

Child Protection Policy



Te Kōhanga Reo
Child/Mokopuna Protection
Policy & Guidance

Policy summary

This policy outlines our commitment to child/mokopuna protection. It includes our protocols when tūkino mokopuna/child abuse is reported to us or suspected by us. It also includes practice notes on measures to be taken to prevent tūkino mokopuna/child abuse. All kaimahi are expected to be familiar with this policy and to abide by it.

Purpose statement

We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of tamariki in our care and are committed to the prevention of tūkino mokopuna/child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all tamariki. The safety and wellbeing of tamariki is our top priority when investigating suspected or alleged tūkino/abuse.

We support the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki (formerly Child, Youth and Family) in the investigation of suspected abuse and we will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies. Where there is such a report of abuse or serious injury or illness or incident involving a child while at Te Kōhanga Reo that is required to be notified to a specified agency, the service provider must also notify Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust (Pou 4) who will advise the Ministry of Education at the same time (HS34).

We support families/whānau to understand how to protect their tamariki.

We provide a safe environment, free from neglect, physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse. We always respond to suspicions of exposure to Family Violence and will consult with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust over such concerns.

Issue Outline

Not all tamariki have the support and protection of their whānau or a trusted adult.

Tamariki that are abused or neglected need whānau or extended whānau that can act on their behalf and keep them safe from harm.

Those who care for tamariki need to know how to respond to a mokopuna if s/he discloses tūkino/abuse or when there are concerns raised from others about abuse or neglect.

Policy principles

- *The interest and protection of te mokopuna is paramount in all actions.*
- *We recognise the rights of whānau to participate in decision-making about their tamariki.*
- *We have a commitment to ensure that all kaimahi can identify the signs and symptoms of potential tūkino/abuse and/or neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.*
- *We are committed to supporting all kaimahi to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure our approach to child/mokopuna protection is consistent and of high quality.*
- *We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.*
- *We are committed to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual mokopuna with kaimahi and te Kaiako Matua.*
- *We are committed to promote a culture where kaimahi feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years and exceptionally at least every three years.*

Legislation

This child/mokopuna protection policy and guidance is written in accordance with the following legislation:

- *Care of Children Act 2004*
- *Children's Act 2014*
- *Family Violence Act 2018*

- *Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008*
- *Education and Training Act 2020*
- *Human Rights Act 1993*
- *Oranga Tamariki Act 1989*

- *Privacy Act 2020*
- *The Protected Disclosures Act 2000*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Definitions: identifying possible abuse or neglect

Child abuse is defined in the Oranga Tamariki Act as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child . . .”

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a mokopuna emotional, psychological or social well-being and sense of self-worth is continually battered. This includes confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment that may diminish their sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. We also include exposure to Family Violence in this category.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour that occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning/development of a child or young person. It is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may include the following.

Physical – failure to provide basic needs of food, shelter or warmth

Medical – failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for a child or young person

Abandonment – leaving a child or young person in any situation without arranging necessary care and with no intention of returning

Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision

Refusal to assume parental responsibility – unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child or young person

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be caused from smacking, punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing the mokopuna. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the whānau and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the mokopuna. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a mokopuna for a sexual purpose. There are 2 different types of mokopuna sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

- **Contact abuse** involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a mokopuna, including penetration. It includes: sexual touching of any part of the body whether the mokopuna is wearing clothes or not; rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a mokopuna mouth, vagina or anus; forcing or encouraging a mokopuna to take part in sexual activity; making a mokopuna take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

- **Non-contact abuse** involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading tamariki to perform sexual acts over the internet and 'flashing'. It includes encouraging a mokopuna to watch or hear sexual acts; not taking proper measures to prevent a mokopuna being exposed to sexual activities by others; online abuse including making, viewing or distributing tūkino mokopuna/child abuse images; showing pornography to a mokopuna; sexually exploiting a mokopuna for money, power or status (mokopuna exploitation).

Kaimahi should become familiar with the possible physical and behavior clues to tūkino mokopuna/child abuse listed on pages 14 and 15. In addition, a copy of '*Signs of abuse and neglect*' chart can be found on page 18 of this document along with a list of further training resources on page 13. In addition, kaimahi should be familiar with the Vulnerability Factors (page 21) and Issues in the Home (Page 20).

Responding to suspected abuse or neglect

It is essential to continue to maintain a **confidential record**, including observations of a mokopuna's behaviour for some time following an allegation or incident. The process for responding to tūkino mokopuna is given in the '**Reporting Process Flowchart**' on page 16.

An incident report template is also provided on page 19 of this document.

All suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents should be reported directly to the Kaiako Matua as soon as possible, who will immediately take steps to protect the mokopuna/tamariki and record the report.

