



Child Protection

Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer
Applies to:	All Staff
Purpose:	<p>Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens (“WMK”) is committed to the protection and wellbeing of children. WMK staff play an important role in the prevention, detection and reporting of suspected child abuse. The provision of well-defined procedures, practices and reporting will reduce the incidences, and increase the detection, of child abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure that children are safe from harm;• To ensure that any suspected abuse is acted upon;• To provide a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse• To support parents and whānau to protect their children.
Definition:	“Child Abuse” means ‘the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person’ (refer section 2 Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989)
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-WMK Complaints Policy-Collection of Children/Missing Children Policy- Changing, Toileting and Bathing Children Policy- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989- Children’s Act 2014

Policy

1. The interests and protection of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions. As described in the “Definition” section of this policy, indicators of child abuse may include but are not limited to, the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person’. This may manifest itself as physical signs, behavioural concerns, or developmental delays.
2. WMK has a commitment to ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, and are able to take appropriate action in response.
3. To this end, WMK shall include, as a regular part of its professional learning and development timetable, courses that address issues relating to child abuse and protection, including indicators of possible abuse.

4. All staff working directly with children and whānau, including teachers and Navigators, shall be required to attend specific professional learning and development relating to the protection of children at least once every three years.
5. Teachers shall ensure that the curriculum in their kindergarten provides opportunities for children to gain an understanding about personal safety and positive self-esteem.
6. Before making any notification to authorities that have the statutory responsibility to act, a staff member who suspects that a child in WMK's care has been the subject of child abuse shall first discuss the matter with a WMK Senior Teacher/ Manager and/or the Chief Executive. No referral to an external agency will be made without the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.
7. If a staff member suspects child abuse of any kind they will take action according to the procedures below. This process is also detailed in Schedule 1 Child Protection Flow Chart which is attached to this policy. The Child Protection Flow Chart should be displayed in a place that is accessible to all staff.

Procedures:

1. WMK shall maintain appropriate procedures for screening applicants before employing new staff. WMK shall conduct safety checks of all its staff in compliance with sections 25, 26 and 27 of the Children's Act 2014. The attached flow charts outline the screening process for teaching and non-teaching staff.
2. WMK shall inform all successful applicants of the Child Protection Policy.
3. WMK shall provide to staff, as and when needed, contacts of appropriate agencies that deal with child protection matters.
4. The WMK Child Protection Policy shall be displayed on the kindergarten noticeboard. All new parents/caregivers shall be informed of the policy and procedures.
5. Teaching Teams shall maintain a confidential file (this may be in the form of a "Concerns Book/Notebook") in the kindergarten in which to document observations of concern regarding the safety of children.
6. Teachers shall inform families/whānau about any relievers, visitors and students in the kindergarten.
7. Whilst in the care of kindergarten, including outside of sessions hours, children shall have two adults present at all times. Similarly, WMK staff shall have two adults present at all times while caring for children.

8. A copy of all court-related custody and protection orders must be kept in the kindergarten. A copy must be sent to WMK's Head Office and drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive.

Reporting/disclosures

1. Staff shall consult a Senior Teacher/Manager to discuss any concerns that they have regarding suspected child abuse. Subsequent to that discussion, a recommendation may be made by the staff member or by the Senior Teacher/Manager to report the suspected abuse to a Social Worker employed by Oranga Tamariki and/or to the Police in accordance with section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (or any legislation is substitution of that Act). However no referral to an external agency will be made without the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.
2. A Senior Teacher/Manager shall provide support, advice and guidance to staff when they are dealing with a suspected child abuse case.
3. Following discussions with the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) a decision will be made regarding who is the most appropriate person to notify Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.
4. Staff shall take seriously any disclosure of alleged child abuse from a child or an adult. Staff shall take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the affected child or children. In any action taken, the safety of the child is paramount.
5. Where a staff member has concerns about a child's immediate and imminent safety, they shall:
 - Notify the Police immediately;
 - Notify their Senior Teacher/Manager or the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) immediately;
 - Follow the directions given by the Police and/or Senior Teacher/Manager and/or Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager).
6. Staff shall keep a record of what has been observed and/or disclosed by the child – a report of the verbal and behavioural observations shall include dates, times and the name of the person making the observations. Any follow-up actions shall be recorded. Staff shall sign and date the documentation. Critical information must not held back when a report to the relevant agency is made.
7. Documentation about concerns shall not be held on the kindergarten premises indefinitely. It shall be passed on to the Association at the time the child stops attending.

