

Child Protection Policy

Function: Health and Safety

Business Activity: Risk management

Approved on: 16 December 2025

Version No: 2.2

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1. Background

- 1.1. Peke Waihanga has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or neglect. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful, inclusive and culturally responsive environment where children's rights, dignity and wellbeing are protected at all times.
- 1.2. This policy requires all Peke Waihanga staff to share in the organisation's commitment to support and protect children and to act when they have concerns that a child is being, or is suspected of being, abused or neglected.
- 1.3. Under Part 2 of the Children's Act 2014, Peke Waihanga is required to have a Child Protection Policy to support a culture of child protection and to guide staff in responding to concerns about child safety and wellbeing.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the safety and promote the wellbeing of children receiving Peke Waihanga services or associated with adults receiving services.
- Support staff to respond appropriately to suspected or identified child abuse or neglect.
- Support responses to vulnerable children where abuse or neglect is not indicated, including early support and referral.
- Promote culturally safe, whānau-centred practice consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all staff and should be used wherever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified.

4. Definitions

Child: A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years, in accordance with the [Children's Act 2014](#)

Staff: For the purposes of this policy, 'staff' is defined as all permanent, fixed term, part-time, contracted and volunteers employed/engaged by Peke Waihanga.

5. Principles

- 5.1. Peke Waihanga recognises that:
 - Children have an inherent right to safety and protection.
 - Māori children experience disproportionate harm and require culturally responsive, whānau-centred approaches.
 - Disabled children may be at increased risk of abuse and neglect.
 - Child protection is a shared responsibility across the organisation.
 - Early identification and action can prevent harm.

6. Organisational commitment to child protection

6.1. Peke Waihanga will ensure that:

- a) There is an organisation-wide policy for the appropriate response to, and management of, reports of suspected or confirmed child abuse and neglect and the identification of vulnerable children.
- b) The Child Protection Policy and procedures comply with legislative requirements, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and best practice standards.
- c) Organisation-wide procedures exist to provide appropriate adequate support for an employee that may witness or be dealing with child abuse and neglect.
- d) Peke Waihanga commits to using safer recruitment procedures, including compliance with any requirements in the [Children's Act 2014](#).

6.2. Peke Waihanga will take steps to ensure that:

- all new staff undergo police vetting in accordance with the Children's Act 2014, including relevant overseas criminal history checks where applicable, with re-vetting every three years (see Recruitment and Selection Policy, section 7.15)
- all staff are familiar with the Child Protection Policy and related procedures, including statutory referral pathways
- staff know how and where to seek advice when child abuse or neglect is suspected or identified
- staff receive appropriate information, training, resources and periodic updates relevant to their role
- frontline staff can recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and vulnerability (including for disabled children) and take appropriate action
- relationships with patients and service users are open and transparent, including sharing child safety concerns with family/whānau where this does not increase risk
- services provided to children and families support and promote child wellbeing
- information is shared lawfully and effectively, and staff work collaboratively with partner agencies and community organisations to protect children and meet legislative responsibilities

7. Our responsibilities and expectations

Support for staff

7.1. To support the implementation of this policy, Regional, Regional Team and National Office Managers will be provided with resources to enable them to lead an annual discussion with their staff about employees responsibilities under this policy including how to recognise abuse and neglect in children. Each year Managers will be asked to lead the discussion via Team Korero and sent resources to enable them to facilitate the discussion (see Appendix A for details).

Confidentiality and information sharing

- 7.2. The Privacy Act 2020 and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared for the purpose of protecting children when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated.
- 7.3. Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually, or has been ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived, may report their concerns to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children or the Police. Where a report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against the person making the report.

Responding to a concern

- 7.4. Statutory responsibility for investigating allegations of child abuse in New Zealand rests with Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and the Police. These agencies work collaboratively under a joint Child Protection Protocol when responding to serious child abuse.
- 7.5. Under this Child Protection Policy, all staff must:
- know that this policy exists and know where to access it
 - understand their responsibilities and what action to take if they suspect or identify child abuse or neglect
- 7.6. Any staff member who has concerns about actual or suspected child abuse or neglect must act. Staff should:
- record a factual account of their concerns, including what they have observed, heard, or been told (directly or indirectly)
 - promptly seek advice from their Regional Manager regarding whether the concern should be reported
 - if the matter is urgent and the Regional Manager is unavailable, seek advice from the Human Resources Advisor at National Office
 - immediately report concerns to Police by calling 111 if a child is believed to be in imminent danger
 - provide their written account to the Regional Manager, who will record actions taken (decisions to report concerns or make referrals to external agencies are made by the Regional Manager in consultation with the staff member raising the concern)
 - report concerns to Oranga Tamariki by calling 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or by submitting an [Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern](#)
- 7.7. Peke Waihangā expects frontline staff to be able to identify vulnerable children. To support this, frontline staff will:
- recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and vulnerability, including for disabled children
 - be aware of risks posed by individuals, environments or situations
 - access child protection information and training appropriate to their role
 - distinguish between situations requiring a Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki and/or Police and those where referral to community support services is more appropriate
 - seek advice from Oranga Tamariki where the level of risk or concern is unclear

