

Cambridge Montessori Pre-School and Magnolia Montessori	Policy
	Policy Category: Health & Safety
	Last Review August 2023
	Policy Name: HS31 Child Protection Policy

The purpose of this operational policy is to

- detail the definition of neglect and abuse of a child to establish a common understanding within our centre;
- detail how centre management and staff will ensure children are appropriately protected from neglect, abuse and harm
- explain our commitment to training and support of staff in this context
- detail the signs of neglect and abuse of children
- describe how the centre will respond to suspected child abuse and neglect

The policy is designed to meet provisions of the Children’s Act (2014), the Education and Training Act (2020), the Education (Early Childhood Education) Regulations 2008, and the Early Childhood Education Licensing Criteria HS31.

For the purpose of this policy, abuse is used in the context of adult to child. This could be staff to child or an adult (outside of the centre) to the child.

Abuse relating to child-to-child or child-to-adult is not within the scope of this policy.

Issues relating to child-to-child or child-to-adult behaviours is covered by C10, whereby behaviour is managed by positively seeking to develop social competence in children that helps them to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with children and adults.

Position Statements

We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care and are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority.

We support families/whānau to protect their children.

We provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse.

Our centre is committed to work with other agencies where necessary to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau.

Issue Outline

Child abuse and neglect is not acceptable. Children need our protection.

Prevention is always better than cure. Adults need to be vigilant and provide protection to the children in their care.

The ECE sector has a key role to play in providing a safe environment for children, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse and also supporting families/whānau to protect their children.

If we believe a child is in immediate danger, our staff will phone New Zealand Police on 111.

If we are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, or want to discuss, report, or refer a concern, our staff will contact Oranga Tamariki:

- Phone 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774)
- Email edassist@ot.govt.nz

If parents have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child then they should approach one of our staff. Discussions of such matters will need to take place in private.

Definitions

Child Abuse is defined by Oranga Tamariki as “any child or young person that has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived”.

Child Abuse can be:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect.

Child Neglect “is a pattern of behaviour 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.

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 assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child.”

From Child Matters website: www.childmatters.org.nz

Our centre staff undertakes documented efforts (i.e. records of professional training undertaken on the subject and/or information shared amongst staff or sought from agencies, advice sought and received, or other efforts undertaken) to gain an understanding of child abuse and neglect as defined by Oranga Tamariki.

The centre will review this policy at least every three years and share information about centre practices with parents, as per HS31 of the Licensing Criteria.

Policy principles

- The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.
- We recognise the rights of family/Whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- We have a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- In order for children to be safe from abuse and or neglect, both parents and teachers need a **shared understanding of what abuse is, how it can present and how it can be prevented.**

- We are committed to supporting all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and high quality.
- We will always comply with relevant legislative responsibilities.
- We are committed to share information in a timely way and to discuss any concerns about an individual child with staff or the Person in Charge.
- We are committed to promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

Detail

Competent and supported staff

We make sure **all staff know and understand** what abuse and neglect are, and how to recognise the signs (see attached table).

We make sure that all staff know and understand that corporal punishment and seclusion of children are strictly prohibited in our centre, in line with Section 24 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

We have designated people that drive child protection culture, implement training needs and play a key role in notifying and implementing our child protection policies and procedures. The designated person for Magnolia is Trish Thompson and the designated person for Cambridge Montessori is Sophie Aston.

We also encourage our staff to notify a designated person or other member of management who would then talk to someone experienced, for a different point of view, or for ideas about how to help. We also have these contacts readily displayed on our noticeboard and in newsletters:

- Parent Help – 0800 568 856
- Oranga Tamariki – 0508 326 459
- Are You OK – 0800 456 450 (Family Violence Information Line)
- PlunketLine on 0800 933 922.

Safety Checking of Staff

- We conduct safety checks of all staff in accordance with Ministry of Education, Licensing Criteria (GMA7A) and Children’s Act 2014 requirements. (as per the centre Safety Check Procedure)

Relationships with Parents

We will form good relationships with parents and be aware of issues that make life extra hard for parents (see attached examples).

We will monitor situations and offer help and support to whānau where we can.

We will make available and provide information and contact details of support agencies within our community

Our centre will share with whānau of children who attend our centre our centre child protection policy and procedure.

