

# Talking Trouble Aotearoa New Zealand Child Protection Policy

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# 1. Policy Summary & Principles

## ***Statement of Commitment***

Talking Trouble Aotearoa New Zealand (“Talking Trouble”) is committed to acting in the welfare and best interests of all children to whom it provides a service and recognises that the most effective way to safeguard these children is to have a comprehensive and effective child protection policy. Talking Trouble Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to the prevention of child abuse and believes that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

## ***Purpose***

To protect the safety and wellbeing of children/tamariki who are receiving services from any Talking Trouble team member, or are associated with adults who are receiving services from a Talking Trouble team member.

## ***Policy scope***

This policy applies to all Talking Trouble team members.

## ***Policy principles***

Rights of the child - Every child has the right to:

- a safe and nurturing environment
  - live in families free from violence
  - protection from all forms of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has their care
- 
- Every year 7-10 children are killed by someone who was supposed to be caring for them and each year there are more than 4,500 reported cases of neglect and more than 14,000 cases of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. This policy provides guidance to all team members on how to identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child, including possible abuse or neglect. It should be used wherever abuse or neglect is suspected or identified, regardless of whether the child is a client of the organisation.
  - This policy is written under the principle that children/tamariki receiving services from Talking Trouble have a right to feel safe and comfortable in that care, contact and environment.
  - Talking Trouble asserts that all children/tamariki have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, and culture, economic status or criminal background.



- The rights, welfare, best interests and safety of children/tamariki are the first and paramount consideration of Talking Trouble in all instances.
- All services provided by Talking Trouble adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Talking Trouble acknowledges the validity of Te Ao Maori at all levels of service development, implementation, and evaluation and that all children are assessed and managed within a culturally safe environment.
- In New Zealand statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services, and it is important for our organisation to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau. Contact details for agencies and services in our community are provided as an appendix to this policy.
- Wherever possible the child/tamariki, family/whānau, hapu and iwi participate in making decisions affecting that child/tamariki.
- Team members will be competent in identification and management of actual or potential abuse and/or neglect through the organisation's policy and procedural structures and education programme.

### ***Review***

This Policy will be reviewed annually and updated regularly, to ensure it is kept up to date with changes that may have been made to legislation, related policies and procedures, and in light of operational experience. The overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Designated Person for Child Protection – Sally Kedge.

## 2. Definitions

- **“Child/tamariki”** means a person aged under 18 years.
- **“Child Abuse”** can involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or may arise from a single incident. Child Abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- i. Physical Abuse
- ii. Sexual Abuse
- iii. Emotional Abuse
- iv. Neglect

**“Emotional Abuse”** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child’s self-esteem and emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children and their social competence undermined or eroded over time. A child can also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment which includes seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others, including but not limited to being exposed to domestic violence.

**“Neglect”** is characterised as the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological need. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for and/or protect the child. It may also include neglect of a child’s basic or emotional needs.

**“Physical Abuse”** is a non-accidental act 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.

**“Sexual Abuse”** is an act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child, whether consensual or not. Sexual abuse can be committed by a relative, a trusted friend, an associate, or someone unknown to the child. Sexual abuse includes situations where the adult seeks to have the child touch them for a sexual purpose, and where they involve the child in pornographic activities or prostitution.

- **“Child protection”** – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **“Designated person for child protection”** – this person is responsible for ensuring that child protection is a key focus for Talking Trouble, both at a strategic level and on a day to day basis.



- **“Disclosure”** – information given to a Team member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **“Family Violence”** can take many forms and may include, but is not limited to, actual physical violence (to a person, pet or property), threats of physical violence (to a person, pet or property), psychological, economic or sexual abuse. Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.
- **“New Zealand Police”** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **“Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children”** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- **“Team member”** - any person working for, or at, Talking Trouble includes, but is not limited to, employees, contractors, directors and volunteers, whether working on a full time, part time, casual, or temporary basis.