If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe an instance of tūkino mokopuna/child abuse has taken place, our first ports of call should be:

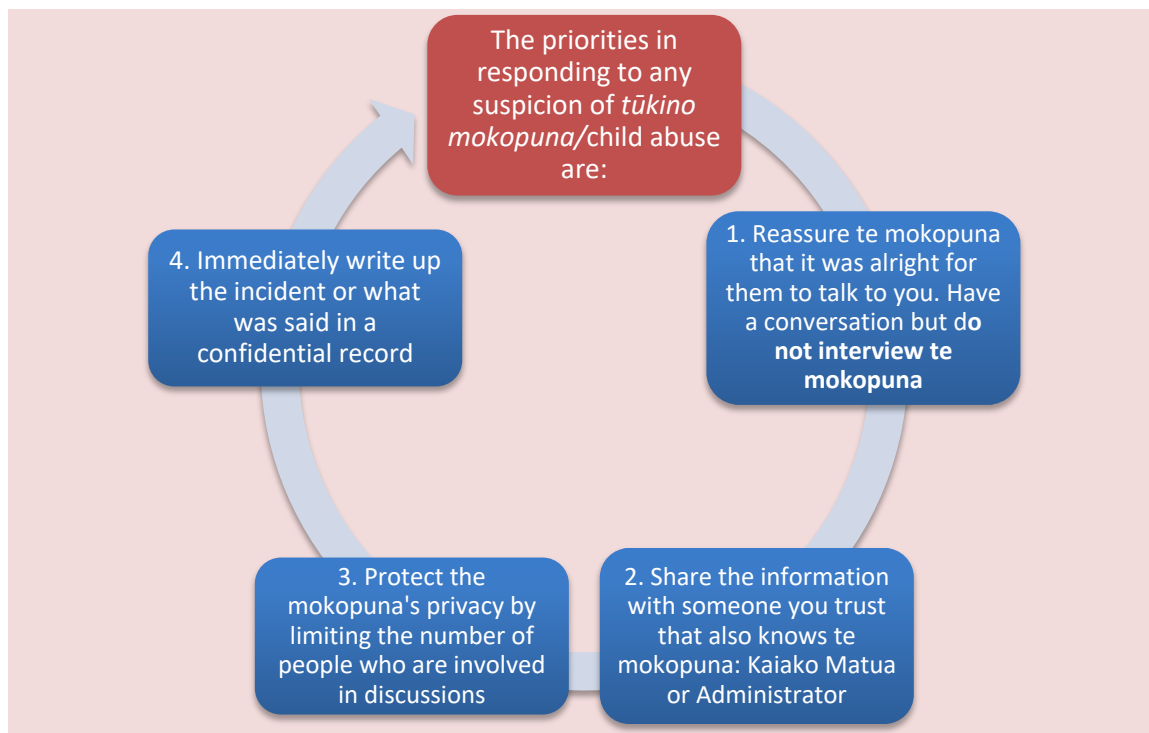
- Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust 04 381 8750 (*Pou 4 – Te Whaioranga*)
- the Ministry of Education (HS34) (Your local office)
- Oranga Tamariki: 0508 326 459

If you believe a mokopuna is in immediate danger, call the Police on 111.

In addition to guiding kaimahi to make referrals of suspected tūkino mokopuna/child abuse and neglect to statutory agencies (i.e., Oranga Tamariki or the Police), this child/mokopuna protection policy will also help kaimahi to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable tamariki whose wellbeing is of concern. Throughout New Zealand statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services, and it is important for our Kōhanga to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable tamariki and whānau in a manner proportionate to the level of need and perceived risk.

Kaimahi will discuss suspicions with te Kaiako Matua. Where appropriate, the person making the allegation will be given a copy of this policy.

Immediate response to suspicion of tūkino/abuse



This strategy is designed as an 'in the moment guide' to support teachers who come face-to-face with a disclosure or have a suspicion arising from their interaction with children. All staff must comply with the detail of the reporting flowchart on Pg. 16 of this policy.

Ongoing care for vulnerable tamariki

Ensure the mokopuna's immediate safety - do not alert the suspected abuser.

- *If a mokopuna tells of tūkino/abuse; listen; have a conversation; don't interrogate them or ask leading questions*
- **Do not** put words in the mokopuna mouth
- *Allow them to tell only as much as they want*
- *Say you're glad they told you and you're sorry it happened*
- *Let them know it's not their fault and that you'll do your best to help*
- *Do not ask further questions*
- *Continue to support te mokopuna*
- *Ignore or distract negative behaviour*

If a mokopuna's behaviour affects the health and well-being of others in the Kōhanga, a whānau hui will be called. Kaiako Matua will consult with the Kōhanga Reo Chairperson to discuss the situation and develop a support plan. The final decision of future action will be made by the Chairperson and Kaiako Matua, with consideration to the fact that the Kaiako Matua has the right to exclude any mokopuna if his/her behaviour poses a significant danger to others.

The Basic Principles for Responding to Suspected Tūkino Mokopuna

- *Believe what tamariki tell you and what you see.*
- *Always act in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of tamariki. This may mean contacting Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, Oranga Tamariki or the police if you think there is an immediate risk of the mokopuna being abused again.*
- *Record clear concerns and observations with factual statements with dates.*
- *We recommend that you never make decisions alone. Consult with te Kaiako Matua or someone experienced. If there is no short-term risk, take time to consult thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision.*
- *Act on your concerns. Don't leave it to someone else or hope it won't happen again. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.*
- *Seek support for yourself. The tasks and situation will be stressful.*
- *Where tūkino/abuse may have been perpetrated by a whānau member or someone close to the whānau, do not initially inform the whānau, but ensure that the appropriate person informs them at the appropriate time under guidance from Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust **and** Oranga Tamariki.*

Allegations or concerns about kaimahi

When there are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a kaimahi, the Kaiako Matua (or the person responsible for child/mokopuna protection) must immediately suspend the kaimahi on full pay and remove them from the environment to ensure that mokopuna and the kaimahi are kept safe. The suspected individual will be excluded from all access to children pending the outcome of a full investigation. We recognise added stress to staff in such situations and will ensure support is available. A template for conducting, recording and reporting the investigation to the Ministry of Education can be found at <https://sexualabuse.org.nz/forms/>

The investigation will seek to establish if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children; or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection (Reg. 56). Where the investigation concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe the allegation, the staff member (or volunteer) concerned will continue to be prevented from having any further access to children pending HR processes for serious misconduct and/or dismissal. The person will be informed fully of their rights.

