Writing a Child Protection Policy

These guidelines provide additional guidance for the MoE Child Protection Policy Template. They will help you develop and/or review your service's child protection policy. Please check that any sources you use are up-to-date before citing them.

Rationale - Why do you need this policy?

Describe your commitment to protect children from child abuse and neglect. You can include discussion about:

- Teachers as advocates for children, speaking up for them
- The vulnerability of children – those that should be helping them may be harming them
- Benefits of having clear child protection policies and procedures
    - Ensures suspected abuse is acted upon
    - Protects staff from false allegations
- How this fits with your ECE service's philosophy and goals

Refer to legislative requirements and your commitment to meeting these:

- ECE regulations and licensing criteria
- Consider relevant goals from *Te Whāriki*, e.g.: Wellbeing, Goal 3. Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm

Objectives

Some examples of objectives are:
- To have clear child protection policies and procedures
- To develop child abuse prevention strategies.
- To maintain a similar format and style to your other policies to keep reader friendly.
- To ensure other policies link with this child protection policy and are up-to-date.
- To ensure all those involved in your service (owners, management, staff, families and children) are:
    - up-to-date and knowledgeable about identifying and protecting children from abuse, and
    - aware they can and should report suspected abuse
    - understand complaints/ reporting procedures.

Sources of information
State what sources of information have helped to inform your child protection policy, some key references can be found at the endo of this document.

Consultation and approval process
Describe how you developed this policy – the method of consultation, e.g.:

- circulate draft with parents, staff, social worker and others
- allow time for feedback
- ensure a quorum (a minimum number of parents, management/board members/owners, educators/staff attend an approval meeting)
- communicate changes and reasons for changes to all stakeholders
- sign off at highest level (Person responsible for the service/owner/manager).
- Where is this policy stored/ filed? Is it displayed and where? Is it available online?
- Confirm the policy has been included in staff/parent induction and refresher/employee personal development training.

Definition of child abuse
Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), Ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person." Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (section 2).

Training
Discuss what training and professional development/learning will support the implementation of this policy. For example:
- Training will appropriately educate all those involved in the service, e.g. staff, relievers, student teachers, parents, management, owners.
- Resources will be made available for children, parents, and staff.
- Parent volunteer and staff induction training and refresher training is to include this policy and where to find it
- how to prevent child abuse and neglect at the ECE service
- how to recognise and report suspected or actual child abuse and neglect
- record keeping
- how to keep up with relevant developments, laws and regulations regarding child abuse
- how the service maintains a curriculum for children and parents to learn ways to keep safe and communicate their concerns.
- Child protection refresher training

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Procedure

Reporting Suspected or Actual Child Abuse and Neglect
Use your sources of information to write your reporting procedure.

Helpful references found in:
> 'Reporting Suspected or Actual…, 2009', pages 3-6.
> http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EmergencyManagement/Responding/ProtocolsForReportingAbuse.aspx
> - Consider adapting the procedure on page 4 to your service.
> - 'Interagency Guide…, 2011, pages 24-25 and 28-31

Keep your procedure simple and clear.
- State early in the procedure that anyone involved in the service should:
- Call 111 if the immediate safety or wellbeing of a child is in doubt.
- Call CYFs if ever uncertain of what to do.
- Inform staff and parents that if necessary they can bypass management to report issues or abuse, e.g. contact owner/ director or contact CYFs/ NZ Police directly.
- Include record-keeping of events – refer to 'Reporting Suspected or Actual.., 2009' page 6 and Interagency Guide…, 2011 page 28.
- Consult with CYFs and Police about how to inform parents/ guardians.
- Ensure the suspected person(s) has no further access to children at your service while the case is under investigation.
- Include how to continue working with the agencies involved, refer 'Interagency Guide…, 2011' pages 30-35 and Reporting Suspected or Actual.., 2009' page 6.

Offering Help to Families
Refer to 'Interagency Guide, Working Together to Keep Children and Young People Safe, pages 25-26.

How to Recognise Child Abuse and Neglect
Refer to 'Interagency Guide, Working Together to Keep Children and Young People Safe, pages 6-20.