- 7.8. Where a [Report of Concern](#) has been made and an investigation or assessment is underway, Peke Waihanga staff must not:
- contact the suspected person in relation to the concern
 - discuss the matter with anyone not directly involved in the investigation
- 7.9. While this policy focuses on reporting suspected child abuse and neglect to statutory agencies, there will be situations where children are vulnerable but statutory intervention is not appropriate. In these cases, particularly where families are actively seeking support and concerns are not related to abuse or neglect, staff are encouraged to assist families to access appropriate community and social support services. See [Whanau Wellbeing Policy](#) for more information about support available to families.

Allegations Involving Employees

- 7.10. Any concern or allegation involving a Peke Waihanga employee, contractor or volunteer will be managed in accordance with this policy and relevant employment procedures. The safety of the child will always take priority over employment processes.

8. Specific Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
All staff	• Be familiar with and adhere to this policy. • Act on any concern about child safety. • Record concerns factually and promptly. • Seek advice and escalate concerns appropriately.
Managers and Team Leaders	• Support staff to understand and apply this policy. • Ensure timely escalation of concerns. • Maintain appropriate documentation and confidentiality. • If appropriate refer Reports of Concern to Oranga Tamariki or the Police • If appropriate, contact and refer to appropriate and approved external agencies • Conduct annual discussion with staff about their responsibilities under this policy and recognising abuse and neglect in children
Privacy Officer	• Remain informed of current legislative requirements • Advise on all Privacy requirements when sharing information internally and externally on vulnerable children.
Peer Support Coordinator	• Ensure volunteers in the Peer Support programme understand and adhere to this policy
HR and Communications Manager	• Annually reminds Managers to hold a discussion with staff about this policy and provides the resources to support such a discussion • Ensures this policy is regularly reviewed
Chief Executive	• Ensure staff understand and adhere to this policy • Ensure support, processes and training are in place in Peke Waihanga to support the implementation of this policy

Party	Responsibilities
The Board	Overall responsibility for this Policy rests with the board

9. Useful support information

- [Child Matters](#) is a non-profit organisation which works with all sectors to deliver child protection training (including an online course), advice and resources with an aim to reduce child abuse and neglect in New Zealand. There are links to [useful resources on its website](#).
- [How Can I Tell? Recognising Child Abuse](#)
- [Creating a Safe Organisation](#)

10. Legal Compliance

- [Children's Act 2014](#)
- [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act \(Oranga Tamariki\) 2017](#)
- [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- [Crimes Amendment Act 2005 – Protection of Children](#)

11. Key Related Documents

- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children template](#)
- [Whānau Wellbeing Policy.pdf](#)

Appendix A: Process to hold Child Protection Policy discussion

1. Include following slide in Team Kōrero shortly before desired time for discussion

Child Protection Policy

- Peke Waihanga is required to have a Child Protection Policy and ensure staff receive appropriate information, training and resources to support child protection
- To enable this, our policy requires managers to hold an annual discussion on the topic with staff
- Attached are a facilitator guide, a PowerPoint presentation and a background resource to assist managers lead this discussion (expected to take 20 minutes depending on amount of discussion)
- Please hold the discussion by [insert date] and inform [insert name] when this has occurred.

2. Attach the following documents with the Team Kōrero:

(Rather than being sent as pdfs, the facilitator guide should be sent as a Word document and the presentation sent as a PowerPoint to enable the manager to make any changes to suit their facilitation style.)

- [Child Protection Policy - Facilitator Guide.docx](#) (stored in Learning resources Sharepoint library)
- [Child Protection Policy Presentation.pptx](#) (stored in Learning resource Sharepoint library)
- <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/downloads/2019-HCIT-PDF.pdf> (download from external publisher)

For Use by National Office Only

Document development and approval			
Review period	3 years	Next review date	December 2028
Legal review required?	☐	Board approval required?	☐
Interconnected processes and documents affected by this document?			

Version history		
Version No.	Version Date	Description of Change
2.2	16 December 2025	Rewrite of section 1 – other minor improvements
2.1	18 Nov 2022	Added in police vetting requirement and link to Recruitment and Selection Policy in there is a criminal history
2.0	9 July 2021	Reviewed policy, clarity added around reporting and referral process and training
1.0	17 August, 2017	New Policy

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Was there a review committee?	
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When updated, these people need to be notified	Peer Support Coordinator Privacy Officer

Implementation history

	Social and Communications Manager
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