

RESPONDING TO/REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If you see a child being abused, OR you observe signs of abuse in a child, OR a child discloses abuse to you, OR someone tells you of a concern

RESPOND TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS

Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child – seek medical help if appropriate. Have a conversation with the child but do not interrogate them.

Listen to the child.

Call the Police if the child is in immediate danger.

Are you a staff member?

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR MANAGER.

If the suspected abuser is your manager, inform the Service owner OR Chair of Governance Group. Where this is **not** possible, contact O.T. on 0508 326 459 OR the police and inform the Ministry of Education at the same time.

PREPARE A WRITTEN RECORD

Date, time and place of observation/report of abuse

Names of anyone present

Word for word what the child said

Any physical or behavioural signs

GIVE THIS TO YOUR MANAGER

Are you in charge?

GATHER INFORMATION

Ensure you have a full signed report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support and tell them what actions you will take. Consult with other professionals with out delay and only if required in preparing your report.

Call O.T. 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) and discuss your concerns. O.T. will tell you if you need to do a formal report about your concerns.

Always inform the Ministry of Education at the same time.

If there is an allegation against a Registered Teacher, inform the Teaching Council at this time also.

REPORT ABUSE

Call O.T on 0508 326 459 (contact@ot.govt.nz) OR Police if it is an emergency
Ask O.T. for advice and guidance about speaking to carers/whānau about the report.

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT - get a timeframe.

OUTSIDE THE SERVICE

- You will most likely suspect that the abuse is by a parent, but you **cannot assume this**. If you are concerned about a child going home tell O.T. or Police about this
- Ensure that the child is not at further risk of abuse whilst in your care
- Email a copy of your Report of Concern to the Ministry of Education
- If you make a verbal Report of concern, email a copy of O.T.'s acknowledgement to the Ministry of Education

REMEMBER

It is not your job to investigate abuse that happens outside your Service

INSIDE THE SERVICE

- Ensure that the alleged abuser is suspended and immediately excluded from the Service
- Report the matter at once to the Ministry of Education
- Once your investigation is completed submit your report to the MoE using their Incident Report Template (<https://sexualabuse.org.nz/forms/>)
- If the person is a Registered Teacher, report the matter to the Teaching Council early on (i.e. even before you begin an investigation)
- Discuss any actions decide to take with O.T./Police first
- Recommend that the alleged abuser seek advice from their union or lawyer
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or events relating to the complaint/allegations and that follow-up action is taken and documented
- Seek employment/legal advice where appropriate

ATTEND TO THE HEALING OF YOUR COMMUNITY

If there is disruption to the ECE Service or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, or there is media interest please contact the

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAUMATIC INCIDENT COORDINATOR

for support on 0800 848 326