The person managing the tūkino mokopuna/child abuse issue will not be the same person as that managing the employment issue. If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, Kōhanga Reo whānau **MUST** also consult with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust as well as Oranga Tamariki or the Police before advising the person concerned. In addition, notify the local Ministry of Education office (HS34). Inform the suspected person that they

have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. They should also be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. It is vital to follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.

If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that tūkino/abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate/illegal behaviour or poor practice by kaimahi that needs to be considered under disciplinary procedures. We recognise the added stress to hoamahi/colleagues in such situations and will ensure support is available.

We commit never to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a strong culture of child/mokopuna protection. An example of a prohibited settlement agreement might allow kaimahi to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a mokopuna, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child/mokopuna protection.

III-treatment of children (Regulation 56)

The **Protected Disclosures Act 2000** encourages kaimahi to disclose and report information about serious wrongdoing in the workplace. This Act provides protection for these employees from legal action or retribution of any kind and outlines the internal procedure to be followed when investigating the matter.

When to make a report to Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust

Kōhanga whānau must IMMEDIATELY report to the Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust **AND** the Ministry of Education (HS34) when:

- a kaiako/kaimahi is dismissed for any reason
- a kaiako/kaimahi resigns from a teaching position, or on the expiry of the kaiako/kaimahi fixed-term contract, if within the 12 months preceding the resignation the employer advised the kaiako/kaimahi it was dissatisfied with, or intended to investigate, any aspect of the kaiako/kaimahi conduct or competence
- a kaiako/kaimahi ceases to be employed by the Kōhanga, and within the following 12 months the employer receives a complaint about the kaiako/kaimahi conduct or competence while he or she was an employee
- the there is reason to believe the kaiako/kaimahi has committed serious misconduct
- the Kōhanga whānau is satisfied that, despite completing competence procedures with the kaiako/kaimahi, they have not reached the required competence level.
- **Registered teachers only:** *under the Education & Training Act, employers must make a mandatory report to the Teaching Council if a Kaiako is a registered teacher.*

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Privacy Act 2020 and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep tamariki safe when tūkino/abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act, any person who believes that a mokopuna has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally, or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them. Child protection information must be shared as soon as possible with the tamaiti's new school or Te Kōhanga Reo. **Best Practice:** Inform parents of your intention **if it is safe** to do so. However, **parental consent is not required to transfer this information as it will be used to prevent harm to a tamaiti**. Where parents object, the facts should be recorded and note the reasons for your decision to transfer information or not as the case may be.

Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

Our prime consideration in employing kaimahi is ensuring that they have the skills and attributes which contribute to the tamariki wellbeing. Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Children's Act 2014 and Licensing Criteria GMA7a. This will include: a police vet; identity verification; references and an interview. A work history will be sought, and previous employers will be contacted. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the Kaiako Matua and the Chairperson. If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to mokopuna, they will **not be employed**. Detailed records of the Safety check will be maintained, including copies of all original documents sighted, for as long as the person is employed by the organisation. Safety checking is a detailed and complex process and is fully explained in our Safety checking Policy and Procedure.

Training, supervision and support

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all kaimahi/kaitūao can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:

- *Understanding tūkino mokopuna/child abuse and indicators of tūkino/abuse.*
- *How to reduce the risk of tūkino mokopuna/child abuse.*
- *Understanding and complying with legal obligations.*
- *Working with outside agencies on tūkino mokopuna/child abuse issues.*
- *Planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk.*
- *Working with tamariki and whānau.*
- *Kaimahi are advised not to babysit privately for Kōhanga whānau.*

Refresher training will occur every two years and **this policy will be part of the initial kaimahi induction programme.**

Kaitūao/Volunteers and Ākonga

- *Kaitūao/Volunteers/ākonga will be welcome into the Kōhanga subject to safety checking*
- *At no times will a kaitūao or ākonga be left alone with a mokopuna or be placed on nappy changing duty.*
- *Where we rely on a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to carry out the safety check for ākonga on our behalf, and we will obtain a letter from the TEO confirming this. If any components of the safety check have not been completed by the TEO, we will be responsible for completing these. We always complete the identity check and risk assessment, even if these have already been completed by the TEO. A separate letter should be obtained for each named ākonga.*

Whānau

- *Whānau will be involved in the development and review of any child/mokopuna protection policies.*
- *Whānau will be encouraged to spend time in the Kōhanga Reo and to participate in daily activities.*
- *Whānau will have access to information regarding a range of support agencies.*

Supervision Guidelines

Kaimahi are well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with tamariki.

Whānau should perform care-taking tasks only with their own tamariki unless they are contracted kaimahi. Visitors to the Kōhanga Reo should not perform care-taking tasks with tamariki or be alone with them. There is an open-door policy for private spaces where intimate care-taking of tamariki is required, e.g. toileting, nappy changing and sleeping.

This Kōhanga Reo has established rules about acceptable touching of tamariki, which are discussed regularly with kaimahi and other adults. If a mokopuna initiates physical contact in the seeking of affection, reassurance, or comfort it is appropriate to respond. It is not appropriate to force unwanted affection or touching on a mokopuna.

