



Little Feet Childcare Centre Limited

Child Protection Policy and Children's Act 2014 – GMA7A

Rationale: Little Feet Childcare Centre is committed to the protection of all children under their care and aim to prevent any form of abuse and neglect.

Policy Procedures;

Safety checks involve gathering a range of key information about a person and evaluating this information to determine whether they pose any risk in being employed working with children.

The regulations require that the worker safety checks include:

- identity verification check
- police vetting
- reference checks (professional or personal)
- employment verification checks
- checks with professional registration bodies or licensing authorities
- interviews with the applicant
- a risk assessment that considers the specific child safety related risk.

Staff Recruitment:

New employees, volunteers, and any other person in regular unsupervised contact with the children will undergo a thorough checking of their credentials as per the guidelines of the Children's Act 2014. Following procedures will be adhered to in accordance with Ministry of Education and **Children's Act requirements:**

Safety Check procedure

A standard application form is an important source of information about a candidate and can also be cross-referenced with other sources. It should **always** be used in addition to a CV.

It is recommended that application forms include space for the candidate to provide:

- Personal details, including their name, two forms of identity and any previous names and their current address. This information will be important for verifying a candidate's identity.
- Details of any relevant academic or vocational qualifications, including the date received and the awarding body or institution.
- A chronological list of previous employment (both voluntary and paid) with commencement and end dates. The candidate should give details of the work history they have held within a five-year period. There should be space for the candidate to explain any periods when they were not in employment, education or training.
- Their reason for leaving these previous jobs.
- Contact details for any referees and the relationship between the candidate and each referee.
- A general consent to contact the referees provided or any other person or organization necessary to gather information to assess the candidate's suitability for the position.
- Consent or non-consent for the current employer to be contacted (some candidates may only consent to their current employer being contacted if the candidate is the preferred candidate).
- A declaration of whether they have been convicted of a criminal offence, which is not eligible to be concealed under the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 and space to provide an explanation.
- Consent to undertake a Criminal Conviction History Check or Police Vet, using the required forms.

Any other necessary disclosures. For example, details of their professional registration status and any previous employment or professional disciplinary history that could be relevant to child safety.

- All children's workers who have access to children are safety checked in accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.
- Safety checks will be undertaken, and the results obtained before the worker has access to children.
- The results of the safety checks will be recorded, and the record kept as long as the person is employed at the service.
- Every children's worker will be safety checked every three years. Safety checks will be carried out by Little Feet Childcare Centre.

The Four Steps of Rechecks:

- Identity verification check
- Police vetting

- Organizational check
- Risk assessment

Prevention:

- During staff induction all staff are made aware of the Centre's child protection policy. Staff are made aware that abuse could occur to any child by any person, therefore they are encouraged to attend professional development and update themselves with literature from appropriate agencies to develop their awareness.
- A resource file is kept at the Centre for all staff and adults to increase an awareness of how to prevent, recognize and respond to all forms of child abuse (physical, verbal, sexual, emotional and neglect).
- Volunteers and casual staff are to be supervised by permanent staff.
- We ensure that all staff can identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- Any suspected abuse must be documented, and the Centre supervisor/manager must be informed immediately.
- Little Feet is committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, and to work with partner agencies and organization if need arises.
- Little Feet supports the role of the NZ police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of any suspected abuse.
- Little Feet Childcare Centre will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- All practicable steps will be taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).
- Little Feet staff will always ensure that no child will be allowed to leave the Centre without a written parental consent except in an emergency. All staff will be informed of any custodial issues as they arise.
- During excursions, staff will always follow the excursion policy and will ensure that children are always supervised.
- Staff regularly review and discuss any concerns regarding any child/children during staff meetings.
- No person on the premises will be using or will be under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour during the service's hours of operation.
- A copy of the child protection policy is displayed in the foyer for parents and visitors.
- All visitors to the Centre must report to the office and sign in the visitor's book. At no time any visitor will be left unattended with the children. Visitors, student teachers

and volunteers are not allowed to change nappies or clothes of any child in an isolated situation.

Police Vetting of Employees

Procedure;

Police vetting of non-teaching and unregistered employees at Little Feet Childcare centre services:

Little Feet Childcare Centre will obtain a Police vet of every person

- who is appointed, or it intends to appoint, to a position at Little Feet Childcare Centre; and
- who will be working at the service during normal opening hours; and
- who is not a registered teacher or holder of a limited authority to teach Little Feet Childcare Centre will obtain a Police vet of every contractor, or the employee of a contractor, who has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children at the service during normal opening hours.

1. In this section, **contractor** means a person who, under contract (other than an employment contract), works at a licensed early childhood service.

Police vet will be obtained by Little Feet Childcare Centre before the person has or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children at the service of the Childcare Centre during normal opening hours and a Police vet of a person will be applied no later than 2 weeks after the person begins work at the Childcare Centre.