Policy review (evaluation)
Outline how you will review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.
- how it will be determined if the policy is working
- how long the policy is to be in place before it is reviewed
- under what circumstances might the policy be reviewed earlier (e.g. changes in legislation, changes in parent expectations, etc)
- how often it will be reviewed
- who will evaluate it and how

Reviewed* (Date) _____ Next Review Due (Date) _____
* Includes review of links to other policies

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References

An interagency guide. Working together to keep children and young people safe 2011. http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/27713-working-together-3-0-45ppi.pdf

Reporting of Suspected or Actual Child Abuse and Neglect: Protocol between the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Schools Trustees Association and Child, Youth and Family 2009. http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsResources/ReportingAbuseProtocolAug09.pdf

Memorandum of Understanding Between Child, Youth and Family and the Ministry of Education 2012 http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/~/media/Educate/Files/Reference%20Downloads/Lead/Files/AllegationsOfAbuseProtocolMOU_CYFandMOE2012.pdf

Ministry of Education draft child protection policy template: http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/EstablishingAnECEService/EstablishingACentreBasedService/PoliciesProceduresProcesses/DevelopingPolicies/ChildProtection.aspx

ECE Service "Keeping Children Safe From Abuse" checklist: http://www.childforum.com/management/staffing-and-employment-relations/319-getting-rid-of-bad-teachers-and-reporting-legal-processes-and-obligations.html

Leaflet: Responding to a child's disclosure of abuse: http://sexualabuse.org.nz/respond/responding-to-child-sexual-abuse/

Leaflet: What can parents and carers do about childhood sexual abuse: http://sexualabuse.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Parents-leaflet.pdf

Article: Body safety skills to teach young children: http://www.childforum.com/childcare-a-teaching/child-abuse-a-child-protection/613-body-safety-skills-to-teach-children.html

Article: Ensuring Effective Child Protection – Key Requirements for ECE Services, Education and Review Officials, and Teacher Education Programmes: http://www.childforum.com/management/health-safety-technology/904-ensuring-effective-child-protection-key-requirements-for-ece-services-education-and-review-officials-and-teacher-education-programmes.html

Links to Other Policies

Examples of other policies to include requirements of this child protection policy are as shown in the table below:

	These policies….	… should include the following details related to this Child Protection Policy:
1	Induction & Professional Development Policy	Include the requirements as outlined in the Training section.
2	Babysitting	Always being aware. Consider importance of following the service's babysitting protocols
3	Personnel	Ensure all new employees including relievers and students are screened with a police check. Repeat Police check every 2 years
4	Sun Protection (Sunsmart)	Be visible to other adults when applying sunscreen.
5	Student Teacher/ Relieving Teacher	Not left alone with child or group of children. Not to help children with toileting, nappy changes or sleeping unless supervised. Supported to ask questions and challenge poor practice.
6	Sleeping Policy	Student teachers do not assist with sleeping unless accompanied by a full member of the teaching team. Relievers up to discretion of the Manager or Supervisor.
7	Settling in Policy	Being aware of how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect.
8	Relievers Policy	Careful selection and supervision. Manager's/Supervisor's discretion to allow helping with toileting, nappy changing, sleeping, excursions.
9	Programme Assessment and Evaluation	Adequate supervision of staff and other adults when with children. Adequate supervision of private spaces, e.g. toilet area, sleeping area, outdoor areas Curriculum successfully teaches children about safe and unsafe touching, the names of body parts, how to say "no", to tell a trusted adult as soon as possible, and about why some secrets are not good secrets to keep. All adults working at the service are open about discussing good and poor practice.
10	Parent Induction Policy	Define tasks performed by parents and visitors. Encourage parents to participate in activities. Ensure awareness of this policy. Inform parents of child protection reporting procedure. Provide complaints procedure. Encourage parents, caregivers and grandparents to drop in anytime and make spontaneous or unannounced visits to see their children.

11	Excursions	Unless you are a home-based service, ensure more than one adult is on excursions and walks with children Parent/ Guardian consent must be obtained.
12	Complaints	Ensure complaints procedure is displayed Include how parent and staff complaints can go forward to inform the Teacher's Council (for example if an abuser is a registered teacher) and the Ministry of Education.
13	Collaboration with Parents	Safeguard for when boundaries become blurred through friendship networks amongst staff and parents. Encourage communication and contact with parents. Ensure parents are kept well informed about their child's day to day experiences including presence of relievers or student teachers.
14	Behaviour Guidance	Adults working at the service to model the appropriate behaviour, including safe touching (e.g. display of affection and empathy when a child has tripped over and hurt his knee).
15	Appraisal	Establish staff roles and expectations of adult behaviour with children. Respectful to children as well as each other. Keep professional and personal lives separate Knowledgeable about the vulnerability of children and aware that it is not possible to know that an abuser is not already involved in the service. Ask questions and challenge poor practice.
16	Aggressive Play or Withdrawn Behaviour	Know how to recognise signs of child abuse and neglect.
17	Philosophy & Curriculum Policy	Provide opportunities for children to understand about personal safety and positive self-esteem. All staff and others who assist at the service (including students on teaching practice) are supported to ask questions and challenge poor practice.