Physical contact of tamariki during changing or cleansing must be for the purpose of that task only and no more than is necessary. Encourage tamariki to take care of themselves if possible. In making physical contact with tamariki, kaimahi should be guided by the principal that they would do so only to meet the mokopuna's physical or emotional needs. Touching should never be initiated to gratify adult's needs. Tamariki should not be asked to take care of adult needs, physical or otherwise. Except in an emergency, tamariki are not taken from the Kōhanga Reo without whānau approval, which is be given in writing.

Protection of Kaimahi

This Kōhanga Reo is committed to providing a safe working environment for all our kaimahi and ensure that employee privacy is protected. We take all reasonable steps to ensure kaimahi safety. The Kōhanga will not disclose personal information (including personal address, phone numbers and personal circumstances) of any employee, to any mokopuna, parent or member of the public. Information will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the office: only employees with specific authority will be permitted access to confidential information.

We require kaimahi to be observant. If you have a concern regarding a mokopuna (ie observation of an unusual behaviour, evidence of injury etc) then you must document this concern and pass it to te Kaiako Matua. We recommend that kaimahi report any such observations immediately to the Kaiako Matua who will determine the appropriate course of action. We recommend that you never act alone. Your written observation/statement will be retained by the Kōhanga Reo as confidential information and kept on file for our records.

We recommend that you consult with other kaimahi and the Kaiako Matua, who will make a final decision about if it is appropriate to report your observation to an external agency (guidelines previously stated throughout the policy). Your statement/identity will not be revealed by the Kōhanga Reo to any third party (except any agencies required to support the Kōhanga Reo) and only in consultation with you or as required by law.

For the protection of kaimahi who, through the course of their work, are caring for tamariki bodily needs the following should be noted. All details of care given in respect to mokopuna ano/genital areas must be recorded with date, time and action taken, as soon as possible after the event. This includes washing genitals (toileting sheet), applying medication to the ano/genital area (medicine book), inspection of ano/genital areas if soreness, itching or injury is suspected (accident book). Tamariki under two years old have this information recorded on their daily record sheet. Kaiako/kaimahi are not to be left alone with tamariki where a situation could arise where allegations of sexual abuse could be made.

Never photograph a mokopuna's ano-genital area, even as a record of your concern.

Alcohol/Drugs

The Kōhanga has a zero tolerance for use of drugs by kaimahi and suspicions will be reported to the Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust. Policies are in place to ensure that no kaimahi is under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst working in the Kōhanga. If whānau who arrive to pick up tamariki are suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, kaimahi must assess if tamariki are safe to be driven away. Where drivers are not cooperative, kaimahi should call the police.

Haumarū Mokopuna/Child Safety Team

A haumarū mokopuna Team, to be led by te Kaiako Matua, is responsible for reviewing and implementing this policy and guidance on behalf of the Kōhanga whānau. These kaimahi are given initial training in tūkino mokopuna/child abuse and are to attend refresher meetings as they become available, or organised by the Kaiako Matua. The haumarū mokopuna team reports to the Chairperson and is to ensure that this policy and its implementation is culturally sensitive and appropriate. Any member of the team can call a meeting at any time.

Advice

Any member of the haumarū mokopuna team may talk unofficially to any appropriate health professional in confidence before the referral procedures are implemented.

Visitors to Kōhanga

The Kaiako Matua is responsible for ensuring that visitors to the Kōhanga know what adult behaviour is deemed appropriate.

Inappropriate touching for visitors is: hugs, kisses, tickling, stroking, sitting mokopuna on knee, carrying tamariki, changing tamariki clothes.

Appropriate touching is: holding hands (e.g. taking tamariki inside), helping tamariki in or out of a swing, physical removal from potentially dangerous situations.

The Kaiako Matua arranges with kaiako/kaimahi to inform visiting ākonga of our policy, and speaks personally to the ākonga where possible before any ākonga arrive. Visitors, trainees etc. never toilet or change nappies.

Prevention of abuse within the Kōhanga

- No closed doors on tamariki toilets.
- Toilet/baby change door to be always open when tamariki are in the room.
- Sleeping room and office to have glass windows.
- Office door to be kept open if a mokopuna is present.
- No mokopuna is to be in the garden shed.
- No mokopuna is to accompany a solitary kaimahi on any trip outside the Kōhanga Reo.
- Trips to any private home or building are only to be undertaken with more than one kaimahi and/or adult present.

Further Information on the following pages

Physical and Behavioural Clues (Page 14 & 15)
 Issues in the Home (Page 22)
 Oranga Tamariki: Signs of Abuse and Neglect (Page 18)
 Record of Incident template (Page 19)
 Process Flowchart 'Responding to Tūkinō Mokopuna' (Page 16)
 Guidance for making a report of concern (page 17)

Contacts

Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust: 04-381 8750
 Oranga Tamariki Advice Line: 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774)
 Oranga Tamariki: 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)
 Police: 111
 Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator 0800 84 83 26
 Ministry of Education Rotorua (07 349 7399)

Resources:

