



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

May 2017

Section One - Intentions, Definitions, Scope, Review, Display

1.1 Intention of this Policy

This policy is for the protection of children and adults attending Centres within the North Shore Playcentre Association (NSPA).

Policy

NSPA is committed to the protection of children and to the prevention of child abuse.

This commitment means that the interest and welfare of the child are the prime consideration when any decision is made about suspected child abuse.

NSPA supports the roles of the Police, and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children – Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse, and will report suspected abuse to these agencies.

NSPA is committed to providing education on this Child Protection Policy (CPP) to centre members and families.

NSPA acknowledges that in cases of suspected child abuse, support for centre members and families is important.

NSPA will maintain knowledge of and relationships with agencies and individuals in the community available for education, support and counselling for centre members and families.

1.2 Other Documents that relate to this Child Protection Policy

This CPP is to be used in conjunction with the following existing policies:

NSPA Disputes and Disciplinary Policies

NSPA Providing Positive Guidance Policy

NSPA Excursions policy

NSPA Employment policy

NSPA Protected Disclosures policy

NSPA Safety Checking of Volunteers/Students Policy

Centre sleeping children procedures

The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

1.3 Definition of Child abuse

Definition of abuse:

“Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person”. (*Section 2, Children and Young Persons Amendment Act, 1994.*)

This CPP refers to the following handbook for full definitions of abuse:

“**Let's stop child abuse together - an interagency guide to breaking the cycle**” Child Youth and Family (CYF) publication (2001). Definitions pages 7 - 9. Copies of this handbook are held in Centre Libraries.

1.4 Scope

Who does this policy apply to? This policy applies to all centre families, volunteers, employees, management and contract workers of the NSPA. and visitors.

Include in kits held by Association Team members, Association Field Officers, Child & Whanau Support, Centre Support workers and paid session co-ordinators

Section Two - Policies, Practices

Centre Practices, Centre record keeping, Trips and Outings, Adult Education, Adult Roles, Employment.

2.1 Centre Practices

Supervision

Aim

To ensure that children at Centres are safe.

That activities take place in a way that protects children from abuse

That parents/caregivers, volunteers and employees are protected from unwarranted allegations of abuse

Policy

-Children are supervised at all times

-Maximum adult to child ratio of 1:5 on any session

-Minimum of two adults on any session

-Centres to use an "open door" policy. Adults are discouraged from being out of sight or alone with a child, and efforts will be made to remain visible to others. Opportunities are limited for adults to be out of sight and alone with children.

-Adults attending to the toilet needs, personal care or sluicing/showering of a child other than their own child will inform another adult.

-Children have the right to privacy.

-Physical contact between children and adults is normal, natural and desirable, and should be used by adults to show affection, to comfort, to reassure them and to give praise, as well as taking care of their physical needs. It is inappropriate to force unwanted affection or touching on a child but adults in Centres have the responsibility of maintaining children's safety. This means that children may need to be held when they are causing harm to themselves or to another person. If a child needs to be held or prevented from harming self or others on a session, this must be recorded in the daybook and the parent informed.

-All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature)

-Children should have either underwear or a nappy on during sessions; no child should be left naked.

2.2 Centre record keeping

- Legal documents (for example, protection orders) are to be kept in a secure place in the centre. All centre members are to be kept informed about who has legal custody and of any child access arrangements that are relevant to Playcentre.

- All Playcentre members and visiting adults must sign-in themselves and their accompanying children on arrival at the centre and sign out on leaving.

- The parent / caregiver must notify the centre **in writing** (e.g. the daybook) if someone other than the parent / caregiver is to collect the child from the centre (except in the case of an emergency).

- A minimum of 2 Emergency numbers including those of members are to be kept on an emergency contact list, in an accessible location bearing in mind the privacy of members.

2.3 Association Headquarters

Children are welcome at NSPA Headquarters, a play area is provided, and all efforts are made to ensure that this is a child safe environment. Headquarters personnel are not responsible for supervising children and any child visiting must remain the responsibility of its caregiver.

2.4 Trips and outings

Minimum adult to child ratio 1:3 unless the risk analysis determines a higher ratio – see Excursions Policy. Trips assessed as being high risk must have a ratio of 1:2 e.g. any outing around water.

Minimum of two adults per trip or outing

A minimum of at least two adults must stay with any children remaining at the centre.

Children may not leave the centre on a trip or outing without the **written** permission of the parent / caregiver (except in the case of an emergency).

2.5 Adult education

This CPP is included in the training provided by Course 2 and above of NSPA's adult education programme.

Members will be Safety Checked in accordance with the Safety Checking of Volunteers/Students Policy.

NSPA will make Centre Presidents aware of this CPP and the centre's responsibilities and obligations under this policy.

2.6 Adult roles

Aim

To ensure parents and adults in centres feel well-informed about child abuse issues.

To respond to allegations and suspicions of abuse in a manner which best ensures the child's immediate and long-term safety.

Policy

All parents have access to the CYF resource "Lets Stop child abuse together - an interagency guide to breaking the cycle" CYF publication (2001).