### 3. Training, supervision and support

Talking Trouble is committed to maintaining and increasing team members' awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training.

Training, resources and/or advice will be available to ensure that all team members can carry out their roles in terms of this policy, particularly:



- Understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse
- Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regard to child abuse
- Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues
- Planning of environment and supervision to minimise risk
- Dealing with child/tamariki and family/whānau

Familiarisation with this policy will form part of team members' induction programme. All team members must confirm in writing that they understand that they are required to be familiar with, and adhere to, the Talking Trouble Child Protection Policy.

All team members will receive updated child protection training every three years.

It is recognised that child protection matters can have an impact on the wellbeing of team members. Team members involved in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect are entitled to support in addition to their own regular supervision. Talking Trouble provides such support through its Designated Person for Child Protection (Sally Kedge), Operations Manager and in addition, will maintain knowledge of individual, agencies, and organisations within the community who can assist in providing external support.



## 4. Identifying child abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

### How Can I Tell

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/shop/item/display/1/3>

We understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc., or related to the child's communication or other aspects of their development.

We understand that when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect, we should talk to someone – we shouldn't act alone. Within Talking Trouble, the person we must speak to is the Designated Person for Child Protection - Sally Kedge, (or if she is unavailable, the Operations Manager).

While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.

It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.

Team members should be alert and aware of the fact that child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

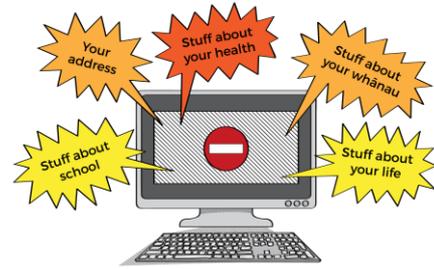
- Direct or indirect disclosure by the child;
- Direct or indirect disclosure from someone known to the child;
- Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child;
- Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child's physical or emotional behaviour;
- Direct witnessing of abuse.

Team members should be aware that at any time, they can seek advice directly from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459).

The signs and indicators of abuse to a child may not be immediately obvious or identifiable. Appendix 4 sets out a non-exhaustive list of signs and indicators to help identify abuse.

## 5. Confidentiality and information sharing

Talking Trouble team members will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the Operations Manager or Designated Person for Child Protection. Team members can seek advice directly from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) at any time regarding child protection concerns.



Team members should be aware that:

- The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 places the wellbeing and best interests of a child as the first and paramount consideration when it comes to the sharing of information so if a team member raises a legitimate concern in good faith about suspected child abuse, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against that team member.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles – i.e. the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Team members may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Child, Youth and Family under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act (Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act) 1989. Please see Sharing personal information of families and vulnerable children; The Escalation Ladder <https://www.privacy.org.nz/assets/InteractiveEscalationLadder/PRCM1000-Escalation-Ladder-Infographic.pdf>
- If Talking Trouble team members are contacted with a request for information about a child then team members will:
  - Seek to confirm the identity and credentials of person requesting information
  - Notify the Designated Person for Child Protection
  - Identify the specific information required and the purpose
  - Check that Talking Trouble holds the information requested
  - Depending on the reason for the request, and risk to children as judged case by case, inform the family/whānau that information has been



- requested, by whom, and seek permission. If this is a child protection issue, permission from the family/whānau is not required.
- Document all steps in the process.

## **4. Recording and notifying Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children of suspected child abuse or neglect**

### **Reporting Procedures**

All team members must report concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Designated Person for Child Protection at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child. If the Designated Person is unavailable, then consultation should occur with the Operations Manager. A decision will be made as to whether to notify Oranga Tamariki. If an immediate response is required to ensure the child's safety, team members should contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police directly.

All concerns or allegations of sexual abuse must be reported to Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police.

When reporting an incident team members should:

- Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection as soon as possible (or the Operations Manager in their absence)
- Record in writing all conversations and actions taken and keep these records securely in the Child Protection Register.

