



Child Protection Policy

1.1 Child Protection

Purpose

WestREAP is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of workers, children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families. We provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal, sexual abuse, or neglect. WestREAP is committed to valuing our children and keeping them safe. The safety of all children is our prime consideration at all times.

Workers are expected to be familiar with this policy and its procedures and to abide by it, as it contains the relevant information and procedures to identify the signs of potential abuse and are able to take appropriate action in response.

Scope

This policy provides this organisation with a framework to identify and manage actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect. Alongside 14. Child Protection and Youth Clients Procedures documents, it outlines the steps this organisation will undertake to ensure children are safe.

Definitions

This policy applies to all children who are clients of WestREAP, and to those with whom workers come into contact in the course of their work with WestREAP.

It applies to employees, and includes volunteers, students and people working under contract for the service. It also applies to any workers providing support services to families and workers, (including childcare), and to those providing support services to workers.

Child Anyone under the age of 18.

An adult receiving a service as a result of their deafness or disability could be regarded as a '**vulnerable adult**' and thereby also covered by this policy.

Workers Employees who are employed, contractors engaged directly by or volunteers for WestREAP, as well as employees and volunteers of partner organisations whilst they are working with children and young people in the care or supervision of WestREAP.

Abuse The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person". The definitions set out in "14. Child Protection and Youth Clients Procedures" and provide the definition of Physical, Emotional, Sexual abuse and neglect and includes some signs of abuse. These should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

Identification

Child protection concerns can arise either by disclosure, or recognition of signs and symptoms in a child receiving services from this service. It also includes child protection concerns related to a child indirectly involved with a client, for example in the household.

Roles & Responsibilities

Management responsibilities

Worker Safety Checks will be undertaken as required by the Children's Act 2014. Each worker safety check will be repeated within 3 years of the previous one.

Worker responsibilities

Front line workers must be alert to the signs and symptoms of neglect or abuse and take appropriate action to protect the wellbeing and safety of children and young people, whether the child/young person is directly or indirectly a client/participant of the programme/activity.

Where a child/young person makes a disclosure:

- Keep the child safe
- Remain calm yet confident
- Don't question extensively
- Keep voice low and gentle
- Don't be too quick to fill the silences
- Thank the child for telling you and say you are there to help them
- Don't promise confidentiality – let the child know that you need to talk to someone to make sure he/she is safe
- Write down what the child says, in their words and record using the template provide in "14. Child Protection and Youth Clients Procedures".

Workers who identify child protection concerns or receive a disclosure must record their observations and concerns using the template provided in "14. Child Protection and Youth Clients Procedures" and notify a Team Leader or someone in the management team.

If you believe the child to be in danger or immediate risk ACT NOW call 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459 or Police 111).

To determine if a notification to Oranga Tamariki is appropriate use the “Child Abuse Reporting Process” flowchart in Appendix III

Referring to Oranga Tamariki

Referrals to Oranga Tamariki are made by phone 0508 326 459 or email contact@ot.govt.nz

- <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/childrens-teams/childrens-hub-referral-form.docx>

Informing parents / caregivers of a referral

Communication with the child’s parents or caregivers that a referral to the police or Oranga Tamariki has been made should be managed with consideration to the safety of the child, workers and other family members. Do not inform the caregivers unless it is safe to do so.

Informing the client / caregivers of a referral should be undertaken in a safe environment for both workers and the client, parents or caregivers e.g. in the office, or by telephone. Consult with an appropriate person in the management team.

Documentation

Regardless if a referral is made, workers are required to document the following:

- Discussions with the Team Leader and others
- What was reported to Oranga Tamariki
- File notes as per Appendix II template

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Privacy Act 2020 and the Children’s Act 2014 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under the legislation any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Security

For circumstances where the safety of the child, family or worker is at high risk workers are to:

- consult with a member of the management team
- arrange appointments with the family at a venue outside of the home
- visit in pairs and carry a mobile phone
- ensure safety monitoring app is utilised where possible or notify your Team Leader of your intended visit.

Recruitment and safety checking

WestREAP ensures that all workers conducting work with children, both paid and voluntary have been appropriately safety checked in accordance with the Children's Act 2014. Safety checks must be undertaken and the results obtained before the worker has unsupervised access to children.

The results of the safety checks must be recorded and the record kept as long as the person is employed at the service (Refer Appendix A).

Every children's worker must be safety checked every three years. Safety checking includes the collection and consideration of a range of information about the person. A safety check is made up of 7 components:

- Verification of identity (including previous identities)
- An interview
- Information about work history
- Referee information
- Information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body
- A New Zealand police vet
- A risk assessment (The risk assessment involves an evaluation of all information collected to assess if there is any risk to the children's safety).

