

Child protection

"I feel safe and know who to tell if I don't feel safe."

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea.

I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea.

Intent

Safety and protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect is central to our kaupapa and is everyone's business. When a rangatahi is being hurt, at risk of harm or where they are hurting someone else, inaction is not an option.

We respond to abuse in ways that are known to work:

- an organisational culture that is open about the risk of abuse
- an inter-disciplinary approach
- provide an early and/or timely response
- responsive to Te Ao Māori
- rangatahi-centred
- prioritise the best interests of the rangatahi
- sensitive to age, gender and sexuality preferences, culture and disability.

Definitions

"Abuse" refers to [child abuse](#).

"Settlement agreement" refers to an agreement that allows a kaimahi to resign without disciplinary action being taken.

Responsibilities

Management will:

- ensure team members who work with rangatahi are trained to implement this policy (eg trained in signs of abuse, reporting and process for responding to child protection concerns)

- follow up on abuse concerns
- address systemic deficits that could contribute to abuse or non-detection of abuse
- lead an organisational culture that:
 - models respect for dignity and rights to safety and equality
 - promotes zero tolerance for abuse
 - promotes early intervention and reporting of abuse by young people, staff, and volunteers.
- designate a staff member, who is experienced and skilled in child protection, as our Child Protection Champion.

Staff/kaimahi and volunteers/kaiawhina will:

- understand and comply with this policy and related procedural requirements in service delivery
- act professionally at all times and desist from any abusive or harmful action against rangatahi
- communicate this policy to rangatahi and their supports
- report abuse concerns and any deficit in knowledge, systems or processes that could contribute to abuse or prevent detection of abuse.

The Child Protection Champion will:

- advise and support staff to implement this policy
- ensure they maintain their knowledge and skills in child protection
- fulfill such other responsibilities as is agreed with management.

Requirements

Safety in staffing

Kaimahi/kaiawhina will be trained in identifying and responding to common signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.

Kaimahi/kaiawhina understand there will be disciplinary consequences, including dismissal, for child abuse.

Kaimahi/kaiawhina will be police vetted/ child safety checked if working regularly with rangatahi.

Kaimahi/kaiawhina will use [safe practices](#) in interactions with children/rangatahi.

Provide information

Information will be provided to rangatahi/whānau to assist prevention and early detection of abuse, as necessary. The information must be given in an accessible way and assist their understanding of:

- the different types of abuse
- how to recognise the signs
- how to report abuse, neglect and exploitation
- how and who to access for support internally and externally if abuse occurs
- [information sharing about abuse](#)
- our obligation to prevent and [report abuse](#)
- attitudes and social and cultural inequalities that contribute to abuse.

Early intervention/support

Children will not be physically punished, disciplined, or treated in any way that is degrading, humiliating or likely to cause fear or anxiety. Alternative methods will be used to manage behaviour eg [behaviour supports](#).

Where appropriate, whānau will be provided with information about child abuse and alternative discipline strategies, i.e. posters and where appropriate, supported to access parenting support services/programmes.

Verbal abuse directed against a person in our organisation will not be tolerated. This will be communicated and addressed with rangatahi and team members.

Reporting

The [Reporting concerns about child, rangatahi](#) policy will be implemented when abuse or risk of abuse to a rangatahi is indicated through assessment or disclosed.

System issues

Policies and practices will be periodically reviewed to identify and check for gaps, which may contribute to or mean risks of child abuse are undetected. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as necessary.

Allegations against kaimahi

The [Responding to allegations of abuse against team members policy](#) will be implemented by:

- management when allegations of abuse are received against a member of our team
- the board for an allegation against management.

Accountability

"Settlement agreements" will not be used if an abuse allegation is substantiated against a team member and the agreement would be contrary to protecting tamariki from abuse.

Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Level 2, Community wellbeing 1.0-4.0; Client services & programmes 1.0-3.0, Health & Safety, 2.0

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights 1.5

Children's Act 2014

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Family Violence Act 2018

References to other Genesis Youth Trust Policies:

Sharing information without consent

Best interests of child, young person

Responding to rangatahi perpetrating abuse

Responding to allegations against team members

Vulnerable persons

Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996

Review

Date: March 2021

Next review: by February 2023