

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. PRINCIPLES

**The Pisces Road Playgroup** is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children. The well-being and safety of children is the primary goal of this group.

This commitment means that the interest and welfare of the child will be primary consideration when any decision is made about suspected abuse. This organization supports the roles of statutory agencies (the Police and the Department of Child Youth and Family Services) in the investigation of abuse processes outlines below.

This organization will maintain a good working relationship with the statutory agencies and be familiar with the laws under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 which serve to protect children from abuse. We will consult with these and other agencies that have specialist knowledge to help protect children from abuse. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training.

### 2. TRAINING

This organization is committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognize and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of the induction, new staff must familiarize themselves with programme policy on child abuse and be encouraged to read any resource material.

### 3. DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

*"Any act by which an individual, institution or society as a whole that interferes with the well-being of a child and deprives that child of his or her rights".*

#### **There are four types of Child Abuse**

*Sexual abuse* occurs when someone uses his or her power over the child, or takes advantage of the child's trust and respect, to involve the child in sexual activity.

*Physical abuse* is non-accidental injury by somebody and also included abusive administration of drugs or alcohol to a child.

*Emotional abuse* is when a child's self-esteem is attacked by somebody to coerce the child into doing what the abuser wants him or her to do.

*Neglect* is a denial of basic needs/rights of nurturing, food and shelter, so that the child fails to thrive. It must be seen as a form of child abuse.

*Family violence* may be witnessed / experienced by children and involve physical sexual and emotional abuse.

#### 4. RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

This organization will act on recommendation made by statutory agencies concerning the official reporting of suspected abuse and on consulting with families.

Staff will respond to suspected child abuse by writing down observations, impressions and communication that are causing concern.

Information volunteered by a child should be fully and accurately recorded.

No child should be interviewed or in any way questioned about the suspected abuse, particularly sexual abuse.

No staff member will act alone about suspected child abuse but will consult with the management. Where staff and programme management suspect child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe, programme management is committed to promptly report the matter to the Police or the Department of Child Youth and Family.

Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse is entitled to have support. The programme will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organizations in the community that provide support.

When responding to a suspicion or disclosure of abuse the programme will follow this process:

Child discloses abuse or abuse is suspected ↓	Education and training for Programme Staff
If immediate danger or safety is an issue act with urgency ↓	Program Management will designate as the child advocates and should be trained in child abuse management
Listen to the child and reassure them they did the right thing ↓	Any factual concerns or observations about the safety of a child should be dated documented and filed
Inform Programme Management ↓	
Document any objective observations and any thing said by the child ↓	Consult with Duty Social Worker at the Department of Child Youth and Family or Waitemata Health Child Protection Services for further advice
Ring the Depart of Child Youth and Family or the Police (child abuse team) ↓	

Await further contact from the Department of Child Youth and Family or the Police before taking actions ↓	
Get support for yourself from appropriate people	

Please note:

Information volunteered by a child should be fully and accurately recorded.

No child should be questioned about the suspected abuse, particularly sexual abuse.

Documentation may be subsequently used in court as evidence for either side.

Notes should be written down during the talk with the child or as soon as possible afterwards.

## **5. WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER**

Where it is suspected that a staff member has perpetrated the child abuse or other person assisting with the programme the matter must be reported promptly to programme management.

Under no circumstances should the child making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require programme management to contemplate removal of the employee from the programme environment subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract.

Programme management will ensure the following process is undertaken:

- 1) Child discloses abuse by a staff member
- 2) If immediate danger or safety is an issue act with urgency
- 3) Programme Management to be notified
- 4) Listen to the child or young person and reassure them they did the right thing
- 5) Inform programme management including Executive Committee
- 6) Document any objective observations and anything said by the child
- 7) Consult with Department of Child Youth and Family or Police (Child Abuse Team)
- 8) Programme Management to refer to the relevant employment contract
- 9) Programme Management to advise employee and see a response
- 10) Employee will be advised of their right to seek support/advise from union or other appropriate representatives
- 11) Programme Management to contemplate removal of the employee from the programme environment subject to the employment contract
- 12) Programme Management to maintain close liaison with Depart of Child Youth and Family or Police.

## **6. SUPERVISION GUIDELINES**

To minimize the risk of actual or alleged abuse in the programme please follow these guidelines:

- All staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations there are for staff to be alone with children. This should be avoided wherever possible. If you are alone use extreme careful judgment.
- All volunteer and outside instruction should be monitored by the paid programme staff
- Whenever possible an open door policy for all space should be used i.e. not possible for toilets.
- Be aware of situations where children are out of sight together i.e. dens, play huts etc, and supervise accordingly
- Unless requested by a parent there should be no need to assist children with toileting. If this situation arises ensure that other staff know you are toileting a child and that the parent is informed
- Staff should avoid transporting a child on their own at all times
- Except in an emergence, children are not to be taken from the programme without written consent