- *Booklet: Sexual Abuse SAY NO! Published by Sexual Abuse Education (Rotorua)*
- *Booklet: How can I tell? Published by Child Matters (Hamilton) 07 838 3370*
- *Leaflet: Common and infrequent sexual behaviours in children ages 2-12. Published by Sexual Abuse Education (Rotorua)*
- *Leaflet: When a child tells. Sexual Abuse Education (Rotorua)*
- *Website: www.sexualabuse.org.nz*
- *[Information Sharing](#) – The Oranga Tamariki Act (1989) information sharing provisions (2019)*
- *[Safety Checking Ākonga on Practicum](#) – Sexual Abuse Education*
- *[Safer Organisations – Safer Children](#) – Children's Action plan (2015)*
- *[Working together](#) – Oranga Tamariki (2020)*
- *[When a child tells](#) – Sexual Abuse Education*
- *[Childhood sexual behaviours](#) – Sexual Abuse Education*
- *[UNCROC](#) – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *[A Parent's Guide](#) – What can you do about sexual abuse (Sexual Abuse Education)*
- *<https://elearning.privacy.org.nz> – Free online courses relating to Privacy issues*
- *[Creating a safe organisation](#) – Child matters (2019)*
- *[Workforce Restriction](#) – Schedule of Specified Offences*
- *[Smacking](#) – Anti-smacking posters*

Physical cues to tūkino mokopuna

Physical abuse

- *Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions*
- *Suspicious locations include: Face, lips, gums, mouth, eyes torso, back, buttocks, back of legs, external genitalia*
- *Bruises of different colours in different stages of healing*
- *Shape of suspicious injuries*
- *Clustered, form regular patterns*
- *Teeth marks, handprints, fingertips*
- *Imprint of article (e.g. belt)*
- *Unexplained burns*
- *Small circular burns*
- *Immersion burns*
- *Burns showing a pattern (e.g. iron)*
- *Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, torso*
- *Unexplained injuries*
- *Fractures of skull, facial bones, spine*
- *Dislocations of hip or shoulder*
- *Multiple fractures at different stages of healing*
- *Bald patches resulting from hair pulling*
- *Any fractures in infants*

Sexual abuse

- *Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the anogenital*
- *Torn, stained or bloody underwear*
- *Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in the anogenital area*
- *Blood in urine or stool*
- *Pain experienced in urination or bowel movement*
- *Sexually transmitted disease*
- *Urinary infection*

Neglect

- *Inappropriately dressed for season or weather*
- *Is often very dirty or unbathed*
- *May have severe untreated nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders resulting from lack of hygiene*
- *Inadequately supervised*
- *Left with inappropriate caregiver*
- *Has unattended health problems*
- *Malnourished*
- *Inadequate housing*
- *Non-organic failure to thrive*

Emotional abuse

- *Bed-wetting or bed soiling*
- *Frequent psychosomatic complaints*
- *Non-organic failure to thrive*
- *Appears pale, emaciated, has sunken cheeks*
- *BMI extremely low (e.g. wrinkled buttocks)*
- *Dehydration (skin may feel like paper)*
- *Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea*
- *Falling behind significant milestones*
- *Malnutrition*
- *Dressed differently to, or has deprived physical living conditions to, other tamariki in the whānau*

Behavioural clues to tūkino mokopuna

Physical abuse

- *Cannot recall how injuries occurred*
- *Offers inconsistent explanations*
- *Is wary of adults or of a particular individual*
- *May cringe or flinch if touched*
- *May display a vacant stare or frozen watchfulness*
- *May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn*
- *Indiscriminate affection-seeking behaviour*
- *Extremely compliant or eager to please*
- *Tries to protect parents or caregiver*
- *Acts out negative behaviour or language in play*
- *Frequently provokes punishment*
- *Dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries*
- *Afraid to go home*
- *Describes abusive situations*
- *Regressive behaviour*
- *General sadness*
- *Could have vision or hearing delay*
- *Is aggressive to animals or other tamariki*

Sexual Abuse

- *Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others, e.g. demonstrates explicit sex acts*
- *Age-inappropriate sexual drawings or descriptions*
- *Unusual or sophisticated sexual knowledge*
- *Refuses to go home, or to another's home for no apparent reason*
- *Discloses or describes sexual activity or hints at it*
- *Comments like "I've got a secret" or "I don't like uncle"*
- *Fear of certain people*
- *Fear of certain places (bathroom, bedroom)*
- *Regressive behaviour*

Neglect

- *Developmental lags, possible global delays*
- *Demonstrates lack of attachment to carers*
- *Demonstrates indiscriminate attachment to other adults*
- *Is left at home alone or unsupervised*
- *Demanding of affection or attention*
- *May steal food*
- *Has a poor social skill*
- *Has no understanding of basic hygiene*
- *Discloses*

Emotional abuse

- *Developmental lags, possible global delays*
- *Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression*
- *Self-destructive behaviour*
- *Overly compliant*
- *Displays extreme attention-seeking behaviour*
- *Extreme inhibition in play*
- *Models negative behaviour in play (spanking, yelling at dolls)*
- *Frequent psychosomatic complaints*
- *Nightmares, poor sleep patterns*
- *Antisocial behaviour*
- *Lack of self-esteem*
- *Obsessive behaviours*
- *Appears generally sad*

RESPONDING TO TŪKINO MOKOPUNA

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

RESPOND TO THE MOKOPUNA'S NEEDS

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

Listen and believe the mokopuna and keep careful notes.

Call the Police (111) if the mokopuna is in immediate danger

Are you Kaimahi?

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR KAIKO MATUA.

If the suspected abuser is your Kaiako Matua, inform the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* who will contact the Chairperson. Where this is **not** possible, contact Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust in Wellington who will support you to contact O.T. on 0508 326 459 OR the police.

