

XYZ Centre	Policy
	Policy Category: GMA7a
	Date Created: March 2023
	Policy Name: Staff Safety Checking Policy

This operational policy describes our procedure to ensure all those working at our childcare centre meet the safety check requirements specified in the Children’s Act 2014. This policy also contributes to the human resource management policies operated by this Centre and ensures we comply with the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Education Licensing Criteria HS31 and GMA7a.

Position Statement

Our centre ensures the safety of children through a robust staff selection process. We want our staff to:

- be safe to work with our children;
- understand the needs and development of children and know how to act to ensure these are met;
- actively contribute to our culture of child protection; to support and adhere to our child protection and child abuse policies
- be prepared to make child safety at our centre their top priority.

A breach of this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and subject to disciplinary action.

Issue Outline

Not all children have the support and protection of a trusted adult, but they must do so at our centre.

Policy principles

A **Full Safety Check** will be completed before a new worker is employed or has access to children. Thereafter, a **Periodic Safety Check** involving only steps 1, 3 and 7 below will be completed every three years.

To ensure our children are safe, we undertake a series of steps for a **Full Safety Check** when appointing all new staff at this centre:

- 1) verification of identity
- 2) search of records
- 3) acceptance of a satisfactory Police vet check report, OR
 - information from the Teaching Council where a teacher is certificated
- 4) information about work history
- 5) referee information
- 6) an interview focussing on the person’s safety to have access to children
- 7) **Risk Assessment:** on the basis of the previous six safety checking steps, we form a view about the suitability of a candidate to work as a “Children’s Worker” under the Children’s Act 2014. This view will be documented and, along with copies of all original documents described above, will be maintained on the staff member’s personnel file for as long as they are employed in this organisation.

Detail

Verification of identity

We require two forms of identity from prospective staff when applying for roles with us: a primary and a secondary document, one of which must be photographic as specified in the Children's Regulations 2015. These documents **must be current**, the originals seen, a copy kept and annotated with the words "original sighted **DATE** by **NAME**"

Where an individual has changed their name and their new name is not on the identity document, we will need to obtain evidence of a change of name (e.g. marriage certificate). The document **must be current**, the original sighted, a copy kept and annotated with the words "original sighted **DATE** by **NAME**"

Search your records

We search our records to ensure that the identity is not being used or has ever been used by any other person associated with our organisation.

Acceptance of a Police vet check report

We will obtain a current Police vet report for all staff at our centre to identify any issue in the individual's recent background that would mean children at our centre might be at risk.

We accept a registered teacher's current practicing certificate as evidence that a current Police vet check report has been obtained by the Teaching Council and that this has met their criteria for being of good character and fit to be a teacher. Where a teachers practising certificate expires, the teacher will be excluded from all access to children until it is either renewed or we obtain a current police vet ourselves.

Information from the Teaching Council

For all teaching staff with a current practicing certificate, we will make a copy of the original Practicing Certificate annotated with the words "original sighted **DATE** by **NAME**". We will check the Teaching Council register to ensure that the Practicing Certificate is valid and that there are no endorsements that reflect concerns over safe practice with children. We will take a screenshot of this and file it with other documents annotated with the words "Screenshot taken **DATE** by **NAME**"

All staff will be required to undertake a periodic safety check every three years.

Overseas Police Certificates

We recommend that you ask children's workers who have lived overseas to provide copies of police certificates from their countries of citizenship and from any country in which they have lived for one or more years within the last ten years.

When a person cannot provide an overseas police certificate, they should provide you with proof of their attempts to obtain one. They should also make a statutory declaration (Schedule 1 of the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957) that states whether they have any overseas criminal convictions or not. Just because a person is not recorded as having a criminal record, does not mean they have not engaged in behaviour that is an offence in New Zealand.

Information about work history

We look for a work history that is clear and transparent, covering the previous five years. We always follow up any gaps in work history or other issues in the candidate's interview.

Referee information

We obtain a minimum of one referee check and preferably two. One of which must be with the most recent employer, and will examine matters of safe practices as part of the discussion.

Safety interview

All prospective staff must participate in a full child safety interview. The interview not only examines the background and attitudes of the candidate, but also their suitability to demonstrate the values of our centre in a manner that meets the expectations of our policy.

Risk assessment

In making an appointment we apply a **risk assessment** by weighing up all of the information gathered and select a person who we believe;

- is a safe person to work with children.
- understands the needs and development of children and knows how to act to ensure these are met.
- supports and adheres to our child protection and child abuse policies
- will make the safety of children at our centre a priority.

Personnel records

We retain information gathered to comply with this Staff Safety Checking Policy in individual personnel files. Police vet check reports, where gathered, are retained for audit purposes, even where replaced with a more current version. All personnel records are kept strictly confidential in secure storage. Safety Check records are kept for as long as the person is employed by us.

Allegations or concerns about staff

When an allegation is made or a concern raised about a staff member, we will follow the procedure outlined in our Child Protection and Human Resource policies.

Where a concern about a staff member is raised, we immediately suspend the person on full pay and inform the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council if the person is a registered teacher. We will then conduct a full investigation to establish if there are reasonable grounds to believe the allegation. A copy of the investigation report is emailed to the Ministry of Education. If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, we consult with Oranga Tamariki or the Police before advising the person concerned, informing the person that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. We will otherwise follow ordinary disciplinary policies.

We commit not to use settlement agreements, where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. In addition, we observe the following:

- Give no persons, other than employed staff over the age of 17 years, tasks that involve nappy changing, toileting or responsibility for the supervision of children.
- Ensure that staff and other adults visiting or working in the centre are well supported and visible in the activities they perform with children. While the centre respects the privacy of our children, staff and visitors, visibility will be given priority to ensure the safety of all concerned.
- Ensure the centre's procedures protect staff from unjustified allegations of abuse.

The persons responsible will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Carry out staff safety checking (including Police Vetting) in accordance with the Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015.
- Maintain appropriate records.

Staff will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Familiarise themselves with this centre’s policies.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Students and Volunteers

Whilst volunteers do not need to be safety checked according to the Act, it is our policy to safety check volunteers.

All students need to be safety checked.

Alignment with Other Policies

- Personnel policies – police checks and careful employment of temporary staff, casual staff, friends of friends, volunteers
- Child Protection Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Goals for Adult Behaviour

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008

Ministry of Education Early Childhood Education Licensing Criteria Governance and Management: GMA7a

Children’s Act 2014 and associated regulations (2015).

Alignment with the Centre Philosophy

This policy is aligned with the centre’s philosophy.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy influences the centre’s recruitment and HR policies and will form part of all staff induction and in-service training.

Review

Review bi-annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	
Date:	March 2023
Review Date:	December 2024
Consultation:	