### **Recording Procedures**

Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must include the following:

- A record of facts, including observations, with time and date
- What was said and by whom, using the person's words
- What advice was received and by whom
- What action has been taken, by whom and when

All decisions, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki or the Police, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in the Child Protection Register with the reasons clearly identified and explained.



## 5. Responding to a child when they disclose abuse

Disclosures of abuse may come directly from a child. It is important that Talking Trouble team members take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the team members own opinion on what is being said. When a child tells you what has been happening to them, or when you witness or suspect child abuse, it is important that you, as the adult, remain calm and confident. (See Appendix 2 for more guidance.)

**RESPOND:** Respond to the person (adult or child) – Believe what they tell you and/or what you see.

**SAFETY:** Ensure the safety of the child. Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This will mean contacting Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or the Police (111) if you think there is an immediate risk to the child.

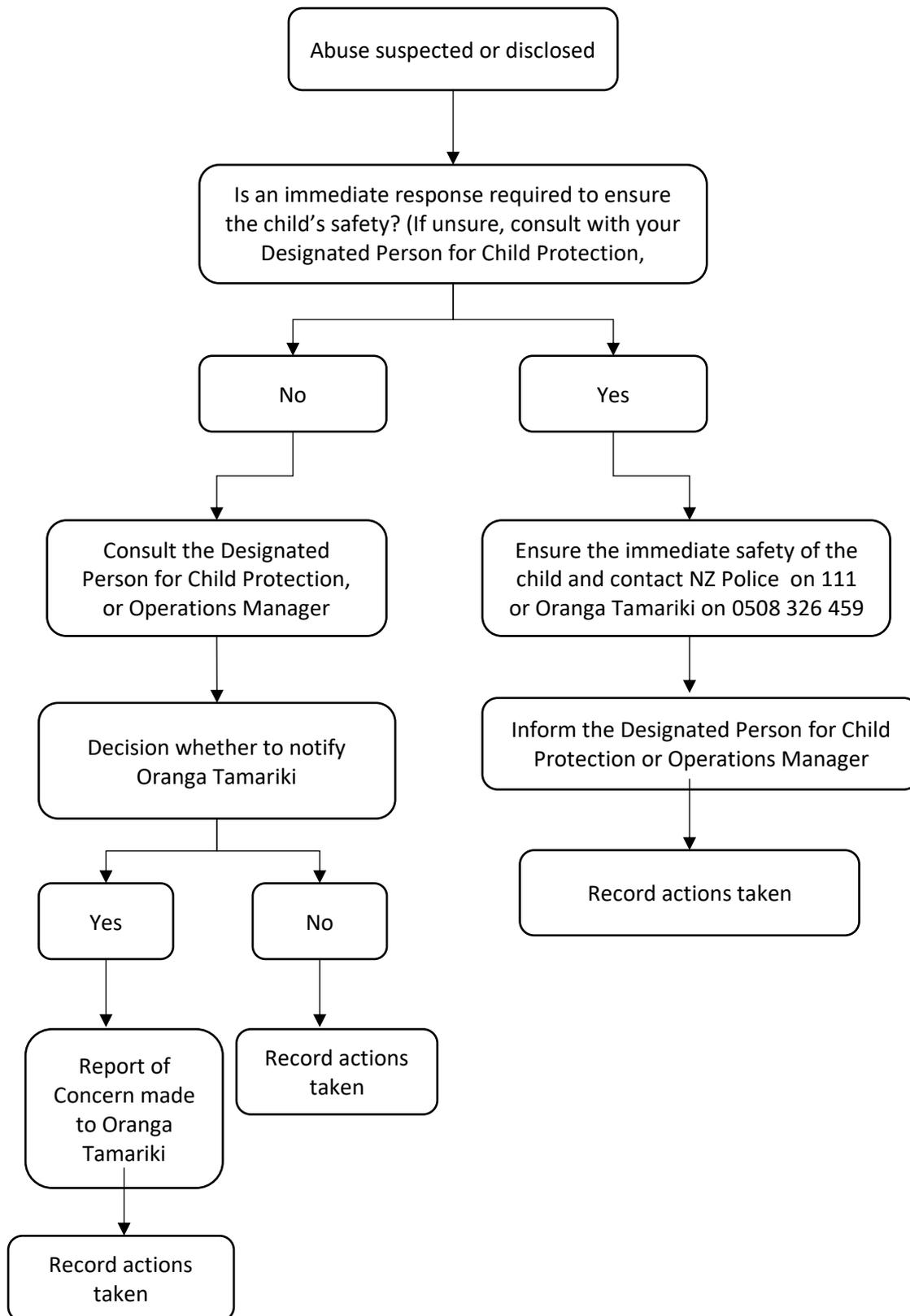
**RECORD:** Record immediately all initial statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date.