PREPARE A WRITTEN RECORD

Date, time and place of observation/report of abuse

Names of anyone present

Word for word what the mokopuna said

Any physical or behavioural signs

GIVE THIS TO YOUR KAIKO MATUA

Are you the Kaiako Matua?

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.

Inform your *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* and Chairperson and work together with them to call O.T. 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) to discuss your concerns. O.T. will tell you if you need to do a formal Report of Concern (RoC).

It is the responsibility of the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* to inform TKR National Trust (Wellington) (Pou 4) who will notify the Ministry of Education (HS34).

(In the rare case that there is an allegation against a Registered Teacher, the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* will inform the Teaching Council at this time also).

REPORT ABUSE

You, the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* or your Chairperson must call O.T. on 0508 326 459 (contact@ot.govt.nz) **OR** Police if it is an emergency

Use the guide for making a reporting of concern on page 17 of the policy.

ALWAYS ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT - get a timeframe.

OUTSIDE THE KŌHANGA

- You will most likely suspect that the abuse is by whānau, but you **cannot assume this**. If you are concerned about a mokopuna going home tell O.T. or Police about this.
- Ensure that the mokopuna is not at further risk whilst in your care.
- Email a copy of your Report of Concern to the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* and the Chairperson. Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust will inform the Ministry of Education (HS34).
- If you make a verbal Report of concern, email a copy of O.T.'s acknowledgement to the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* who will forward it to Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust and the Ministry of Education

REMEMBER

It is not your job to investigate external abuse

INSIDE THE KŌHANGA REO

- Ensure that the alleged abuser is suspended and immediately excluded from the Kōhanga
- Report the matter at once to the *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* for your Kōhanga Reo who will inform Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust **and** the Ministry of Education
- Work together with your *Kaitohu ā-Rohe* and Chairperson to complete your investigation and submit your report to the MoE using their Incident Report Template (<https://sexualabuse.org.nz/forms/>)
- (In the rare case that the person is a Registered Teacher, report the matter to the Teaching Council early on, even before you begin any investigation).
- If you have made a Report of Concern, consider discussing any actions you decide to take with O.T./Police first
- Recommend that the alleged abuser seek legal advice
- Ensure records are kept of any comments or events relating to the complaint/allegations and that any follow-up action taken is documented
- Seek employment/legal advice where appropriate

ATTEND TO THE HEALING OF YOUR COMMUNITY

If there is disruption to the Kōhanga Reo or community, negative impacts on other mokopuna and/or kaimahi, or there is media interest please contact the

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAUMATIC INCIDENT COORDINATOR

For support on 0800 848 326

October 2025

Guidance for making a report of concern

When you make a Report of Concern you are advocating for the mokopuna. It is important that you provide high quality information as this can be key to the mokopuna receiving the help they need. When making a Report of Concern take time to consider the information that needs to be included in the report. Consider these points:

- Will the person receiving the report be able to easily understand your concerns?
- Ask a colleague to read your report in confidence before you submit it, just to ensure that your concerns are clear.
- How will you follow up with the agency you filed the report with to ensure your concerns are being addressed?

Here is a list of information useful for Oranga Tamariki or Police to both identify the child and to better understand your concern(s). The more detail you can provide the more effective your report becomes.

- Mokopuna's name
- Date of birth or approximate age
- Residential address
- Name(s) of parent/caregiver
- Telephone numbers of carers
- Name(s) of any other tamariki in the household if known
- Name(s) of any other adults in household/whānau
- If relevant, name(s) of the person you are concerned about and their relationship or connection to the mokopuna or Kōhunga
- Name of Doctor (GP) or Plunket nurse if known
- What are you concerned about? What have you seen or heard?
- Who was present when you noticed something? When did it happen?
- What did the mokopuna say? Use the mokopuna's actual words.
- What did the adult say or do that concerned you? Use speech marks. Is it a one-off incident or often occurring?
- If injury is present or disclosed, provide detail of where on the body. Use the body map on page 18.
- Using the mokopuna's or adult's own words, record how any injury happened and any other details disclosed.
- Provide details of any questions you have asked, and the response given.
- What have you done to safeguard or protect the mokopuna?
- Who else is aware of or shares your concern(s)?
- Have you spoken to the mokopuna's family of your concern(s)? If not, detail why, for example, fear for mokopuna's or your own safety. Do the family know you are making a Report of Concern? If yes, what was their response?
- If you have any reason to believe that a mokopuna will be at increased risk of harm because of submitting the Report of Concern, please ensure you highlight this concern in your report.
- Include your full name, job title or relationship to mokopuna. Also, your contact number and name of your Kōhanga Reo.

You have the choice to remain anonymous. However, if you include your details in the report the agency will be able to contact you for more detail or clarification if necessary.

If you choose to remain anonymous, please indicate this in your report and clearly state the reason why. Ensure you have included as much detail as possible as the agency will be unable to contact you for more detail or clarification.

CALL THE POLICE IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.

