

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

- To ensure that the team at Sport BOP understand the requirements and expectations regarding the safeguarding and welfare of children in its care.
- To outline the manner in which Sport BOP will deal with breaches of this policy and the consequences for failing to follow this policy and/or other associated policies.

SCOPE

- This policy applies to all employees of Sport BOP while at work and it also applies to behaviour and conduct outside of the normal working day.
- This policy also applies to all contractors, subcontractors and visitors to the workplace.
- This policy is in accordance with the Childrens Act 2014.

OVERVIEW

- Sport BOP is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in our activities.
- Employees will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.
- For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.
- Sport BOP will support statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police) to investigate child welfare concerns & will report suspected cases and concerns as appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

- **Abuse:** any acts or omissions which are cruel, violent, or demeaning in nature leading to an adverse effect on an individual. This includes, but is not limited to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Further definitions follow;
 - Physical abuse: acts which may result in physical harm of a child.
 - Sexual abuse: acts which involve forcing, enticing, or manipulating a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
 - Emotional abuse: acts or omissions that result in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning and/or development.
- **Child:** a person aged 18 or under who is not married or in a civil union.
- **Child Protection:** activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Disclosure:** information given to an employee by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Neglect:** a form of abuse in which a person fails to care properly for a child. This can be in the context of;
 - Physical neglect such as not providing a warm & safe home, food, and clothing.
 - Emotional neglect such as not providing comfort, attention, and love.
 - Supervisory neglect such as leaving children without adequate supervision or with someone unsafe.

- Medical neglect such as not addressing health needs.
 - Educational neglect such as failure to enrol in education or allowing chronic truancy.
- **Welfare:** the health, wellness, happiness, and wellbeing of a person.

PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters, which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- Our organisation will work in partnership together with children, parents/carers & whānau, and government agencies to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- Adhere to the recommendations of the Children's Act 2014 where no child will be in the care of a person whose safety cannot be ascertained.
- Concerns of child safety shall always be investigated and responded to appropriately.
- Information and data which is required by law to be given to third parties in the case of child welfare investigations shall be treated with respect & integrity.
- Employees will be given training, support, and guidance on how to support children's welfare as well as how to act in suspected abuse or neglect scenarios.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through:

- Promoting the health and welfare of children.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Requiring staff to adopt and abide by the Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with the Policy and procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and procedures.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Sport BOP is committed to supporting employees to prevent, recognise, and respond to concerns of child welfare.
- All employees will be required to read and accept this policy when they start at Sport BOP. Staff will also be required to undertake a bi-annual e-module on Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport
- Training will be provided to allow all employees to understand:
 - The signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
 - Role and responsibilities around record keeping and reporting.

- Responsibilities to children.
 - Limitations and boundaries of their role.
- Sport BOP will report annually to all staff, showing them where all the documents/resources can be found and any updates to the policy.
- If you require further training and support, please discuss with your Manager/Team Leader.

SAFEGUARDS AND PROCEDURES

Screening

- As part of our duty of care, we must ensure that suitable and appropriate employees are engaged to work with children. When recruiting people to engage with children we will ensure that there is robust recruitment process that includes:
 - creating a role description.
 - developing candidate specifications.
 - advertising the position.
 - an application process.
 - following up on referees.
 - interviewing; and
 - screening (e.g. police vetting).

Appointing a Child Protection Officer

- A Child Protection Officer (CPO) shall be appointed to manage child protection issues by:
 - Ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members.
 - Acting as the main contact for child protection matters.
 - Keeping up to date with developments in child protection legislation.
 - Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken; and
 - Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

Best Practice Protocols

- The protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations.
 - Applying a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity.
 - Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.
 - Optimise communication with both children and parents.
 - Creating a safe and open working environment.
 - Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity.
 - Seek permission to touch when doing the above.
- Social Media, internet or public use of images of children
 - Particular care must be taken if photos of a child are intended for use on our website or social media sites.
 - Obtain and document consent by the parent or caregiver before utilising any images in this manner. Ensure they are fully aware what media will be utilised.
 - Ensure the parent/ caregiver has visualised the image to be used.

