

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

Community Networking Trust (CNT) is committed to the prevention and early detection of abuse and/or neglect of children and young people.

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

All services delivered by CNT reflect the principle that the welfare and interest of the child and young person are the first and paramount consideration.

This policy covers all staff who have direct or indirect contact with children. For the purposes of this policy "staff" is defined as anyone working for this organisation whether paid, voluntary, contracted or on placement.

Guidelines

- At all times a child or young persons safety and welfare are paramount
- We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities
- Information will be shared in a timely way and any concerns about an individual child will be discussed with colleagues or the Manager.
- A culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal will be promoted.
- At no time will staff use methods of discipline or control that involve physical or emotional punishment
- Volunteers will be well supervised and visible to staff when interacting with children.

Recruitment and Employment (Safety Checking)

In accordance with Children's Act 2014, all necessary safety checks will be undertaken on new and existing staff. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to children, that applicant will not be employed or used as a volunteer.

Training, Supervision and Support

CNT will ensure that all employees who work directly with young people receive the appropriate training and resources to enable them to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse, understand their obligations to act in the interests of the child or young person and are able to take appropriate action in response.

The Community Networking Trust will ensure that the Ministry for Children / Oranga Tamariki be advised immediately where there are concerns a child or young person is at risk from abuse or serious danger.

Responding to suspected Abuse or Neglect

All suspected or observed incidents or reports of child abuse will be responded to in a manner which ensures the child's immediate and future safety. If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of abuse has taken place the CNT Manager or staff member shall notify the Ministry for Children / Oranga Tamariki, or NZ Police.

If abuse is suspected or alleged, all details will be documented by the staff member concerned. These concerns may either be reported to the CNT Manager who will make the notification to Oranga Tamariki / Police or the staff member involved may make the notification independently.

Appropriate supervision / support will be provided to the staff member(s) involved.

A register of all notifications or reports of concern will be kept. This will be updated as appropriate to include any responses received or follow up made by Ministry for Children - Oranga Tamariki. Verification of receipt of the notification must be received and kept on file.

If a child or young person is in immediate danger call POLICE ON 111

All notifications go through the Ministry for Children - Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre. Phone: 0508 FAMILY or 0508 326 459 Email: contact@ot.govt.nz

Allegations or concerns regarding staff

All suspicious or observed incidents or reports of incidents relating to a CNT staff member / volunteer should be reported directly to the CNT Manager, who will record the report and immediately take steps to protect the child. If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of abuse has taken place, the Manager shall notify the Ministry for

Children / Oranga Tamariki and /or the Police as appropriate. Where such reports of concern are made the Manager will consult with OT / Police before advising the person concerned, informing them that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. They should also be advised of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. Ordinary disciplinary policies /procedures as per the individual employment agreement and relevant statutory obligations should be followed.


Where any investigation relating to allegations of abuse by a staff member has been initiated, and the person concerned resigns, the investigation will be continued.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Privacy Act, 1993 and The Children's, Young Persons, and their families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children and other vulnerable persons safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the CYPF Act any person who believes that a child or vulnerable person has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to the Ministry for Children / Oranga Tamariki or to the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Date Approved:	6 November 2019
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amended 16/11/19

Manager:  Date: 6/11/19