Practices staff will do to keep children safe

- All staff practice the 4 Rs: Recognise, Respond, Report and Record.
- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child. If a child's safety is in danger, the police will be called.
- Maintain confidentiality. Failure of staff to comply with this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct
- Maintain and increase staff and parental awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse, including learning about appropriate touching.
- Have regular discussions/training with staff around what abuse might look like in our centre, the signals/signs to initiate a recording/reporting process and the various types of abuse and/or neglect.
- Immediately notify the Manager or Lead Teacher if they observe signs of child abuse or anyone reports to them any suspicions of child abuse of children at the centre, or a pattern of neglect or concerns is identified
- The Director will carry out staff safety checking (including Police Vetting) in accordance with the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015. If there are staff/students that are employed/enrolled at another agency written confirmation of a safety check is obtained.
- A Supervision plan is in place. Unauthorised persons are not left unsupervised with children. Give no persons, other than employed staff over the age of 17 years, tasks that involve nappy changing, toileting or responsibility for the supervision of children
- Ensure that staff and other adults visiting or working in the centre are well supported and visible in the activities they perform with children. While the centre respects the privacy of our children, staff and visitors, visibility will be given priority to ensure the safety of all concerned
- Understand Safe Practice: Respond appropriately to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, reassurance or comfort. It is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection/touching on a child. Touching should not be initiated to gratify adult needs. Physical contact during the changing or cleansing of children must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for the job.
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are allowed to collect the child from the centre. Ensure no child is taken from the centre by any staff member or adult, without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency where clearance has been obtained from either the Lead Teacher or Manager in conjunction with the parents.
- Ensure no child is taken from the centre by any staff member or adult, without the permission of a parent, except in the case of an emergency.
- Maintain appropriate records which are kept in a confidential folder stored in the office.
- Ensure the centre's procedures protect staff from unjustified allegations of abuse
- Ensure the centre has educational and informational resources for children and adults on child abuse
- Should a neglect or abuse situation occur or come to the attention of the centre, and should a report/referral to Oranga Tamariki or the Police be made, the centre is also under an obligation to report the matter to the Ministry of Education (HS34). The

reporting to outside agencies normally be done by the lead teacher, director or teaching manager. In the absence of these people, another qualified teacher would report/refer neglect or abuse.

- There is a zero tolerance for staff/parents to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol. Staff will use their discretion if a parent/caregiver is believed to be under the influence and will decide if the adult is able to drive. Staff can call another family member but if driver became non-cooperative staff should call the police.

Alignment with Other Policies

- Personnel policies – Safety Checking Policy & Selection and Appointment policy.
- Outings and excursions policy
- Information & Complaints policy.
- Positive Guidance Policy
- Child Protection Procedure

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

Regulation 46 Health and Safety Practices standard: general (1) of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 Health and Safety practices criterion 31 and 32.

Further information can be found on:

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Traumatic-incidents-and-emergencies/MoE-STA->

www.mvcot.govt.nz

Children's Act 2014 and associated regulations.

Impacts of Policy on Staff, Parents and Children

Information, discussion, trusting relationships and clear procedures will strengthen the ability of staff, parents and children to work together to adequately protect all the children who attend the centre.

Alignment with the Philosophy of the centre

This policy is aligned with the centre's philosophy.

This Policy is aligned with our centre values.

Implications and/or Risks for the centre

Failure to protect children will not only lead to lifelong damage for children, it will also seriously damage the reputation of the centre, its staff and the reputation of early childhood centres.

Implementation

We build discussions into our staff meetings as to what abuse/neglect might look like at our centre, what the signals are to start a notifying and investigation process (done with outside agencies)

Shared understanding amongst staff around support for families that may need it e.g additional clothing, toileting, cleaning or food supplies.

Display and regularly remind families of different agency numbers that can provide support. Display numbers on Educa (Policy Tab) and entrance area of the classroom.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	Sophie Aston
Date:	4.11.23
Review Date:	August – October 23
Consultation Undertaken:	Yes - staff

Signs of Abuse and Neglect (Oranga Tamariki)

The physical and behavioural signs, symptoms and history listed below, may indicate abuse or neglect. However they are not specific to abuse or neglect. In certain situations, contexts and combinations they may indicate other conditions. All signs must be examined in the total context of the child or young person's situation.

The Child				
Consider physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect				
Recognise disclosure as a sign of abuse				
Recognise Physical Signs	Record Parent, Caregiver or family signs	Observe Behavioural 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 • Terrorising • Corrupting • Isolating • Humiliating • Dependency • Closure • Flight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Withdrawal • Anxiety, fear and regression • Sadness • Overly responsible • Obsessions • Substance abuse • Suicidal thoughts/ plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addictions • 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

From Oranga Tamariki website: www.mvcot.govt.nz

Issues in the home

Issues in the home that teachers or centre staff might become aware of, that might lead to abuse and neglect include:

- Parents with money problems, being out of work
- Overcrowding or housing struggles
- Parents with stress
- Child with special needs
- Parents isolated from friends, family and whānau
- Parents with a history of depression or other mental illness
- Parents separating.

Early signs that can lead to abuse and or neglect can be;

- Parent has a drug, alcohol or gambling problem
- Parent does not engage with their child or has a difficult relationship with them
- Child doesn't have enough clothes on and is often cold and hungry
- Child has unexplained or changeable emotions (eg, withdrawn or depressed)
- Parents frequently yell at, swear at or shame a child
- Child seems scared of a particular adult.