- Authorised image and video capturing of children should occur on company devices. If no company device is readily available, and an employee therefore needs to use their personal device, the employee must get approval from their Manager/Team Leader and the image/video must immediately be stored on SharePoint and deleted from the personal device.
- Supervision and visitors:
 - Employees should avoid situations where they are alone with children.
 - Employees should be aware of where children are at all times.
 - Visitors should be monitored at all times.
 - Except in an emergency, children may not leave the employers premises without written parental consent.

IDENTIFYING, ADDRESSING AND RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

- In accordance with members' responsibility to act on any serious concerns (as per the requirements of section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989)
 - The following should be brought to the attention of the CPO Any instance where policy is breached, or best practice guidelines are not followed.
 - Any disclosure by a child that abuse, neglect, or harm is occurring.
 - Any suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to abuse.

Identification

- Identification of abuse should be guided by the following principles.
 - Every situation is different, and we must consider all available information before reaching a conclusion.
 - Concerns should always be discussed with another person, ideally your Manager/Team Leader or the CPO. Action should not be taken in isolation.
 - Instinct and concerns of neglect or abuse should not be ignored. While employees are expected to act with restraint and caution, concerns should be raised with Management or the CPO even if there is little evidence.
 - Exposure to family violence has a proven correlation with child abuse & neglect. Where we become aware of family violence, attention should be paid to the child.
- Concerns, investigations, or allegations from children directly should be noted with as much information and potentially supporting evidence such as photos as appropriate.

Recognising Signs

- Employees are expected to be familiar with common signs of neglect & abuse in order to identify, address, and prevent abuse.
- Examples of signs of abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to;
 - Physical signs of injury or neglect e.g. generally dirty/uncared for.
 - Developmental delays such as poor speech.
 - Emotional signs such as obsessive behaviour, sadness, evidence of self-harm.
 - Behavioural concerns.
 - Discussion or allusion to abuse or neglect.

Addressing & Responding

- Addressing and/or reporting suspicions or allegations must occur through the appropriate channels.

- If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police.
- If a child discloses abuse or neglect or there are concerns employees should discuss with the Manager/Team Leader and seek advice from Oranga Tamariki's National Contact Centre.
- If the outcome is to report to Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police, employees should be aware of the following:
 - Under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 any person who believes that a child 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. Provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
 - When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the Privacy Act.
 - Employees may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11).
- In many cases, the involvement of statutory agencies is not appropriate and potentially harmful. Employees must discuss the situation with their Manager/Team Leader and/or CPO to determine the appropriate level of involvement.
- There are many agencies which offer mutually supportive services. It important for Sport BOP to work with these agencies in a manner appropriate & proportionate to the level of need and risk. Discuss this with your Manager/Team Leader.
- Where a child directly discloses abuse or neglect, the employee should take the following steps:
 - Listen to the child.
 - Reassure the child they are not in trouble, they have done the right thing, and they will be helped.
 - Ask open ended questions to gain more information. Ensure this is done in an open way to encourage the child to talk rather than through undue pressure or persuasion.
 - If the child is not in immediate danger; re involve the child in ordinary activities and explain the next steps.
 - If the child is in immediate danger, contact Police immediately.
 - As soon as possible, record the event.

EMPLOYEE ALLEGATIONS

- If a concern or allegation is raised against an employee of Sport BOP, this must immediately be escalated to the management team/most senior member of staff.
- To ensure the safety of the child, employees involved in an allegation or concern may be removed from the environment while Sport BOP investigates.
- As per the mobile device policy, in the event of an investigation Sport Bay of Plenty has the right to access business information from personal devices.
- At all times Sport BOP shall act in accordance with the employee's employment agreement and relevant employment legislation.