



iCare PROTECTION POLICY

Vulnerable Person's

Owner: iCare Afterschool Trust

This policy was authored by Jodi Wichers on 9/12/2019

A digital copy can be found on our website at icarekids.co.nz

The policy is due to be updated on 22/01/2025.

It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.

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iCare Afterschool Programme Protection Policy

Vulnerable Persons

1. POLICY PURPOSE

. The Vulnerable Person's Protection Policy ensures that iCare After School Care meets legislative, ethical and professional standards in the process of working with children and young people.

The wellbeing and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse and maltreatment is a paramount goal of iCare.

. This policy is also to ensure that staff and volunteers of the iCare programme are not placed in a vulnerable position and are protected as much as reasonably possible from unfounded complaints. They will also be given clear guidelines on acceptable and appropriate conduct.

. This policy applies to all iCare paid and non-paid Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers.

2. POLICY

2.1 Children and Young People

. It is the policy for all staff and volunteers of iCare to ensure that, to the best of their ability, children and young people are safe from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

. It is also the policy of iCare staff and volunteers to work within the Principles and Objectives of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and the Principles and Objectives of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

- a) The welfare and interests of any child or young person must be the first and paramount consideration. This policy provides a framework and expectations to protect children, including staff behaviors in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect.
- b) That clear guidelines are managed and reviewed regarding the identification and reporting of any child abuse or neglect. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their training and experience. We will commit to having access to the right information and training as needed.
- c) A person is designated for child protection – and is responsible for providing advice and support to staff/volunteers where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy. **(See 7.6)**

3. POLICE CHECKS AND RECRUITMENT

3.1 Any adult staff member who interacts with people who may be vulnerable must be known to iCare and have completed a **Police Check*** before being permitted to act with children or young people in a staff role on behalf of iCare.

. Where volunteers only attend for a short time but would be considered for service due to the nature of their situation, a **Risk Assessment**** needs to be completed including a verbal reference from a supervisor.

. Any volunteer, leader, staff member or intern who is under 18 years of age, and is therefore ineligible for a police check, must be clearly supervised by the iCare Leader or their delegated person in any interaction with children.

**** Risk Assessment See Appendix 9.3**

3.2 Diligence in selection of workers will be used by expecting the following standards:

- Staff will agree with the iCare Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Police Screening process.
- Live a consistent Christian life. (Hebrews 12:14)
- Be prepared to attend training, development and meetings regarding their work area as required including Protection Policy training.
- Have at least two referee checks undertaken by iCare and work history for the last five years (if applicable).
- Have some experience in working with children and will help, not harm, any child in their care.

. We are committed to maintaining and increasing workers' awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff/volunteers will be made aware of this policy on child protection.

4. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

4.1 Sign In/Out

. Whenever primary school aged children are left in the care of staff they are to be signed in and their safety becomes the paramount responsibility of iCare during that time.

. The iCare staff will sign in all children who come to them during the programme. Parents will collect children at the completion of the programme and iCare staff will make sure the child is signed out.

. Once children have been signed out, they are no longer the responsibility of the iCare staff even if they remain on property. Parents must be informed and reminded of this periodically throughout the year. Although not directly responsible, staff still have a duty to promote safety and act in accordance with the policies of the iCare Protection Policy. (see General Supervision 4.2)

4.2 General Supervision

While children are under the responsibility of the parent/caregiver (i.e. not signed in), if an iCare staff member or volunteer sees a child who is unsafe they have a duty of care to intervene in an appropriate manner. If there is ongoing concern regarding a child who is regularly unsupervised then please inform the iCare Team Leader or iCare Management team.

Staff/Volunteers should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it.

Written parental consent is required for children and young people before they are taken from our organisation's premises, except in an emergency. Our excursion policy (see separate document) must be adhered to for any off site excursions.

Any visitors to the premises where iCare is held will be supervised and will remain visible to iCare team throughout the duration of visit.

4.3 Expectations of Staff and Volunteers (CODE OF CONDUCT)

See appendix 9.7

4.4 Child safe practice guidelines

If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for a child, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent caregiver and if possible, the child. Let them know what you are doing and why.

Avoid situations where you are alone with a child. While acknowledging that occasionally there may be no alternative for example, an emergency. However one-to-one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis.

Do not allow physically rough or sexually provocative games or inappropriate talking or touching.

Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child are taken seriously and that the guide to report suspected or actual abuse included in this policy as an appendix is followed.

Ensure that use of photographic images and video are aligned to relevant privacy policies.

Do not give out your personal communication details or accept friend requests from any children in your care on any social media platforms. Communications with a child through a device are strongly discouraged and all communications should go through the parent or caregiver.

5. CHILDREN'S TOILETING

. The iCare staff will be aware of where the school aged child is when they have left the room and monitor their return.

. Children will be encouraged to use the toilet one-at-a-time.

. Use of a toilet pass may be used as required ie holiday programmes.

. In the case of toilet use when iCare Te Puke is run out of The Orchard Church Lounge:

- One of the single use cubicles (disability toilets) will be labeled for iCare use.
- One child will use the toilet at a time.
- A staff member will stand at the lounge door to ensure the child safely enters and exits the bathroom.

6. SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN

6.1 Consultation and Reporting

. If a child or young person discloses information regarding abuse* of a child/young person to a staff member or a volunteer, or if they have reason to believe that a child/young person may have been abused, is being abused or is at serious risk they are to consult with the iCare Team Leader or iCare Management Team as soon as possible.

