



POLICY STATEMENT

Auckland PHO Child Protection Policy

Auckland PHO is committed to the prevention of abuse and the wellbeing of children and young people and their families/whānau.

The rights, welfare and safety of a child or young person are our first and paramount consideration.

The organisation has a moral duty to protect children and young people, intervening when they need help.

All children, young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of gender, religion, race, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, culture, economic status or criminal background.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Auckland PHO employees and its network of general practices and primary care providers operate in such a way that any disclosure about alleged abuse is acknowledged, and appropriate action is taken to safeguard the safety of children and young people in question.

The Child Protection Policy is to be used in conjunction with Auckland PHO's existing Policies and Procedures (as per the Employee Manual) and is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

SCOPE

This Policy has two parts.

1. Auckland PHO's obligation as an employer
2. Auckland PHO's obligation to ensure our Primary Care Network is compliant as per the PHO Services Agreement and Te Whatu Ora Contracts.

RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all employees and contractors in the Auckland PHO network.

As a contractual requirement by Te Whatu Ora, Auckland PHO shall meet our contractual obligations and will keep a copy of our Child Protection Policy on our website.

All employees responsible for contracted services for tamariki/children and rangatahi/young persons and their whānau/family are to be provided with adequate training to ensure they understand and implement the obligations under the Vulnerable Children Act 2020 (the Act).

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To improve detection and intervention for children and young people at risk;
- To provide a framework to identify and manage actual and/or suspected child/ young person abuse and neglect;
- To ensure all Auckland PHO employees and contractors who provide clinical services to patients are appropriately trained and understand the process to follow when they suspect a child or young person of being abused and/or at

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- risk of abuse. This also includes when abuse is disclosed from a third party or that a patient/client reveals that they have perpetrated abuse;
 - To provide accountability and meet government and contractual requirements;
 - To actively support Auckland PHO general practices and primary care providers to develop their own policy and procedures to respond to suspected child abuse;
 - To ensure Auckland PHO applies the highest standard in its recruitment and vetting actions to ensure the suitability and safety of candidates for working with children and young people.;
 - To protect and support employees in the event that any allegations of abuse are made by ensuring staff are safe.
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PROCESSES

AUCKLAND EMPLOYEES

PHO

All applicants recruited by Auckland PHO in any capacity must undergo police vetting and a reference check as per the Recruitment policy.

All Auckland PHO staff including employees, volunteers, and contractors that involves being with children in the course of their employment may be rescreened at any time. Individuals selected for rescreening will be asked to sign a consent form before police vetting is conducted.

All Auckland PHO staff (including employees, volunteers and contractors) will read and be made aware of this Policy and associated documents.

All clinical staff providing direct services to patients will be expected to complete basic training covering how to recognise and respond to children affected by child abuse and family violence, and how to deal with any issues that arise from this process.

The Child Protection Procedure for Auckland PHO clinical staff to be able to recognise, respond and manage actual and/or suspected child abuse/neglect is located in [Auckland Region HealthPathways](#)

Child protection refresher training will be accessed when identified as necessary in the staff member's performance review.

Further advice can be found in Child Matters

<https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/handling-disclosures/>

Auckland PHO will have a named Child Protection Officer to support Auckland PHO staff and contractors through the processes when dealing with child abuse and family violence issues that arise through any Auckland PHO activities and services.

This process 'owner' will consult with stakeholders to ensure the policy is up to date and have access to relevant Professional development to support current knowledge.

It is acknowledged that child protection issues occur infrequently and are often not straightforward to manage. Therefore, it is expected that the relevant Senior Management Team members will provide support and guidance.

PROCESSES

PRACTICE NETWORK

Auckland PHO expects that member general practices have a commitment to child and youth protection by including comprehensive screening and vetting procedures, by undertaking police checks, checking qualifications and references with previous employers and agencies where the person has volunteered (as applicable).

Auckland PHO also offers police vetting services on behalf of its general practices every three years.

In addition, general practice managers must confirm the above recruitment processes have been completed.

Practices who undertake their own police vetting are required to update Auckland PHO on the status of employees' checks, including GP Principals/Owners.

Auckland PHO maintains a register of Police Checks.


Auckland PHO supports its practices with their Child Protection Policy as part of Foundation Standards.

