteers)
- **Supervision policies** and practices ensure that no one (either in a paid role or as a volunteer) has unsupervised access to children, or information held about children, unless they have been vetted and screened and the employer continues to have confidence in them
- **Orientation policies** and practices for paid and volunteer staff include training in the child protection policy and practices
- **Human Resource policies** and practices specifically address the situation where an allegation is made or concern is raised about a staff member’s behaviour or actions around children.

Relationship with the CYF *Working Together Guide*

While covering some shared material, this document is intended to be complementary to the Child, Youth and Family, *Working Together Guide*. The *Working Together Guide* is aimed at practitioners, and focuses on identifying and responding to abuse, and is recommended as a resource for organisations looking to support staff giving effect to the policy recommendations in these guidelines.

Glossary of Terms

'Child' means a child or young person aged 0-17 years.

'Child protection policies' are the documentation supporting the processes and procedures that organisations use to keep children accessing their service safe.

'Child protection practices' are the processes and procedures that organisations use to implement their child protection policy.

'Child protection' is 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.

'Provider, employer or organisation' includes voluntary, commercial, private or

independent agencies or organisations. providing services for children and families.

'Safety' means that children in an organisation's care are not exposed to a risk of abuse or neglect that could reasonably have been predicted or prevented by the organisation.

'Safer recruitment' means using recruitment processes that help keep children safe, including robust vetting and screening.

'Staff' means all persons employed or engaged (including volunteers) by an organisation.

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II. Child protection policy checklist

Assessing your organisations current child related policies and practices against this checklist will help identify any gaps that need to be addressed

The Child Protection Policy Checklist

Introduction and principles

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Does the policy contain an overview and summary of the policy, including the purpose, intended audience, and scope? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Does the policy contain a purpose statement that outlines why the policy is needed, and what outcomes the policy is intended to achieve? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Is it clear who the policy applies to? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Are the principles staff are required to apply in making and acting on decisions concerning child protection clearly stated in the policy? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Are key terms and concepts included in the policy defined? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Guidelines and protocols

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| 5 | Is detailed guidance on identifying possible abuse or neglect included? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Are specific instructions on how to respond to suspected abuse or neglect included (including escalation, reporting and documenting)? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Are there clear guidelines on how to respond to disclosures by children? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Is it clear what happens if a concern is raised or an allegation made that involves a staff member? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Does the policy confirm your organisations ongoing commitment to appropriate training, development and supervision in child protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional guidance

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 10 | Does the policy include Information on related documentation and commitments to regularly review the policy? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Does the policy provide clear guidance for staff about confidentiality and information sharing? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

III. Developing a child protection policy

Overview

This section contains supporting guidelines for each of the sections outlined in the child protection policy checklist.

They are a resource to support the development of a high quality child protection policy.

For each section, key information is provided, as well as links to more comprehensive resources for organisations that “want to know more”.

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1

Policy summary

Overview

Policies should be accessible to all staff, and be clear about what issues they can help with. The policy summary helps staff immediately understand what the policy covers and highlights key points in the policy. The summary should:

- include a short positive outcome statement describing the intent of the policy
- confirm that the policy applies to all staff
- highlight key points.

Key guidance

1. Write the overview/summary so that staff will understand immediately what it covers. This helps staff looking for assistance to quickly identify that the policy is the one they need.
2. This is an opportunity to communicate “critical information”. For example, the name and role of a “Designated Person for Child Protection”.
3. Consider also whether to include a contents page, or a quick reference guide for common “issues” staff may be using the guide to help address (for example, a page reference for guidance on responding to suspected abuse or neglect).
4. It can also be useful to include administrative information on the first page of the policy – who authored the policy, who the current “owner” of the policy is, when it was last updated, and where a digital copy can be found.

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contains overviews/summaries that clearly place their policies within their organisational context.

2 Purpose statement

Overview

Your policy should include a short statement describing its purpose.

Try to include positive outcomes, for example, "Our child protection policy helps maximise the safety of children who access our services" "Our child protection policy ensures our staff are able to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect".

This will provide clarity to people using the policy and emphasise your organisation's commitment to child protection.