Procedures of responding to suspected child abuse

- All staff will ensure that child safety and wellbeing is paramount
- The staff must immediately inform the supervisor/manager any suspected child abuse.
- **Little Feet Childcare Centre will exclude any person employed or engaged in the service from coming into contact with children if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person:**
 - **Is in a state of physical or mental health that presents any risk of danger to children**
- Maintain confidentiality always.
- All observation and conversation with the child will be documented by the teacher in the child protection folder. (Record accurately in child's own words). Details of any marks or bruises will be recorded on the body map chart which is stored in the child protection folder in the office cupboard.
- Listen carefully and reassure the child.

- **Little Feet Childcare Centre will exclude any person employed or engaged in the service from coming into contact with children if they have 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, immobilization, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter or protection.**
 - Oranga Tamariki, and Police will be informed and consulted once all the information has been gathered.
- Oranga Tamariki (0508326459)**
- All documentation gathered in this process will be strictly confidential.
 - If the suspected abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member, or someone close the family, the family members will only be informed by the Centre manager and personnel from Oranga Tamariki.
 - Where suspected abuse may have been perpetrated by a staff member at the Centre, the staff will be suspended from duty while the management will investigate the matter and the staff is informed about their rights. (Refer to the center’s staff’s disciplinary policy and procedure)
 - Little Feet will ensure that all those involve in an investigation where child abuse is suspected are supported.

WHEN TO MAKE A MANDATORY REPORT

Little Feet Childcare Centre will IMMEDIATELY report to the Council when:

- a teacher is dismissed for any reason
- a teacher resigns from a teaching position, if within the 12 months preceding the resignation the employer advised the teacher it was dissatisfied with, or intended to investigate, any aspect of the teacher’s conduct or competence, or on the expiry of the teacher’s fixed-term contract
- a teacher ceases to be employed by the employer, and within the following 12 months the employer receives a complaint about the teacher’s conduct or competence while he or she was an employee
- the employer has reason to believe the teacher has engaged in serious misconduct
- the employer is satisfied that, despite completing competence procedures with the teacher, the teacher has not reached the required competence level.

***Child Abuse** is defined in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”*

***Physical abuse** - any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person.
Sexual abuse - any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether they are aware of what is happening.*

Emotional abuse - any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional functioning or development.

Family violence may be witnessed/experienced by children and involve physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

Neglect “is a pattern of behavior which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development.

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter, or warmth
- Medical - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child
- Abandonment - leaving a child young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning
- Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision
- Refusal to resume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child.”

Responding to a child when the child discloses abuse:

i) Listen to the child	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child’s cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
ii) Reassure the child	Let the child know that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not in trouble. • Have done the right thing.
iii) Ask open ended prompts – e.g., “What happened next?”	Do not interview the child (in other words, do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue). Do not make promises that can’t be kept, e.g., “I will keep you safe now”.
iv) If the child is visibly distressed	Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
v) If the child is not in immediate danger	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
vi) If the child is in immediate danger	Contact the Police immediately.
vii) As soon as possible formally record the disclosure	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word for word, what the child said. • The date, time and who was present.

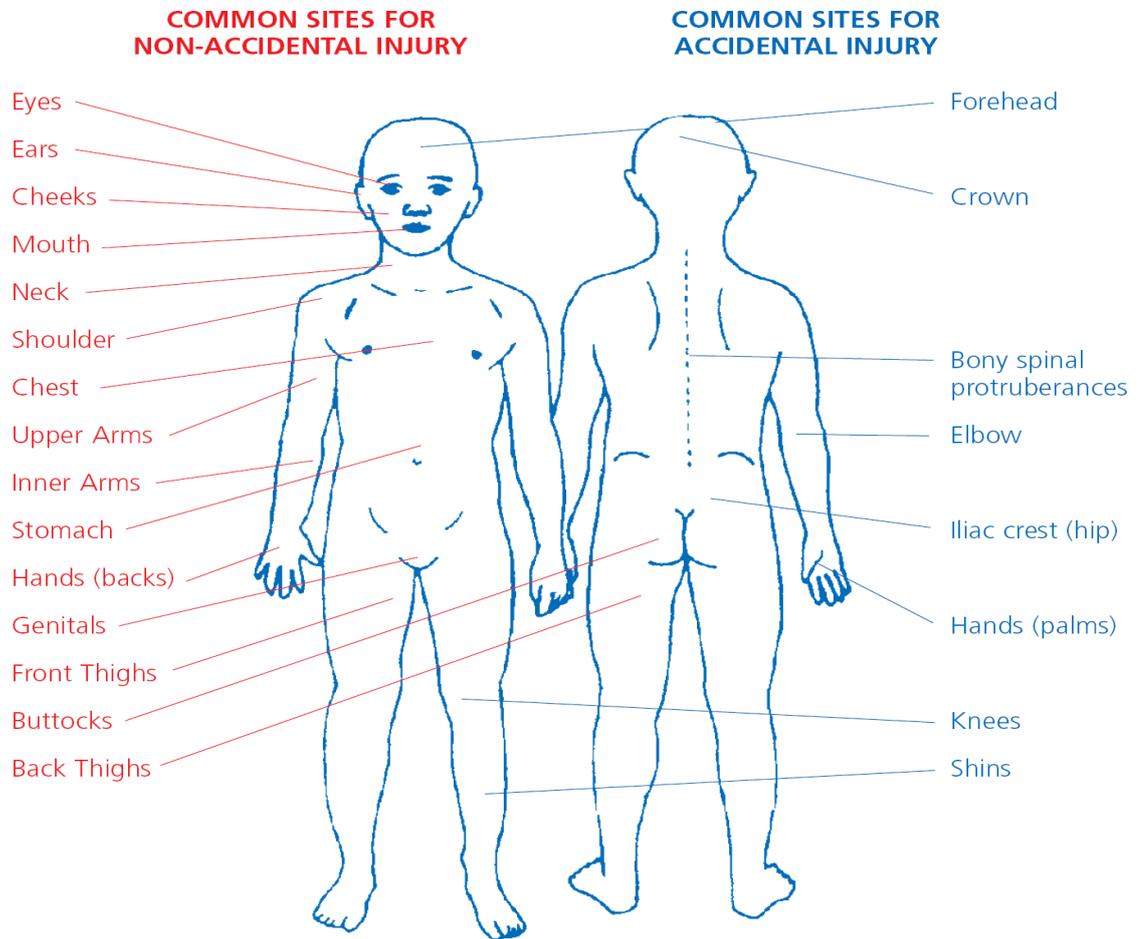
Procedures for responding on allegations or concerns about staff

