

## CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE 1

- **Responding to care and protection concerns, allegations, or disclosure of abuse.**
- For management, Visiting Teachers, educators, staff.
- Use this procedure to respond to child protection concerns for any child.

**You have immediate child protection concerns and/or information that suggests a child is being harmed and/or there is possibility of future risk to the child.**

Information may come from a number of sources eg a phone call, a disclosure, or you may observe behaviour's or signs that alert you to a situation of possible risk.

Read these procedures alongside the Oranga Tamariki (OT) guidelines:

*Information sharing in practice* and *Working together to keep children and young people safe*. See links below.

### 1. YOUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE – Assess the child's safety now

#### Check –

- Is the child in a safe place?
- Is there a protective person available now (parent/caregiver, family/whānau, teacher)?
- Is the child able to be accessed by the alleged perpetrator?
- Is the child able to protect him/herself?

#### Inform –

- Your manager or Visiting Teacher of the situation
- If the child needs to be protected right now and the danger to the child is immediate and critical, make a notification by contacting the **Police on 111** or **Oranga Tamariki (OT) (0508 Family/0508 326 459)**.

#### Initiate –

- Initiate an urgent planning meeting as soon as possible to ensure a coordinated approach, considered decisions, and the most appropriate plan to ensure the safety of the child.

At the planning meeting the manager and/or Visiting Teacher will:

- **Form a team** – bring together key people – manager, coordinator/Visiting Teacher, educator, advisor
- **Assign roles and responsibilities**, including who has overall responsibility for managing the case, to ensure a team approach and robust decision-making
- **Gather information** and determine if there are care and protection issues
- **Decide if the child is safe now**
- **Develop an action plan**

### 2. PLANNING & INFORMATION GATHERING

#### DETERMINE

- Is this a care and protection issue?
- What are the indicators of signs of abuse and/or neglect?
- Is urgent action necessary to ensure the child's safety?
- Are there other children who may be at risk?
- How quickly do we need to respond?
- Are other professionals/agencies involved with this family who may hold relevant information?
- How long will it take us to find this information?

#### GATHER

- Relevant contextual information, information on file and cultural advice and support where appropriate.
- **Ensure information is factual, accurate and sufficient.**

**Note** - You are gathering information to be able to make an informed professional decision about what to do next; it is not an investigation to establish whether or not abuse has occurred.

#### DECIDE

**As a team** decide if you have sufficient information to decide whether:

- the child is safe now,
- there is immediate risk, or
- you are unsure

### 3. DECISION & OPTIONS FOR ACTION Follow the option pathways on the next page...

## **IS THE CHILD SAFE NOW? NO or UNSURE**

### **OPTION ONE**

**Follow this pathway if the child is unsafe or you are not sure and immediate action is required.**

#### **DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN**

If the child is being harmed or is at risk or you are unsure and immediate action is required, make a notification to CYFs or the Police and develop an Action Plan to ensure the child's immediate safety.

#### **The Action Plan is:**

- Make an immediate notification, call the **Police on 111** or **Oranga Tamariki (0508 Family/0508 326 459)**
- Inform the Ministry of Education of the notification and send a copy to them. (03 378 7300)
- Develop a plan for the child, the family, staff
- Arrange a meeting to inform the family of our obligation to make a notification *unless informing the family might compromise the child's immediate safety.*
- Talk with the child about matters relating to them as appropriate according to age and circumstances *unless this might compromise the child's safety.*
- A meeting with the team to review the plan and the actions taken, and to ensure support for everyone.
- Allocate roles and responsibilities for time-framed actions and tasks.
- Document, date and sign everything - concerns, what has been seen, said, heard, discussed, planning and actions taken, Sign and date all documents.

## **IS THE CHILD SAFE NOW? YES or UNSURE**

### **OPTION TWO**

**Follow this pathway if the child is currently safe and there is sufficient time to gather further information to clarify decision-making.**

#### **DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN**

#### **Gather further information.**

- Develop as full a picture as possible to help you decide the child's care and protection needs. This is not an investigation into whether or not abuse has occurred; it is gathering information to be able to make an informed professional decision on what action to take.
- What further information do you need? eg previous concerns/incidents, indicators of signs of abuse and/or neglect; relevant social history and background (parent/caregiver, family/whānau, culture, ethnicity); file information; others to consult with.
- Allocate roles, responsibilities and timeframes for actions.

#### **Decision making**

- In consultation with the planning team, make a decision re notification to OT or the Police.
- Put in place a clear timeframe to ensure a decision is made.

#### **Make a decision from the following actions –**

#### **Concerns not substantiated**

Inform those involved of the outcome.

Develop a follow up plan in consultation with relevant parties.

Ensure working relationships with all involved.

Ensure staff de-briefing and support.

**Document, date and sign all material.**

#### **Concerns remain – no notification**

A decision is made to not make a notification *at this time.*

Document the reason for decision.

Develop a time-framed plan to ensure on-going safety of the child, and the future relationship with the family.

Arrange support for the child and family.

If situation changes eg more information available or risk to the child increases, immediately *call* OT or Police.

Continue to work as a team.

Ensure staff de-briefing and support.

**Document, date and sign all material.**

#### **Concerns remain – call CYFs or Police**

Follow Option 1 above.

**Call the Police on 111** or **(Oranga Tamariki (0508 Family/0508 326 459))** if the child is being harmed and/or the possibility of future risk is unclear.

Ensure staff de-briefing and support.

**Document, date and sign all material.**

**Keep all information confidentially. Review actions and process within two weeks.**

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/>

You can call OT on 0508 ED ASSIST (0508 332 774) for non-urgent child protection situations.