Key info

1. A shared understanding of child protection is an important part of your organisation's child protection culture.
2. In the context of these policies "child protection" does not mean preventing accidents (covered by health and safety policies) or making sure that a child's rights (defined, for example, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) are fully implemented. Instead these policies apply specifically to the protection of children from abuse and neglect.
3. Consider incorporating elements of the following statements into your own organisation's purpose statement:
 - a. Our organisation is committed to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect.
 - b. 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.
 - c. This policy is our organisation's commitment to protect children from abuse, and neglect through its actions, activities and staff.
 - d. This policy provides our organisation with a broad framework and expectations to protect children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse neglect.
 - e. 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.

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contains a purpose statement, tailored to the aspirations and context of the organisation that developed the policy.

3

Policy scope

Overview

Your policy should confirm that it applies to all staff and all children that staff come into contact with whilst at work.

When drafting your policy, consider:

- Is it clear that the policy applies to all staff, including volunteers and part-time or temporary roles?
- Is it clear that the policy is intended to protect all children – including siblings, the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff as they provide their service?

Key info

1. The policy should clearly outline the child protection responsibilities of all staff. For example:
 - All staff 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 has 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.
2. The policy should be clear that it applies to all children encountered by staff as they provide their service

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contains clear scopes that reflect the users of their service, and the children's workforce roles they employ or engage.

4

Policy principles

Overview

Your policy should include principles that your organisation is committing to by adopting the policy. These principles or values will inform staff decision-making, and help promote your organisation's culture of child protection.

These do not need to be highly detailed, but instead communicate a clear set of commitments and expectations to staff, to people who use your service – including their family and whānau, and to members of the wider public.

Key info

1. Your organisation's principles will reflect the unique perspective and context of your organisation. Consider directly involving staff in the formation of these principles – a sense of ownership will make the principles far more enduring.
2. The following principles are common to many children's services, and could form a starting point for discussions within your organisation:
 - a. A commitment to work together to produce the best possible outcomes for the child.
 - b. Recognition of the culture of the family, and its importance.
 - c. A commitment to develop and maintain links with iwi, Pacific and other cultural and communities groups, and ensuring that important cultural concepts (e.g., whakamanawa, whakapapa, te reo Māori, tikanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga) are integrated, as appropriate, into practice.
 - d. Making the safety of children the primary concern, with the child at the centre of all decision-making.
 - e. Recognising the rights of family and whānau to participate in the decision-making about children.
 - f. A commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, and are able to take appropriate action in response.
 - g. An organisational commitment to support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and high quality, and to always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
 - h. A commitment to share information in a timely way, and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues, the Manager/supervisor or the Designated Person for Child Protection.
 - i. A commitment to promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear.

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contains overviews/summaries that clearly place their policies within their organisational context.

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5

Definitions

Overview

Including clear definition of key terms and concepts in the policy is helpful for reducing confusion or uncertainty amongst staff and those accessing your service.

Key info

1. Consider the usefulness of the following example definitions
 - a. **Abuse** – the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person
 - b. **Child** – any child or young person aged 0-17 years.
 - c. **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.
 - d. **Designated Person for Child Protection** – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child, or who want advice about child protection policy.
 - e. **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by the child, parent or caregiver, or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
 - f. **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person.
 - g. **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including child sexual exploitation, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
 - h. **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.
 - i. **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.
 - j. **Child, Youth and Family** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect, and to provide care and protection to children found to be in need.
 - k. **New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contains robust definition sections

6

Guidance on identifying possible abuse or neglect

Overview

Child abuse and neglect can take many forms. Your policy should contain clear guidance to staff on what signs to look for in children they encounter in their work.

When drafting your policy, consider:

- Does the policy provide robust information about what the signs of potential abuse or neglect are? (it may be useful to include this information as an attachment to your organisations policy)
- Does the policy empower staff to act on suspected abuse and neglect, even when the symptoms or patterns of symptoms are subtle?
- How will staff be familiarised with this information? Will they need additional training?
- How will you ensure that this information is updated consistently to reflect an evolving understanding of good practice?

