



Policies

Practices & Procedures



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3. Child Protection Policy

Education (ECS) Regs 2008 reg 46(1)(a), 56, 57

Licensing Criteria C10, HS31, HS32

Last Reviewed 05/08/2024.

This policy outlines our commitment to child protection. The purpose of this policy is to provide City Heights Montessori staff with guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly in the light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislations and associated policies. This policy covers all staff of City Heights Montessori who has direct and indirect contact with children. This includes staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by City Heights Montessori, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of City Heights Montessori. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

3.1 Definition of child abuse.

Children, Young persons, and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as “.... the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person”.

3.2 Identifying possible child abuse.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g., headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones
- Dressed differently from other children in the family
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family.

There may also be behavioural indicators that child or young person is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self-harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse

- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child or young person names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child
- Continually threatens the child or young person with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child or young person
- Involves the child or young person in “adult issues”, such as separation or access issues
- Keeps the child or young person at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent

Indicators of Neglect

There may be physical indicators that a child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather
- Extremely dirty or unbathed
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time
- Malnourished
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene

There may also be behavioural indicators that child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance or school performance
- Poor social skills
- May steal food
- Is very demanding of affection or attention
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child or young person’s basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care
- Fails to enrol a child or young person in school or permits absenteeism
- Leaves the child home alone

- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child or young person's needs

Indicators of Physical Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures
- There may also be behavioural indicators that child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:
- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
- Is violent to animals or other children or young people
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child or young person
- Shakes an infant
- Threats or attempts to injure a child or young person
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child or young person

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child or young person is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or faeces
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area

There may also be behavioural indicators that child or young person is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others

- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge
- Comments such as “I’ve got a secret”, or “I don’t like uncle”
- Fire lighting by boys
- Fear of certain places e.g., bedroom or bathroom

Some examples of this in older children or young people are:

- Eating disorders
- Promiscuity or prostitution
- Uses younger children in sexual acts
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child or young person
- Is jealous of a child or young person’s relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child or young person
- May favour the victim over other children
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child or young person which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones.

3.3 Responding to suspected child abuse.

If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, or want to discuss, report, or refer a concern you must:

- Contact **Oranga Tamariki** immediately.
Phone 0508 332 774 and Email edassist@ot.govt.nz (this is the dedicated contact for schools and early learning services).
- Talk to your centre manager if you require support with sharing any concerns.

The following organisations can support and help you with sharing your concerns:

- **Healthline Phone: 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 Phone: 0508 74 46 33**

Shine can provide advice and support for anyone seeking information about family harm.

- **Crimestoppers Phone: 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 Phone: 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 Phone: 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.

3.3.1 Handling disclosures from a child

If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff, it is important that staff take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the member of staff's own opinion on what the child is saying.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to investigate or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. Any incidents, concerns or suspicion must be reported following the procedures set out below.

3.3.2 Reporting procedures

When reporting an incident, staff must record in writing conversations and actions taken.

1. Ensure the immediate safety of the child.
2. Contact Police on **111**, if the child is in immediate danger.
3. Contact Oranga Tamariki immediately on **0508 332 774**.

Share your concerns.

3.3.3 Allegations about a staff member

When a staff member is suspected the same process apply.

1. Ensure the immediate safety of the child.
2. Contact Police on **111**, if the child is in immediate danger.
3. Contact Oranga Tamariki immediately on **0508 332 774**.

Share your concerns.

A complaint or allegation against a member of staff may require a report to the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

All staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children and young people. All staff have a responsibility to maintain appropriate behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others. Any concerns or reasonable suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Manager.

A person tendering his/her resignation, or ceasing to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation of abuse against a child being followed up in accordance with these procedures.

3.3.4 Confidentiality and information sharing

The privacy Act 2020 and Children, Young Persons and their family Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or neglect is suspected.

3.4 Practices to keep our children safe.

At City Heights we strictly follow these practices to make sure we keep children safe from abuse and neglect.

1. Safety check to all our workers.

We practice a safety check on our children's workers before they start work at our centre. In each safety check, we:

1. Verify the person's identity (including any previous identities)
2. Interview them.
3. Get information about their work history.
4. Get information from their referees.
5. Get information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body.
6. Carry out a New Zealand police vet.
7. Carry out a risk assessment.

On existing children's worker, we carry a safety check every 3 years. This requires the following 4 of the 7 components to be completed:

1. verification of identity (including previous identities),
 5. information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body,
 6. a New Zealand police vet, and
 7. a risk assessment.
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2. **Protect children from inappropriate material** of sexual or violent nature. At City Heights we will ensure all practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material. At our centre, children are not exposed to screen time. Art and Crafts materials used for practising cutting and doing collages such as old newspapers and magazines are revised by the teaching team prior to being placed in the classrooms to be used by the children.
 3. **Protect children from other adults.** If we suspect of someone being physically or mentally unwell in a way that could pose a risk to children, we will prevent them from coming into contact with any children at our service, which may involve excluding them from our premises.
 4. **Protect children from someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.** If we suspect of someone being under the effect of alcohol or drugs, we will prevent them from coming into contact with any children at our service, excluding them from our premises.
 5. **We will facilitate to our team member the completion of Child Protection e-learning resource from Ministry of Education.**