**CONSULT:** Do not make decisions alone. Consult with your Child Protection Policy and your Designated Person for Child Protection. If your Designated Person for Child Protection is unavailable, consultation is to occur with the Operations Manager or the Oranga Tamariki Duty Social Worker.

**REPORT:** Decide to act on your concerns. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.

**SUPPORT:** Seek support for yourself. Responding to a child protection issue can be stressful.

**Think “what if I’m right?” ... Not “what if I’m wrong?”**





## **6. Responding to child abuse/ suspected abuse**

Talking Trouble will respond to child abuse in a manner which ensures the child's safety is the first and paramount consideration.

When child abuse is suspected, disclosed or witnessed, everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child concerned, along with the ongoing safety of any other child who is in close connection to the alleged offender. In all cases, the child is the primary concern and all other concerns (including the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender) must be secondary. This does not mean that the alleged offender is to be considered guilty without due investigation, but that the child's safety comes first.

In a situation where a team member believes that a child is in immediate danger, the team member in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection will inform Oranga Tamariki or the Police of their concerns.



## 7. Child safe practice guidelines – Keeping yourself safe

All team members are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Code of Ethics.

When physical contact is made with a child this needs to be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Team members must use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### Talking Trouble requires team members to:

- Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Ensure that their communication with children takes place within the boundaries of a professional relationship and is open to scrutiny from other adults
- Have no secret social contact with children or their parents or whānau
- Take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be vigilant in maintaining practitioners' own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work and always have any contact approved by senior colleagues
- Report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the service or their own professional standing
- Gain approval of operations manager before sending any personal communications such as birthday cards to children, and keep a record of such personal communications
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified
- Ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and children are never listed as approved contacts
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with any organisation policy
- Avoid
  - transporting children
  - using or accessing social networking sites of children



- listing children as approved contacts on social networking sites
- using internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to children
- giving personal contact details to children, including your mobile telephone number
- texting children

In situations where team members may be alone with children Talking Trouble requires staff to:

- Ensure that full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed i.e. matching the assessor to the context and/or service user, the selection of appropriate assessments and tools to ensure the safety of everyone involved
- Avoid meetings with a child/tamariki in remote, secluded areas
- Always inform other colleagues or parents about the contact(s) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague
- Carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child/tamariki when in one to one situations. All team members should examine the possible situations where they may be alone with children.

**Wherever possible another adult should be present, if this is not possible the door to the room should be left open**

- Team members have a responsibility to understand and adhere to the safe working practices of other facilities and work environments which they may find themselves in during the course of their work with Talking Trouble. In all circumstances the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Please refer to the *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings* document at

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>

Talking Trouble requires that team members:

- Are aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child/tamariki, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Never touch a child/tamariki in a way which may be considered indecent
- Are always prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Do not engage in horseplay, tickling or wrestling
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Work within Health and Safety regulations



- Are aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender

To support this Talking Trouble will always:

- Foster a culture of openness and support
- Ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
- Ensure that there are effective recording systems in place which confirm discussions, decisions and the outcomes of any actions taken
- Ensure that staff are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
- Ensure that all staff are aware of expectations, policies and procedures
- Provide team members with any information they have about the child or young person's well-being in advance so that any risks can be discussed and a plan can be made.