This CPP to be displayed on centre noticeboards

2.7 Employment

Aim

To ensure that every person employed to work within Centres (session co-ordinations, centre support workers, Field Officers, Child and Whanau Support, volunteers) is safe and suitable to be associated and involved with children.

Policy

All applicants will be safety checked. The police vet will be renewed every three years.

All employees will be provided with a copy of this Child Protection Policy and are expected to become familiar with it.

Section Three - Responding to suspected abuse

Aim

To ensure children are protected
To ensure adults are protected
To acknowledge possible conflict of interests.

3.1 Responding to suspected abuse.

The welfare of the child is the first consideration when abuse is suspected.

Any person who suspects child abuse may immediately contact the Police or The Ministry for Vulnerable Children 0508 FAMILY OR 0508 326 459

OR

If a centre member has reason to suspect child abuse, suspicions must be discussed **only** with the following:

The Centre President or
A trusted senior Centre member (only if it is inappropriate to consult with the Centre President)
and

The Association Child & Whanau Support
If the Association Child & Whanau Support or President cannot be contacted then go directly to The Ministry for Vulnerable Children.

Keep a confidential record of what is observed. Record detailed, factual observations of anything that causes concern. Include date and time on the observations the full names of the child and the alleged abuser and any other persons present at the time of the incident. If possible, two people should be involved - one to record the information and one to verify it. They must also provide their full names and contact details.

Adults at Playcentre hold a unique position, being both teachers and parents. It is important to acknowledge this could result in a possible conflict of interest with cases of abuse or suspected abuse.

The safety and well-being of the child is foremost.

Adults are to follow these procedures regardless of who the suspected abuser is.

3.2 If a Child discloses - procedure

The safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
Do not solicit or interview the child

Don't panic.
Don't question the child - just listen.
Say: "I'm glad you told me"

"I will help you"
Don't make promises you can't keep.
When able, write down what the child told you.

(Reference: CYF resource "Let's Stop child abuse together - an interagency guide to breaking the cycle" CYF publication (2001).

As soon as possible notify:

EITHER: The Ministry for Vulnerable Children 0508 FAMILY OR 0508 326 459 or the Police

OR

The Centre President, or

A trusted senior centre member (only if it is inappropriate to consult with the Centre president)

and

The Association Child & Whanau Support

If the Association Child & Whanau Support or President cannot be contacted then go directly to The Ministry for Vulnerable Children

Adults at Playcentre hold an unique position, being both teachers and parents. It is important to acknowledge this could result in a possible conflict of interest with cases of abuse or suspected abuse.

The safety and well-being of the child is foremost.

Adults are to follow these procedures regardless of who the suspected abuser is.

3.3 When abuse is witnessed - procedure

The safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.

Remove the child from immediate danger.

Ensure that a Centre member (whom the child is comfortable with) stays with the child. Do not question or interview the child.

Ensure the alleged abuser is not left on his or her own. A senior Centre member should remain with him or her at all times. Maintain confidentiality and keep him or her informed about what is happening.

As soon as possible notify:

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children 0508 FAMILY or 0508326 459 or the Police

OR

The Centre President, or

A trusted senior centre member (only if it is inappropriate to consult with the Centre president)

and

The Association Child & Whanau Support

If the Association Child & Whanau Support cannot be contacted then go directly to The Ministry for Vulnerable Children

Even if a parent is suspected of abuse, the child may go home. **Phone the police if you believe the child is in immediate danger.** The police are the only people who can keep or remove a child from a family.

3.4 When an employee is suspected of abuse - procedure

If any employee is suspected of child abuse, suspicions should be discussed **only** with one of the following:

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children or 0508326 459 or the Police

OR

The Association President

The Association Child & Whanau Support

Keep a confidential record of what is observed. Record accurate, factual observations and anything that causes concern. Include date and time on the observations, the full names of the child and the alleged abuser and any other persons present at the time of the incident. If possible, two people should be involved - one to record the information and one to verify it. They should also provide their full names and contact details.

The employee under suspicion of child abuse will be suspended from contact with children within the NSPA while the matter is being investigated. The member will be fully informed of their rights and confidentiality (Privacy Act 1993) will be maintained.

Section Four - Role of the NSPA Child & Whanau Support

Aim

To ensure abuse or cases of suspected abuse are handled in a confidential, professional and prompt manner.

Policy

Respond promptly and appropriately to cases of abuse or suspected abuse by seeking assistance from The Ministry for Vulnerable Children or the Police.

Keep the Association President and Licensee informed of the abuse or suspected abuse.
Remain in close consultation with the Centre President.

Keep records in a secure and confidential manner at the Association Headquarters until it is subpoenaed or destroyed.

Maintain a working relationship with statutory and specialist agencies.

Keep up-to-date information on abuse awareness and child protection.

Seek support and counselling from appropriate outside agencies for adult/s who discovered the abuse or suspected abuse.

Policy reviewed: May 2017

Next Review Date: 3 years or in line with changes in legislation