Key info

1. While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for staff to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
2. It is normal for staff to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that they should be able to recognise something is wrong, especially if they notice a pattern forming, or several signs that make them concerned.
3. Staff need to:
 - a. be aware of the signs of potential abuse. More information is detailed in the resources referenced below, but the signs include:
 - Physical signs
 - Behavioural concerns
 - Developmental delays, changes or signs
 - The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure)
 - b. be aware of the signs of potential neglect. More information is detailed in the resources referenced below, but the signs include:
 - Physical neglect
 - Neglectful supervision
 - Medical neglect
 - Abandonment
 - c. understand that every situation is different, and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For

example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

- d. understand what your organisation expects of your staff when they are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect, including talking to someone, either a colleague, manager/supervisor or Designated Person for Child Protection if they are uncertain
4. Your organisation may also consider providing more detailed advice:
- a. on recognising signs of elevated risk. For example, recognising the family circumstances, child characteristics, or parental characteristics that can be evidence of increased risk.
 - b. on recognising and responding to family violence. This is strongly recommended given the strong coincidence of family violence and child abuse.
 - c. issues of child vulnerability particularly relevant to your community that you consider staff need advice on. For example, some communities have recognised that forced marriages between young participants are a problem, and have taken steps to work together to better identify and respond to potential victims.

Additional resources

Working together guide

MOH documentation on identifying abuse and risk

High quality family violence resource

7

Guidance on responding to suspected abuse or neglect

Overview

Staff who believe they have identified possible abuse or neglect need to know how your organisation expects them to respond.

Your organisation's policy should clearly state the actions to be taken by staff, including who they should communicate any concern to, and when they should do so.

Key info

Your organisation's policy should clearly state your organisations expectations in regard to:

1. Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse: for example

(i) listen to the child	Disclosures by children are often subtle, and need to be handled with particular care
(ii) reassure the child	let the child know that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they are not in trouble they have done the right thing
(iii) ask open ended prompts – e.g., “What happened next?”	Do not interview the child Do not make promises that can't be kept, e.g., “I will keep you safe now
(iv) if the child is in visible distress	Provide appropriate reassurance, and re-engaged in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities
(v) if the child is not in immediate danger,	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
(vi) as soon as possible formally record the disclosure.	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> word for word, what the child said the date, time and who was present

2. Recording and notifying Child Youth & Family of suspected child abuse or neglect:

What Process to follow	For example	Key considerations
(i) Recording	formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> anything said by the child the date, time, location and the 	Relevant information can inform any future actions

	<p>names of any staff that may be relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (eg. any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns) the action taken by your organisation <p>any other information that may be relevant</p>	
(ii) Decision making	Discuss any concern with the manager/supervisor or the Designated Person for Child Protection	No decisions should be made in isolation
(iii) Notifying authorities	<p>Notify Child Youth & Family promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected.</p> <p>Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459)</p> <p>Fax: 09 914 1211</p> <p>email: cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz</p>	<p>Child Youth & Family will</p> <p>(i) make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers in consultation with your organisation</p> <p>(ii) advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate including referring the concern to the Police</p>
(iv) following the advice of Child Youth & Family	Child Youth & Family advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police	Child Youth & Family are responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether we need to work with the family, or put them in touch with people in their community that can help.
(v) storing relevant information	<p>Securely store:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the record of the concern a record of any related discussions a record of any advice received the action your organisation took, including any rationale this concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident)) 	Records assist in identifying patterns

Additional resources

Working together guide

8

Additional Guidance on allegations or concerns about staff

Overview

The same general process used for allegations or concerns about third parties should be used for staff members of your organisation.

It is important to ensure that the addressing the needs of the child remain the first priority.

However, staff should also be provided with support during what is likely to be a troubling or traumatic experience.