## **8. Disclosure/allegation of child abuse against a team member**

All team members have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to children and to ensure that they maintain this behaviour.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a team member, the allegation must be taken seriously and reported to Designated Person (Sally Kedge) and Operations Manager who need to deal with the allegation immediately, sensitively and expediently.

It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal or Oranga Tamariki investigation. If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then an internal disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken subject to internal disciplinary procedures.

Management will consult with Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police before advising the person concerned and informing them of their right to seek legal advice and providing them with an opportunity to respond. The team member will be given access to legal and professional advice, in accordance with the Employment Relations Act. Ordinary disciplinary processes, guided by the relevant legislation, will be followed.

Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or management will advise the employee and seek a response (depending on outcomes of discussions with statutory agencies.)

Management will contemplate removal of team member from the team depending on seriousness of allegations or outcome of investigations.

Management will maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police.

Talking Trouble commits not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. A team member tendering their resignation, or ceasing to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation of abuse of a child being followed up in accordance with these procedures.



## 9. Recruitment and employment (safety checking)

Talking Trouble recruitment practice reflects a commitment to child protection by including comprehensive screening procedures. Safety checks will be carried out, as required by the Children's Act 2014. These will always include:

- police vetting
- identity verification
- references
- an interview
- review of work history
- telephone contact with previous employers, including core children's worker questions.

If there is any suspicion that an applicant might pose a risk to a child, that applicant will not be engaged.



## 10. Relationships with Statutory and Specialist Agencies

In New Zealand statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services, and it is important for Talking Trouble to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and their families and whānau. Talking Trouble will support the statutory agencies Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children and the New Zealand Police to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy. We also recognise that the family's/whānau's primary role in caring for and protecting the child should be valued and maintained.

Talking Trouble will maintain good working relationships with agencies that have the statutory powers and skills to intervene in cases of child abuse. This includes maintaining a good working relationship with Oranga Tamariki and with Police, and being familiar with the laws that serve to protect children from abuse. Team members will consult with Oranga Tamariki, Police, and with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge to help protect children from abuse.

Contact details for statutory and specialist agencies in our community are attached as Appendix 1 of this policy.



## 11. Keeping the child's family and whanau informed and involved

Although the parent or caregiver of a child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed and Talking Trouble's team members need to be aware of this. Such circumstances when concerns will not be shared with a child's parent or guardian can include, but are not limited to when:

- the parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator
- it is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence
- there is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
- the child does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision

If the Team member involved is in doubt, they can seek advice from Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police.

## 12. Roles and responsibilities of staff

All Team members have a full and active part to play in protecting children from harm. It is the primary responsibility of team members to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect and abuse, whether actual or potential, and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations immediately. Team members have a responsibility to ensure that any concern, suspicion or allegation raised is taken seriously.

### **Designated Person for Child Protection:**

Talking Trouble's Designated Person for Child Protection is responsible for ensuring that child protection is a key focus within the organisation and that appropriate protocols, procedures, and training are in place. The Designated Person is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and providing advice and support for team members with child protection concerns.

It is important that every team member knows that the Designated Person for Child Protection is Sally Kedge (021 103 4842).

### **Operations Manager:**

If the Designated Person for Child Protection is unavailable, team members with child protection concerns must contact the Operations Manager (Alison Paulin 021 025 80128). The Operations Manager's role in Talking Trouble's Child Protection Policy is to carry out delegated tasks, and to be a backup contact in case our Designated Person is unavailable.





### 13. Additional resources & related documentation

Child Matters website; educating to prevent child abuse <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/>

- Child protection training e.g. CPS Workshops, Child Protection Studies Programme
- Resources e.g. How Can I tell? Worried about a child? Speak up, Creating a Safe Organisation
- Publications e.g. Hidden In Front of Us

Safeguarding Children Initiative – free evidence-based, seminars and e-learning

<https://safeguardingchildren.org.nz/>

See also: Murphy, C. et al. (2013). *Understanding connections and relationships: Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and parenting*. NZ Family Violence Clearing House. Issues Paper 3. April.