Periodic rechecking of all children's workers requires the following 4 of the 7 components to be completed:

- That the person hasn't changed their name and if so reconfirmation of their identity,
- Information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body,
- A New Zealand police vet, and
- A risk assessment

The Children's Act prohibits WestREAP from employing or engaging people with a specified offence as core workers, unless they hold a Core Worker Exemption.

Further guidance regarding the safe recruitment of workers can be found in the publication "Safer Recruitment Guidelines" published by Ministry of Education and Child Matters. <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/Safer-Recruitment-Safer-Children.pdf>

Managing Allegations against Workers

Any allegation that a worker has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

When there are suspicions of abuse by a worker, children's rights are to be attended to, with the safety of the child is of our first concern. WestREAP complaints and disciplinary policies and procedures must be followed and, in the case of employees, guided by the written contract employment agreement and any other relevant policies. The worker may be advised to seek legal and professional advice.

Preventative Practices

To minimise the risk of an allegation against workers, all workers will do their utmost to ensure:

- They are visible to others during REAP activities
- That any nappy changing/toileting is carried out by the parent or caregiver responsible for the child
- No adult (apart from the child(ren)'s parent/caregiver) should be alone with a child(ren) at any REAP activity.

Worker Support

Workers can access support through:

- A debrief with a senior colleague / team leader

Employees can also access support through:

- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) <https://www.employerline.co.nz>

Worker Training and Information

Workers will be provided with:

- a copy of this policy
- this referral to read "How Can I Tell: Recognising Child Abuse" booklet by Child Matters <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/downloads/2019-HCIT-PDF.pdf> (or equivalent)
- employees and volunteers will be provided with training i.e. Child Protection Workshops such as:
<https://onlinecourses.childmatters.org.nz/courses/introduction-to-child-protection-in-new-zealand> (if applicable to their role)
- regular updates or changes to legislation/policy.
- Contractors will be expected to keep up to date with any appropriate training and current legislation

1.2 Youth Clients

See also "14. Child Protection and Youth Clients Procedures".

Clients and Learners Policy Statement

WestREAP's Board delegates responsibility of the organisation's Youth Clients Policy to the Chief Executive (CE), to ensure that appropriate practices are in place that meet legislative requirements and ethical obligations.

Where behaviour is concerned, WestREAP maintains a clear code of conduct for all workers - the board, employees, contractors, and volunteers. We are proud of our organisational culture and expect those representing us to:

- Be open and honest at all times as a selfless contributor to the wider team and our Kaupapa;
- Exhibit respect and tolerance for others; we celebrate diversity and difference;
- Demonstrate professionalism, high standards, and a learner-focused approach;
- Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of WestREAP and learner information;
- Be loyal to WestREAP and follow direction of the CE (Chair for board) and lawful agreements;
- Avoid actions and statements that undermine the reputation or profile of WestREAP;
- Preserve WestREAP resources by avoiding waste, maximising use, and acting sustainably.

For purposes of this policy and any related procedures, the following definitions are clarified:

Worker is defined as anyone the organisation relies on to deliver services. Where appropriate in procedures, subgroups of workers are identified by the nature of any applicable employment relationships (i.e. permanent, fixed etc.) or other written contracts. Volunteers, a subset of workers, are noted to include governance and management committees.

In line with the Children's Act 2014, most positions at WestREAP are defined as non-core worker roles (and do not have sole care or responsibility for a child or children in their work). The following roles are classified as core roles: Early Childhood Tutor, Playgroup Facilitator, Youth Facilitator, and Whānau Facilitator.

Intended Outcomes/Scope

WestREAP provides a safe, mana-enhancing and welcoming environment for our youth clients to thrive and achieve their goals.

As part of WestREAP's Client and Learner Policy, we will provide a safe and welcoming environment where all Youth Clients and Learners:

- Always leave West REAP with their mana intact;
- Are given consistent service;

- Are given an appropriate needs analysis before enrolment or application is made to any of the youth programmes or services that we offer;
- Are made aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Principles

In order to carry out the above policy, the following principles are applied to all aspects of youth client work:

- Equal opportunity and fairness, in that WestREAP provides a consistent service, free of judgment, to all youth clients and their whanau
- Family friendly and flexible, in that all youth services are flexible to meet needs of clients and their whanau;
- Inclusiveness, in that if the client wishes, whānau and friends of the youth are welcomed and encouraged to be a part of the goal setting process.

Responsibilities & Delegations

WestREAP's CE carries full responsibilities for implementing, monitoring and reviewing all operational aspects of the organisation's policy aims, as set by the board.

Management responsibilities that fulfil the youth client requirements of the organisation include:

Cultural responsiveness

The CE will ensure the culture of learners, communities, clients and workers is appropriately considered in WestREAP activities by encouraging culturally adaptable practices and frameworks for operations.