[Practice Info back ground checks version 1.3 April 2023.pdf](#)

[Police Vetting Policy and Process.pdf](#)

APPENDICIES

- Definitions
- Relevant legalisation
- References
- Domestic violence
- Auckland PHO related policies and procedures

Document	Child Protection Policy	Version	1
Policy Area	Human Resources	Updated	October 2024
		Next review	October 2027
Signed Board Chair	 Jayme Kitiona		

APPENDICIES

DEFINITIONS

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 does not define child abuse. However, it is defined in Section 2 of the Children and Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989.

“Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child and/or young person”

Child and young person - defined as any person under the age of 18 years. (For the purposes of this Policy, children are those under the age of 14 years. Young people are those from 14 and up to the age of 17 years. Reference to 'child' or 'children' in this Policy includes both children and young people as the context permits.

Child abuse - Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually) ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

Child protection - Activities carried out to ensure the safety of the child in cases where there is abuse or risk of abuse.

Child physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Child sexual abuse describes a range of acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose. This includes any act that results in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person whether consensual or not.

Child emotional/psychological abuse - any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person.

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Child neglect - neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health and development It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs such as failure to provide adequate food, clothing and health care.

Child Matters - is NZ's specialist child abuse prevention organisation, It has been tackling the issue of child abuse through raising understanding and awareness of the issue, educating and inspiring those working with children, and influencing change in society's attitudes and behaviours. <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/training--services/resources/>

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Oranga Tamariki – the national statutory agency responsible for the investigation of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Ph. 0508 FAMILY or 0508 326 459.

Family Services Directory - The Family Services Directory lists organisations and service providers in all areas of NZ that can help support families, these include addiction, health, family violence, employment, whanau, mental health, and legal and disability services. <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/>

Family violence - violence or abuse that occurs between those persons connected by domestic relationships. Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present. It includes child abuse and neglect, vulnerable adult abuse and neglect, partner abuse and elder abuse, It can be physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, financial or material. For the purposes of this policy a 'domestic relationship' is as defined under the 'Domestic Violence Act 1995' and includes anyone in a close personal relationship and is therefore not limited to family members only.

Secure email- refers to encryption, and often authentication, of email messages, to protect the content from being read by any but the intended recipients. In general practice, e-referrals are a type of secure email. Standard emails are not secure.

Vulnerable adult — any person unable by reason of detention, age, sickness, mental impairment, or any other cause to withdraw him or herself from the care or charge of another person.

Privacy Act 2000

Health Information Privacy Act 1994

Health and Disability Services Code 2008

Children, Young persons and their families Act, 1989

Children, Young persons and their families Amendment Act, 1994

Vulnerable Children's Act, 2014

Child Protection Policy – Ministry of Health

Crimes Act 1961 and amendments

Oranga Tamariki Act, 1989

Young People's Wellbeing Act, 1989

Ministry for Vulnerable Children, 2017

Treaty of Waitangi – Tiriti o Waitangi – Section 7AA

Health and Disability Sector Standards Regulations, 2001

Health and Safety at Work Act (General Risk & Workplace management) Regulations, 2016
Section 22f of The Health Act, 1956

REFERENCES

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), 1989

Employment relations Act 2000 6. References (including but not limited to)

Treaty of Waitangi – Tiriti o Waitangi Section 7AA, of the Oranga Tamariki Act and standard Treaty of Waitangi principles. To improve outcomes for tamariki Māori. April 20, 2020. Published: July 1, 2017

Oranga Tamariki <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-actrequirements/child-protection-policies/>

Overview of changes to the information sharing Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
<https://www.health.govt.nz>

Healthy Parents, Healthy Children
<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/supportingparents-healthy-children>

Child Matters – Creating a safe health service (Child Protection Policy)
www.childmatters.org.nz

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Auckland PHO supports victims of Family Violence. Any employee experiencing or observing family violence will be supported to report abuse, and assistance via appropriate services offered. Staff who are affected by family violence may apply for family violence leave which will be considered urgently.

[Domestic Violence Leave.pdf](#)

AUCKLAND PHO RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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- Code of conduct
 - Induction and Exit for employees
 - Staff training and development
 - Recruitment
 - Privacy
 - Child protection procedure
 - Family violence
 - Employee Handbook