Safe working practices: *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings* document at <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>

#### Related documentation; relevant legislation

- Children’s Act 2014
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Privacy Act 1993
- Victims’ Rights Act 2002
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)
- Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Education Act 1989/1998
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights



## Appendix 1

### Important contact details:

- Budgeting Services <https://www.moneytalks.co.nz/find-a-service/>
- Children's Team referrals <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/support-for-families/childrens-teams/referrals/>
- Family Services  
<https://family.services.govt.nz/#/>
- New Zealand Police 111
- Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children (0508 FAMILY) 0508 326 459 <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/worried-about-a-child-tell-us/>
- Strengthening Families Whakapiripri Nga Whanau <http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/get-started/northern.html>
- Talking Trouble Designated Person for Child Protection: Sally Kedge 021 103 4842 [sallykedge@talkingtroublenz.org](mailto:sallykedge@talkingtroublenz.org)
- Talking Trouble Operations Manager: Alison Paulin 021 025 80128 [alisonpaulin@talkingtroublenz.org](mailto:alisonpaulin@talkingtroublenz.org)

## Appendix 2

### The DO's and DONT's - Dealing with disclosures of abuse

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance. When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise and legal action against the abuser. There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child:

- Don't panic
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says
- Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage
- Tell your Designated Person for Child Protection or Operations Manager as soon as possible
- Refer to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police
- After making the referral to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person

Things TO SAY when a child discloses:

- "I believe you"
- "I am going to try to help you"
- "I will help you"
- "I am glad that you told me"
- "You are not to blame"

Things NOT TO SAY when a child discloses:

- "You should have told someone before"
- "I can't believe it! I am shocked!"



- “Oh that explains a lot”
- “No not... he’s a friend of mine”
- “I won’t tell anyone else”
- “Why? How? When? Where? Who?”

#### Things TO DO

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you
- Let them know what you are going to do next
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated person for child protection
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place and do not delete them.
- Seek help and support for yourself

#### Things NOT TO DO:

- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- Do NOT formally interview the child
- Never ask leading questions
- Never push for information or make assumptions
- Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed
- Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
- Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
- Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.



## Appendix 3

### Record of issue or concern

<b>Child name:</b>		<b>D.o.B:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Action:</b>			
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>			

## Appendix 4

### Indicators of Abuse

The [indicators](#) for child abuse and neglect fall into three general categories:

- Physical indicators:** Injuries to a child that occur in a pattern or occur frequently. These injuries range from bruises to broken bones to burns or unusual lacerations and are often unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given
- Behavioural indicators:** The child's actions, attitudes, and emotions can indicate the possibility of abuse or neglect. Behavioural indicators alone are much less reliable than physical indicators, as a child's behaviour may be the result of a variety of other problems or conditions. When observing changes in behaviour, look for the frequency and pattern of the new behaviour, as well as a child's age and stage of development. For example, it is normal for younger children to be wary of adults, as they may have been taught not to talk to strangers. Look for a combination of physical and behavioural indicators.
- Caregiver indicators:** Caregivers who abuse, neglect or exploit children are either unable or unwilling to provide care and protection in an appropriate way. Those who are unable to provide care and protection may be physically unable due to their own medical or health condition. They may be overly stressed, tired, or working under the influence of drugs or alcohol which limits their abilities. Caregivers who are unwilling to provide children with the appropriate level of care and protection are more aware that what they are doing is wrong but continue to act in that way. These caregivers may not view the child as someone who has feelings and emotions and often have the need to control others or have displaced aggression towards weaker persons.

The indicators alone do not prove child abuse or neglect. Likewise, the absence of indicators does not exclude the possibility that abuse is occurring. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child, seek advice from your Designated Person for Child Protection, Manager or Oranga Tamariki.