Health and wellbeing

The CE will holistically support the health and wellbeing of employees and volunteers directly engaged in support work by encouraging programmes around work-life balance and well health (e.g. professional supervision, peer supervision).

Privacy and protected disclosure

The CE will facilitate protected disclosure standards by maintaining appropriate internal procedures for receiving and dealing with private information and information about serious wrongdoing.

Dispute resolution and complaints

The CE will ensure fair means of resolving disputes and reporting complaints for workers and learners by providing accessible resolution processes, the results of which will be shared with the board.

Anti-harassment and anti-bullying

The CE will maintain safe work and learning conditions by maintaining clear definitions and guidelines for identifying and deterring harassment and bullying.

Appraisal and development

The CE will develop a culture of success for employees and volunteers by ensuring at least annual appraisal of organisational roles that identifies and resources professional development as appropriate.

Relevant Limitations

This policy operates within the legislative guidelines of:

- Incorporated Society Act 1908
- Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
- Official Information Act 1982
- Education Act 1987 and its amendments
- Privacy Act 20
- Public Records Act 1995
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Public Audit Act 2001
- Children's Act 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

Additional limitations of this policy include contractual guidelines and Ministerial requirements from Government departments providing funding. These include the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Social Development, and Oranga Tamariki.

Appendix A: WestREAP Children's Worker Employee Safety Check Record

Employee:

Date:

Initial safety check requirements	Evidence (hyperlink)											
<p>Step 1: Identity confirmation</p> <p>The purpose of identity confirmation is to confirm that the identity given is not fictitious therefore you should obtain 3 forms of ID, at least one MUST have a photo to confirm the identity of the worker. Establish the identity exists by siting one original document from Group A and two from Group B:</p>												
<p>Group A (1 form)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Passport • Overseas Passport (including visa permit) • NZ Birth Certificate issued on or after 1 January 1998 carrying a unique identification number • NZ citizenship certificate <p>Group B (2 forms)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Drivers Licence • 18+ Card • Community Services Card • SuperGold Card • Veteran SuperGold Card • NZ Student photo identification card • NZ employee photo identification card • NZ electoral roll record • IRD number • NZ issued utility bill, issued not more <p>Copy of original document has been taken for our records</p>												
Completed	Yes/No	Date:										
<p>Step 2: Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always interview with two staff members present. • Prior to interview have the applicant complete paperwork (Police Vetting Form, Health Questionnaire, Application Form). • Use a prepared interview question sheet and record answers. • Do not ask closed questions which can be answered with a Yes or No. Ask questions with a what, where, who and how so you can assess the workers attitude towards the role and in particular children 												
Completed	Yes/No	Date:										
<p>Step 3: Obtain 5 Years Work history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining and considering a work history, covering the preceding five years, provided by the potential children's worker in their CV • If you cannot obtain 5 years you must state clearly the reason why on this check list. E.g., students, new to work force <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Year 1:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 2:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 4:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 5:</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Year 1:		Year 2:		Year 3:		Year 4:		Year 5:	
Year 1:												
Year 2:												
Year 3:												
Year 4:												
Year 5:												
Completed:	Yes/No	Date:										
<p>Step 4: Obtain Two Referees</p> <p>Obtain two referees, not related to the potential worker or part of their extended family and who do not live with them</p>												

When contacting the referees use the Reference Checking Template found in: C: Governance - Documents\Employment\Employment Templates

Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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Step 5: Seek Information
 Seeking information from any relevant professional organisation, licensing authority or registration authority, including (but not limited to) confirmation that the potential children’s worker is currently a member of the organisation, or currently licensed or registered by the authority. E.g., a teacher.
 There is no requirement that the organisation gives you any information.

Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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Step 6 Police Vet
 A New Zealand Police Vet MUST be completed before starting employment unless it has already been done as part of a professional registration e.g., teacher, nurse
 Police Vetting will need to be completed three yearly on the anniversary of the applicants start date

Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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Step 7: Evaluate the Risk
 Evaluation of the above information to assess the risk the potential children’s worker would pose to the safety of the children if employed or engaged, taking into account whether the role is a core children’s worker or non-core children’s worker role.

Evaluation:

Is the worker a Core or Non-core worker?
Will the worker have sole charge of children?
Does the worker have a clean Police Check?
Based on the work history of the worker is he/she stable or do they move on regularly?
Considering the behavioural questions asked during the interview and body language when talking about children. Does the worker have a genuine warmth/enthusiasm for children?
Were references positive, negative or neutral?

Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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Step 8: Personnel Folder
 All information gathered in steps 1 – 7 MUST be attached to this check list and filed in the applicant’s personnel folder should they be successful in being offered the role.

Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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Signed by: _____ Dated: / /
 Chief Executive

Review (every 3 years from completion date):

Date	Primary and secondary identity documents	Police Vet	Risk assessment

Completed by: _____ **Completion date:** _____