- As an employer we have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child and the employee. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee will be made in consultation with Oranga Tamariki and the Police. This will ensure any actions taken do not undermine any investigations being conducted by the external agencies.
- If it is a child making the allegation or raising the concern, or the allegation/concern regards a child accessing the service, that child will not be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may mean suspending an employee from their duties, subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract and relevant legal obligations. At the very least we will separate the child and the staff member.
- If, after discussion with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police, there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employment matter, we will advise the person concerned, inform them that they have a right to seek legal advice and provide them with an opportunity to respond. They will also be informed of their right to seek support from the relevant union/representative body. We will follow ordinary disciplinary policies, guided by the employment contract/collective employment contract and relevant statutory obligations.
- Historical allegations will be responded to in the same way as contemporary ones, with the same priority. All allegations or concerns will be investigated fully, regardless of the resignation or termination of the staff member concerned.
- Little Feet Childcare Centre will adopt clear policies around protection for employees reporting on concerns about the conduct of other staff members. Such policies are important for promoting safe organizational cultures.
- Little Feet Childcare Centre will provide staff with support during what is likely to be a troubling or traumatic experience. Policies will cover the support available to both the staff receiving the allegation or expression of concern and the staff member against whom the allegation has been made. It will not be appropriate, however, for the same person to provide support to the staff member receiving the allegation and to the staff member against whom the allegation is made.
- Little Feet Childcare Centre commits not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concern the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

The Child
Consider physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect
Recognize disclosure as a sign of abuse

Recognize Physical Signs	Record Parent, Caregiver or family signs	Observe Behavioral Signs	Child/family Vulnerabilities	Identify Developmental Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises and welts • Cuts and abrasions • Scalds and burns • Fractures • Head injuries • Sexually transmitted infections • Failure to thrive and malnutrition • Dehydration • Inadequate hygiene and clothing • Poisoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to family violence • Unrealistic expectations • Terrorizing • Corrupting • Isolating • Humiliating • Dependency • Closure • Fight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Withdrawal • Anxiety, fear, and regression • Sadness • Overly responsible • Obsession • Substance abuse • Suicidal thoughts/plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction • Mental health • Oranga Tamariki history • Age of parents or child • Attachment • Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global development delay. • Specific delays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motor ○ Attachment ○ Speech and language ○ Social cognitive ○ Vision and hearing ○ Unusual developmental patterns

Little Feet Childcare Centre Body map



Name of Child

Date of Birth.....

Name of Staff.....

Date Recorded.....

Observations:

Review

1. Child protection policies will include formal reviews, and these will occur at least every three years. The Centre manager will be a designated person responsible for this review and the reviewers from outside our organization will also be sought for help and guidance.
2. Reviews will incorporate the views of staff, supervisors and leaders within the organization and seek to gauge the accessibility, relevance and usefulness of the policy. We will also consider any serious incidents that have occurred during the years, review how effective the policy was at responding to them, and consider whether to review the policy to take account of lessons learnt, or at the request of staff.
3. We will include a formal consultation process with staff.
4. We will ensure our reviews should also consider developments in child protection theory and any additional guidance produced by government agencies.
5. The policy should also link other policies or documents to consider when reading the policy, including general human resources policies (complaints, performance, review), policies around safer recruitment and those regulating risk management (e.g., policies on transporting children).