Where they feel that no action has been taken, Kōhanga Reo Kaimahi (from kaiako through to the cleaners, cooks, parent help – everybody) are free to make a report of concern about suspected or actual harm to Oranga Tamariki and are legally protected from any repercussions by Section 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

Signs and symptoms

Physical indicators that should raise suspicion for maltreatment include the following:

- Injury pattern **inconsistent** with the history provided
- Multiple injuries/multiple types of injuries
- Injuries at various stages of healing
- Poor hygiene
- Presence of pathognomonic injuries, including loop marks; forced immersion burn pattern; and classic abusive head trauma findings of subdural hematoma, retina haemorrhage, and skeletal injuries

Bruising over bony prominences is common in childhood, but patterns of bruising that raise the concern of possible abuse include the following:

- Involvement of multiple areas of the body beyond bony prominences
- Bruising of ears, facial cheeks, buttocks, palms, soles, neck, genitals
- Bruises at many stages of healing
- Bruises in non-ambulatory child
- Patterned markings resembling objects, grab or slap marks, bites, and loop marks
- Oral injury, lingular or labial frenula tears

Skeletal injuries in children younger than 2 years may not be obvious; therefore, a skeletal survey screening is recommended. Many fracture types can be accidental or inflicted. Fractures that raise a high degree of suspicion for inflicted injury include the following:

- Any fracture in a non-ambulatory infant without clear accidental and consistent mechanism
- Metaphyseal fractures
- Multiple, bilateral, differently aged posterior rib fractures
- Multiple and complex skull fractures if only simple impact history
- Spinous process fractures
- Scapular fractures

Burn patterns that may suggest physical maltreatment include the following:

- Patterned contact burns in clear shape of hot object (eg, fork, clothing iron, curling iron, cigarette lighter)
- Classic forced immersion burn pattern with sharp stocking-and-glove demarcation and sparing of flexed protected areas
- Splash/spill burn patterns not consistent with history or developmental level
- Cigarette burns
- Bilateral or mirror image burns
- Localized burns to genitals, buttocks, and perineum (especially at toilet-training stage)
- Evidence for excessive delay in seeking treatment, and the presence of other forms of injury

Strictly Confidential

Record of Incident or Allegation

Name/s of tamaiti/tamariki:

Date:

Time:

What happened or was alleged? (Be clear, use anatomical words):

How did the kaimahi manage the behaviour/situation?

How did the tamaiti/tamariki respond?

What action was taken?

Kaimahi involved:

Notetaker: _____

Recording injuries

Abrasion - a superficial scraping injury of the body surface with or without bleeding

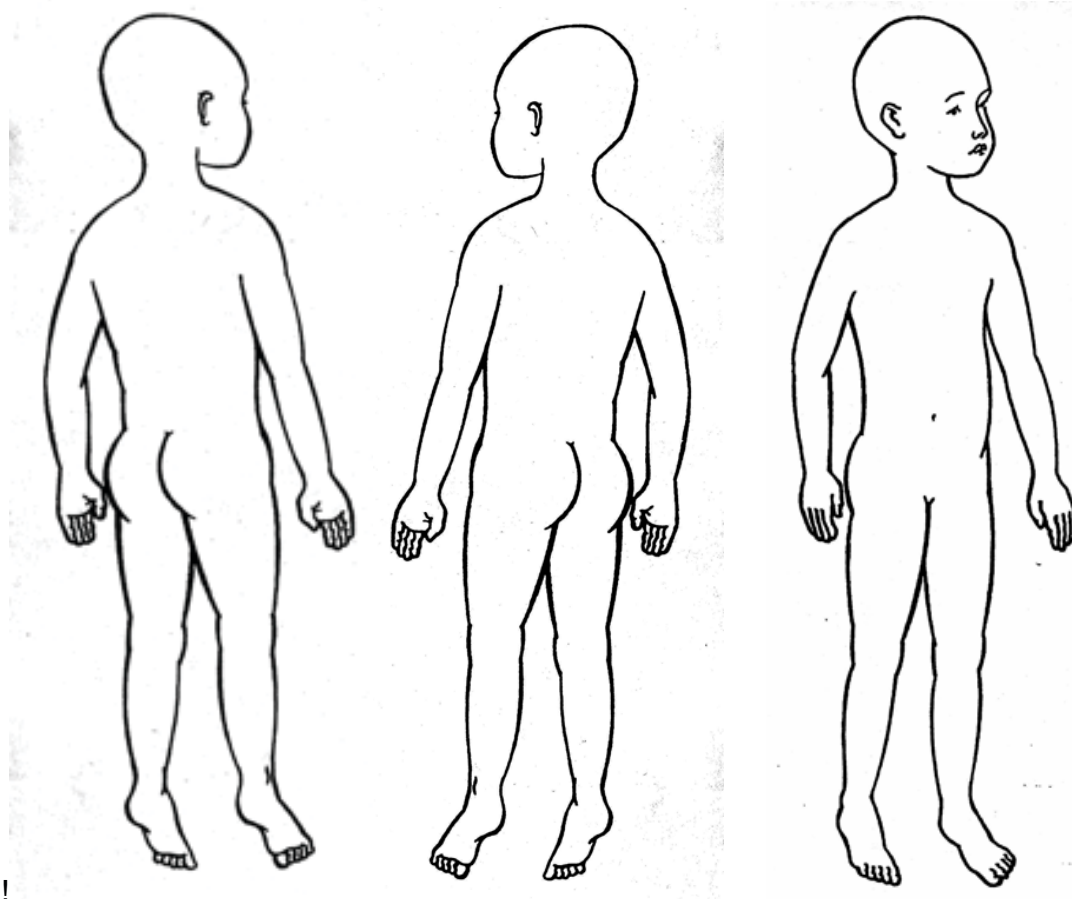
Bruise - Leakage of blood from blood vessels discolouring the tissues of the body

Incision - A cutting type injury that severs tissues in a clean and generally regular fashion

Laceration - A tear or split in the tissues

In describing a wound consider the following features:

- Size
- Shape
- Surrounds
- Colour
- Contours
- Course
- Contents
- Age
- Borders
- Classification
- Depth



Tamaiti:

Date:

Time:

Kaiako/kaimahi 1

Kaiako/kaimahi 2:

Child Abuse: Vulnerability Factors

There are many issues that may predispose a child to abuse, but some factors increase the risk to children and young people and make them more vulnerable to abuse. They can be found in the background of parents, in the environmental situation and in attributes of the child or young person themselves.

