

Policy Document

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Abuse and Protection

Child protection



Mai Lighthouse
Guiding whānau to wellbeing

Abuse and Protection Category

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Child protection

"I feel safe and know who to tell if I don't feel safe."

*E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea.
I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea.*

Intent

Safety and protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect is central to our kaupapa and is everyone's business. When a young person is being hurt, at risk of harm or where they are hurting someone else, inaction is not an option.

We will be guided by Te Aorerekura National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence and respond to abuse in ways that are known to work:

- an organisational culture that is open about the risk of abuse a collaborative and holistic approach
- preventative and/or timely response responsive to intersectionalities of culture, age, gender,
- sexuality and disability prioritise the safety of victim-survivors and their tamariki
- ongoing capacity building aligned to the Aorerekura family violence Entry to Expert Workforce Capability Framework
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Definitions

"Abuse" refers to child abuse.

"Child abuse" means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), illtreatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of a child or rangatahi. It includes:

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse

See here for more about the different types of child abuse.

"Settlement agreement" refers to an agreement that allows a staff member to resign without disciplinary action being taken.

Responsibilities

Management will:

- ensure training and induction sufficiently cover how to respond to and report child abuse
- follow up on abuse concerns lead an organisational culture that: models respect
- for dignity and rights to safety and equality promotes zero tolerance for abuse
 - promotes early intervention and reporting of abuse.
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Staff/volunteers will:

- ensure they can identify common signs and indicators of abuse inform and support those raising
- abuse concerns inform those we work with about our reporting obligations and approach to abuse
- and protection concerns maintain professional boundaries and engage in safe practice at all times.
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Requirements

Staff training and checks

Staff training will align with the Entry to Expert Standards of Te Aorerekura National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence. It will be responsive to the skills and knowledge of staff and to nature of our work. But, at minimum, all staff and volunteers will have training in:

- how to identify and respond to common signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, and the process for notifying concerns of child abuse and neglect under section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act
- 1989.

Background checks will be undertaken with staff and volunteers/kaiawhina that are appropriate to their role and responsibilities. If working regularly with tamariki/ rangatahi, staff will be child safety checked.

Provide information

Information will be given in an accessible way to those we work with so that they understand:



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- how to recognise abuse and raise and report concerns about abuse within Mai Lighthouse how we prioritise the safety and best interests of tamariki/rangatahi our feedback and complaints
- process when and why we will report concerns to Police, Oranga Tamariki.
-
- If appropriate, whānau will be provided with information about child abuse, alternative discipline strategies and/or parenting support services and programmes.

Safe practice and early intervention

Staff/volunteers must use safe practices with tamariki/ rangatahi, follow our policies and access advice from internal and external colleagues about safe practice, as necessary.

Prevention of abuse will be a key focus along with a holistic approach to individual and whānau wellbeing.

Tamariki/ rangatahi must not be physically punished, disciplined or treated in any way that is degrading, humiliating or likely to cause fear or anxiety. Alternative methods must be used to manage behaviour eg behaviour supports.

Staff will be alert to and consult with management, or an appropriate colleague, if there are any signs a child or associated person is suffering or perpetrating abuse. This includes disclosures and incidents of coercion or control that together might indicate a pattern of abuse.

Staff will report abuse concerns in accordance with our policies (eg Responding to abuse, exploitation and neglect.)

Allegations against staff

Allegations against staff about abuse must be immediately forwarded to management or to the next level up if an allegation is against management. The Responding to allegations against team members policy will apply.

Collaboration

Relationships will be built with organisations and practitioners who work with victimsurvivors, people who use violence and can support a holistic response for clients/whānau of diverse cultures and identities.

System issues

Policies and practices will be periodically reviewed to identify and check for gaps, which may contribute to or mean risks of child abuse are undetected. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as necessary.

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Accountability

"Settlement agreements" will not be used if an abuse allegation is substantiated against a team member and the agreement would be contrary to protecting tamariki/ rangatahi from abuse.

Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Level 2, Community wellbeing 1.0-4.0; Client services & programmes 1.0-3.0, Health & Safety, 2.0

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights 1.5

Children's Act 2014

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Family Violence Act 2018

Helpful links

[Please visit this policy on our policy to view these links.](#)

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Te Aorerekura, Specialist Family Violence Organisational Standards

Te Aorerekura, Entry to Expert Family Violence Capability Framework

Working together to support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau

Child Matters, Empowering People & Organisations with Proven Safeguarding and Child

Protection Strategies

Whistleblowing

Let's talk videos

Background and Child Safety Checks

Review

Date: November 2024

Next review: by October 2026