#### ➤ **Emotional Abuse Indicators**

- Physical Indicators:
  - Bed wetting or bed soiling with no medical cause
  - Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
  - Non-organic failure to thrive
  - Pale, emaciated
  - Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea
  - Malnutrition
  - Dressed differently to other children in the family
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Severe developmental lags with obvious physical cause
  - Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
  - Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
  - Overly compliant
  - Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition

- Running away from home, avoiding attendance at school/sport practice
  - Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
  - Anti-social behaviours
  - Lack of self esteem
  - Obsessive behaviours
  - Eating disorders
- Caregiver Indicators:
    - Labels the child as inferior or publicly humiliates the child (e.g. name calling)
    - Treats the child differently from siblings or peers in ways that suggest dislike for the child
    - Actively refuses to help the child
    - Constantly threatens the child with physical harm or death
    - Locks the child in a closet or room for extended periods of time
    - Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
    - Withholds physical and verbal affection
    - Keeps the child at home in role of servant or surrogate parent
    - Has unrealistic expectations of child
    - Involves child in adult issues such as separation or disputes over child's care
    - Exposes child to situations of arguing and violence in the home

➤ **Neglect Indicators**

- Physical Indicators:
  - Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
  - Often extremely dirty and unwashed
  - Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
  - Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods
  - May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult
  - Does not receive adequate medical or dental care
  - Malnourished - this can be both underweight and overweight
  - Lacks adequate shelter
  - Non-organic failure to thrive
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
  - Lack of attachment to parents/caregivers
  - Indiscriminate attachment to other adults
  - Poor school attendance and performance
  - Demanding of affection and attention
  - Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
  - May steal food
  - Poor social skills
  - No understanding of basic hygiene
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - Puts own need ahead of child's
  - Fails to provide child's basic needs
  - Demonstrates little or no interest in child's life - does not attend school activities, social events
  - Leaves the child alone or inappropriately supervised
  - Drug and alcohol use
  - Depression

➤ **Physical Abuse Indicators**

- Physical Indicators:
  - Bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions
  - Burns - small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns etc
  - Fractures and dislocations - skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
  - Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
  - Fractures in very young children
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
  - Wary of adults or a particular person
  - Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
  - Cringing or flinching if touches unexpectedly
  - May be extremely compliant and eager to please
  - Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
  - Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
  - May regress (e.g. bedwetting)
  - May indicate general sadness
  - Could have vision or hearing delay
  - Is violent to other children or animals
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
  - May appear unconcerned about child's wellbeing
  - May state the child is prone to injuries or lies about how they occur
  - Delays in seeking medical attention
  - May take the child to multiple medical appointments and seek medical treatment without an obvious need

➤ **Sexual Abuse Indicators**

- Physical Indicators:
  - Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
  - Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
  - Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
  - Blood in urine or stools
  - Sexually transmitted infections
  - Pregnancy
  - Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
  - Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
  - Refuses to go home, or to a specific person's home, for no apparent reason
  - Fear of a certain person
  - Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
  - Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
  - Overly compliant
  - Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
  - Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries

- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviours
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - May be unusually over-protective of the child
  - Accuses the child of being sexually provocative
  - Misuses alcohol or drugs
  - Invades the child's privacy (e.g. during dressing, in the bathroom)
  - May favour the victim over other children

➤ **Family Violence Indicators**

- Indicators in the Child:
  - Physical injuries consistent with the indicators of physical abuse
  - Absenteeism from school
  - Bullying or aggressive behaviour
  - Complaints of headaches or stomach aches with no apparent medical reason
  - Talking or describing violent behaviours
- Indicators in the Victim:
  - Physical Injuries including: bruising to chest and abdomen, injuries during pregnancy
  - Depression and/or anxiety
  - Inconsistent explanations for injuries
  - Fearful
  - Submissive
- Indicators in the Offender:
  - Isolates and controls partner and children
  - Threatens, criticises, intimidates, uses aggressive and physical abuse towards partner and children
  - Minimises and denies own behaviour, or blames victim for the perpetrators own behaviour