These factors can be significant in alerting a bystander or family member to offer support to a family and keep a caring eye out.

Issues in the home that kaimahi might become aware of, that might lead to abuse and neglect include:

- Money problems, being out of work
- Overcrowding or housing struggles
- Whānau is experiencing multiple stresses
- Parents with a history of depression or other mental illness
- Strained relationships – Separation
- Poverty or lack of opportunity to improve the family's resources
- Parent has already abused a child
- Pregnancy was not wanted
- Young, unsupported mother often with low education
- Mātua have unrealistic expectations of the Mokopuna and lack parenting knowledge
- Family violence is present
- Drug, alcohol or gambling problem

Early signs that can lead to abuse and or neglect can be;

- Mokopuna has a physical or developmental disability
- Isolation from whānau, friends and extended whānau
- Child is the product of an abusive relationship
- Lack of attachment between child and parent
- Parent does not engage with their Mokopuna or has a difficult relationship with them
- Poverty – Mokopuna does not have enough clothes and is often cold and hungry
- Mokopuna has unexplained or changeable emotions (e.g. withdrawn or depressed)
- Carers frequently yell at, swear at or shame a mokopuna
- Mokopuna seems scared of a particular adult

Risk factors for child sexual abuse are as follows:

- Parent abused as a child: Most perpetrators are not strangers but are known to the tamaiti (eg, stepfathers, uncles, mother's paramour). Female perpetrators are reported less often. Parents who have been abused do not always abuse their own children, but the risk for continued familial abuse is present.
- Multiple caretakers for the child
- Caretaker or matua who has multiple sexual partners
- Stress associated with poverty
- Social isolation and whānau secrecy
- Mokopuna with poor self-esteem or other vulnerable state
- Other family members (eg, siblings, cousins) abused
- Gang member associations

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Expectations for Kaiako Behaviour

Kaimahi working with mokopuna will:

- *affirm the positive in their approach to child guidance.*
- *be consistent and reliable in their behaviour with mokopuna;*
- *be objective when assessing mokopuna's behaviour;*
- *consider the child's behaviour within the context of the environment.*
- *demonstrate empathy for mokopuna feelings;*
- *encourage mokopuna to care for equipment, the environment, and other people;*
- *establish a few clear, constant rules about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour;*
- *foster harmonious working relationships with other adults, including parents/caregivers;*
- *have realistic expectations of what mokopuna at different stages can be expected to do or cope with;*
- *help mokopuna to recognise their feelings and to express them in appropriate ways;*
- *model appropriate behaviour and relationships with other adults as well as with mokopuna;*
- *use clear, simple, and friendly direction;*
- *use the management of behaviour as a positive opportunity for learning appropriate social skills, and for thinking about concepts such as justice;*
- *value mistakes as learning opportunities;*

Inappropriate practice for adults working with mokopuna includes:

- *ignoring unacceptable behaviours.*
- *inflicting verbal or physical punishment;*
- *isolating mokopuna;*
- *labelling mokopuna with derogatory words;*
- *shaming or comparing mokopuna.*

Immobilisation (physical intervention) is not part of our behaviour guidance approach. Regulation 56 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 explicitly prohibits the use of immobilization of children in our setting. **Kaiako should only consider using physical intervention as a last resort, where harm to the child or someone else is imminent, and no other options are available to avoid the harm.** Staff accused of or observed engaging in inappropriate practice **will be suspended** pending full investigation.

The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 encourages employees to disclose and report information about serious wrongdoing in the workplace. This Act provides protection for employees who make such a disclosure from criminal and legal retribution and outlines the internal procedure to be followed when investigating the matter.

Who can you speak to if you have a concern?

Date: Signed by the kaimahi:

Contacts

AGENCY	PHONE NUMBER	INFORMATION
New Zealand Police	111	If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call NZ Police on 111.
Oranga Tamariki	0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) or email edassist@ot.govt.nz (this is the dedicated contact for schools and early learning services)	If you are worried about a child or want to discuss, report, or refer a concern, contact Oranga Tamariki.
Healthline	0800 61 11 16	Healthline can provide you with advice about a child who appears unwell or hurt, or has any symptoms of sickness.
Shine Helpline	0508 74 46 33	Shine can provide advice and support for anyone seeking information about family harm.
Crimestoppers	0800 55 51 11	If you have any concerns about reporting a potential case of family harm, Crimestoppers will support you to pass on key information anonymously.
Are You Ok	0800 456 450	Are You OK helpline will be able to provide information and advice on family violence. As well as referrals to local family violence services.
Safe to Talk	0800 044 334 or email support@safetotalk.nz	Safe to Talk helpline will be able to provide information and advice on sexual harm. As well as referrals to local sexual harm services.
Special Education Traumatic Incident Coordinator	0800 84 83 26	Support if there is disruption to the ECE Service or community, negative impacts on other children and/or staff, or there is media interest.

**He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai.
Ko te aroha te mea nui.**

If kindness is sown, then kindness you will receive