If a child chooses you as their 'safe person' and discloses abuse, the following might help:

- Be calm – trust that you and the child will get the help you need to handle the situation.
- Stay emotionally connected to the child and their emotional needs – if you do feel panic, shock or anger, put this to the side for now to allow you to meet the child’s need to trust you and feel safe.
- Listen to what the child is telling you and take it seriously. Accept what they tell you.
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that you will get them safe now, and praise the child for their bravery in telling.
- Don’t ask much about what has happened, even though instincts might mean you want to know every detail. It is best to leave it for a trained expert to question them at a later time.
- Tell the child that there are other people that you will need to talk to in order to get help.
- Ensure that the child is safe now – if needed, call the Police or Oranga Tamariki.
- Whilst the notification of the iCare management Team first is preferable to informing an outside agency, the safety of the child is paramount and must be considered ahead of any other procedure.

***Indicators of potential abuse are: physical signs; behavioral concerns; neglect – medical or supervisory; emotional abuse; developmental delays; or if the child is talking about things that indicate abuse. See Appendix for greater detail.**

- If it is identified that a child/young person is abused or is at risk of abuse, a written **Report of Concern*** should be made to Oranga Tamariki. Or make a phone call to Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 459 or Police 111. This report will be made by the person the child disclosed to with the support of the Management team.
- Due to the potentially upsetting nature of a disclosure, support will be offered to staff to help them navigate this. This may be professional, personal or legal support as appropriate.
- The decision on how and when to pass on information to families of the child must be handled with the support and advice of a Designated Child Protection Policy Person due to the risk this could expose the child to. Reference must be also made to our confidentiality policy in managing information of a personal nature.

6.2 Recording of Information

. It is important that documentation of concerns about children and young people be undertaken in writing, so that they are not distorted when passed from staff member to the outside agency.

Reports of Concern are to be objective, include details of the conversation; as well as notes about any physical signs of abuse.

See Appendix 9.6 *Report of Concern

7 THREATS TO SAFETY FOR A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

7.1 Responding to children who pose a potential threat to other children.

. If a staff/volunteer is aware of behavior from a child that poses a threat to other persons, they are to report that to their **Team Leader**.

. The **Team Leader** may discuss this concern with the Caregivers and **Management Team** as required.

Guidelines for managing this are as follows:

- No violent behavior is to be tolerated and must be acted on immediately
- Consider pairing the child with a supervisor.
- Refer child to their Behavior Contract. (**Appendix 9.5**)
- As a final resort a child may be excluded from our children's program, in consultation with the **Management Team**.

7.2 General misbehaviours will be treated as follows (further information is available in our Behaviour Management Policy)

- A supervisor will record what happened in the **behaviour book**.
- The misbehaviour will be explained to the child and they will be reminded of the iCare rules again.
- Each time this happens the parents/caregivers will be told.
- Serious misbehaviour three times may result in the child being stood down from iCare for one week.
- 3 times of being stood down in a term the iCare enrolment may be terminated.

Where possible, create opportunities for a child to practice new, preferred behaviours and to receive feedback as soon and as often as possible.

We will use safe restraint and isolation practices as **per our Behaviour management Policy**.

7.3 Safety Concerns

. If any staff or volunteer is aware of any potential threats whether environmental, procedural or otherwise they have a duty of concern to inform the **Management Team** in a timely manner.

. The **Management Team** in consultation with the Property owners and Staff will then investigate the concerns and determine what action will be taken. If applicable they will refer the matter to the Health and Safety team of the overseeing body.

7.4 Further guidelines

- When working with iCare Children there must be a two-worker minimum supervising the children.
- Use only rooms that have adequate visibility i.e., rooms with windows or keep the doors open.
- Make sure the signed in/out children are all delivered and collected at the start and end of the programme.
- Where a child or young person requires extra assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible, involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.

Staff will be offered support due to dealing with things of a difficult or upsetting nature.

8 ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

Allegations, suspicions, or complaints of abuse against staff volunteers or representatives of iCare must be taken seriously and reported to the **Child Protection Advisor** who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined in this section.

If a concern or allegation needs to be made that involves a member of iCare then it is to be reported to their Direct Supervisor who will then determine the action to be taken (if that is not possible then report to their Direct Supervisor and so on).

Historical allegations as well as current or contemporary ones will be handled equally as seriously and may require suspensions until investigated and resolved.

It is not the responsibility of the staff to investigate allegations of child abuse.

It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation. The member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure.

9 DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON

- DCPP #1 Jodi Wichers (responsible for the maintenance and annual review of this policy)
- DCPP #1 Tim Davision.

Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training. Our organisation commits to ensure staff have access to the training they need.

10 DEFINITIONS

iCare – Christian After School Programme

iCare Management Team - Trustees

Staff member - a paid worker or contractor of iCare.

Volunteer - an unpaid worker for general or specific help.

Health and Safety team – a group of people responsible for administering and monitoring the OSH standards at The Orchard which oversees iCare.

Child/Young Person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Workers - anyone (paid or unpaid) who is involved in a capacity of authority (regardless of amount of authority) as either a volunteer or leader and contributes their time to the work of iCare.

Team Leader - the person in charge of their local iCare branch

Disclosure – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

Designated Child Protection Person– Senior staff or Trustees who will be responsible for this policy and training staff.

New Zealand Police (Dial 111) – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred. **(Dial 111)**

Oranga Tamariki – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need. (Phone: 0508 FAMILY or 0508 326 459 Email: cyfcallcentre@cyf.govt.nz)

11 APPENDIXES

The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM147088.html>

The below documents are available from the iCare master file documents

Risk Assessment form

Police check form - Vetting Service Request and Consent Form .

Behavior Management Contract

Behaviour Management Policy

Report of concern form.

Code of Conduct

Confidentiality Policy

Indicators of Abuse