Key info

1. Any recommendations in your policy that could have implications for employees should be considered by a human resources or employment law specialist.
2. We also recommend that your organisation adopt clear policies around protection for employees reporting on concerns they have about the conduct of other staff members. Such policies are important for promoting safe organisational cultures.
3. Historical allegations should be responded to in the same way as contemporary ones, and with the same degree of priority. All allegations or concerns should be investigated fully, regardless of the resignation or termination of the staff member concerned
4. Your policy should include a commitment to not use “compromise agreements”. These are where a member of staff agrees to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. These agreements are contrary to a culture of child protection.

Additional resources

Note: *This section could be strengthened with advice on the immediate response to an allegation in relation to ensuring that the staff member does not pose an undue risk to children in the time between receiving the information and a process being put in place.*

For example: *“You may consider responses such as ensuring a second adult is present when the person is with children.”*

We are seeking input or feedback on this issue.

9

Confidentiality and information sharing

Overview

Sharing the right information with appropriate persons is one of the ways organisations can safeguard the children accessing their service. Your child protection policy should contain clear guidance on confidentiality and information sharing, or link to other relevant policies within your organisation.

Information management and confidentiality are often poorly understood by staff, which can result in information not being shared in situations where a risk to a child could have been addressed.

Key info

1. When drafting your policy, consider:
 - What expectations on staff does your organisation have regarding information sharing?
 - Will staff know their rights and obligations under the Privacy Act 1992?
 - Will staff know their rights under section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989?
2. The Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act (CYPF Act) emphasises the importance of sharing information to keep children safe, by allowing CYFS to share information when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.
3. Generally, advice should be sought from CYFS and / or the Police before information about an allegation is shared with anyone other than the service manager or designated person.
4. Under sections 15 and 16, 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 Child, Youth and Family (CYF) or the Police, and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
5. Staff should also understand their obligations under the Privacy Act 1993. For example:
 - When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to acquire their informed consent, or the consent of the parents, guardians or carers of young children.
 - In addition, staff should be aware that information can be disclosed without the written consent of the person who it is about where there is a “serious threat” to the safety of a child or children.

Additional resources

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/working-with-others/swis/swis-useful-link-and->

[tools/reference-resources/interagency-information-sharingguidelines.pdf](#)

<http://privacy.org.nz>

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/latest/whole.html#DLM296639> (link to the Privacy Act)

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10 Training and professional development

Overview

Creating a culture of child protection requires that staff have the knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to work together effectively to implement the policies. Clear policies on training and professional development in the skills of child protection are important for ensuring your organisation grows and develops in this critical area.

For a child protection policy to be a living document, and to drive changes in organisational culture, it is important to incorporate specific commitments to training and professional development into your child protection policy.

Key info

1. Consider who in your organisation needs to be proficient in child protection, and to what level. For example, your Designated Person for Child Protection should have training sufficient to provide guidance and expertise across the organisation. Frontline staff should have the skills necessary to recognise and respond to suspected abuse and neglect.
2. Staff should be trained in the content of the child protection policy as part of their orientation, and skills needed to implement the policy should be included in performance management and professional development programmes.
3. Many organisations provide specialist child protection training, and organisations should consider whether this would be a valuable investment for their staff.

Additional resources

11 Related documentation and review

Overview

Child protection policies need to be living documents that are at the heart of the organisations day to day operations and management.

The child protection policy should also have a section for general matters of documentation management, including linking the policy into the wider context of policies within your organisation.

Key info

1. Your child protection policy should include a section of formal reviews. These should occur at least 3-yearly, but ideally every year. There should be a designated person whose responsibility it is to undertake this review.
2. Reviews should incorporate the views of staff, managers and leaders within the organisation, and seek to gauge the accessibility, relevance and usefulness of the policy. You should also consider any serious incidents that occurred, and review how effective the policy was at responding to those incidents.
3. Reviews should also consider developments in child protection theory, and any guidance produced by agencies.
4. You may consider whether to incorporate reviews of the policy into responses to serious incidents.
5. The policy should also link other policies or documents that should be considered when reading the policy, including general human resources policies (complaints, performance, review), policies around safer recruitment, and policies regulating risk management (e.g., policies on transporting children).

Additional resources

Each of the example policies in Part IV contain strong sections on related documentation and review.

IV. Example policies

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Example policy 1

About this example

- Overview/summary of the policy

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