Toileting and Care Routines

1. Visitors, parent helpers, caregivers, untrained relievers and students on placement shall not assist children (other than their own) with toileting or changing clothing.
2. The changing of children's clothing or assisting children with toileting, shall be carried out in a manner that ensures children's dignity is maintained while also ensuring visibility to others.
3. Toileting and clothes changing incidents shall be recorded, including name of child, name of staff member, date, incident and action taken.

Accusations Concerning/Involving Staff

1. Staff accused of child abuse shall immediately be placed on special leave or suspended, as determined by the Chief Executive

Attached to this policy are Guidelines for Communication with External Agencies Related to Child Protection.

Guidelines for Communications with External Agencies

These guidelines should be applied to communications by staff with:

- Oranga Tamariki
- The Police
- Lawyers appointed by the Court as "Lawyer for the Child"
- Lawyers representing families in custody disputes
- Court Appointed Psychologists
- Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income
- Schools
- Other ECE services

The Head Teacher of the kindergarten where the child attends or the Manager of a WMK service is primarily responsible for the handling of communication with external agencies unless they have delegated this responsibility to another teacher/team member.

The Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) must be consulted and their direction sought before any notification of suspected child abuse is made to any agency or third party and before any information regarding a child is provided to any agency.

Initial requests for information from external agencies/individuals

1. The staff member shall inform the person requesting the information that they will refer their request to the Chief Executive. For example, if a person phones the kindergarten or contacts a staff member and says "I am requesting information about John Smith, does he attend your kindergarten and do you have any concerns about him?" the staff member will respond by saying "Thank you for your query, our process is that any information shared regarding children must be cleared with our Chief Executive before we are able to provide information, can I take your name, position and number and I will call you back."
2. Information shared by the Head Teacher/ Manager about alleged child abuse or by the kindergarten with an agency shall be factual and conversations shall be documented and a copy retained by the Head Teacher /Manager. A copy must be sent to WMK's Head Office and drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive.
3. If the information is shared over the telephone, the Head Teacher/Manager shall ensure that there is another WMK staff member present during the conversation.
4. WMK may request copies of correspondence from the agency/ individual of any documents or information obtained from its staff about suspected child abuse.

Sharing information with schools and other ECE services

Before sharing written information with schools and other ECE services, regarding concerns about a child in relation to child protection, a staff member shall first discuss the matter with a WMK Senior Teacher and the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager). No written information, other than information relating to teaching and learning, will be shared to a school or ECE service without the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) having first been involved in discussion about the matter.

Completion of Gateway Assessments

Teachers will contact the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) if they are asked to complete a Gateway assessment. Support will be given to teachers by the Association to complete such a document.

Visits to the Kindergarten

1. If external agency staff contact the kindergarten and are wanting to interview children who are attending our kindergartens, the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) must be informed about this request immediately

Note: In most cases the external agency will ring ahead if they wish to visit and make a suitable time, agreed upon by the teacher/s. However in some instances, social workers, lawyers or the Police may require immediate access to the child. Immediate access should be given, however, the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive or in their absence a Senior Manager) must still be informed by the kindergarten.

2. Head Teachers will explain to external agencies that in order to meet WMK policies children can only be interviewed if a kindergarten staff member is present. The child's interests and needs are paramount.

Identification Check for Registered Teaching Staff

Relieving Registered Teacher

Applicant is given Proof of ID forms to be completed face to face by Senior Teacher at Interview Stage prior to appointment. Included in this interview are questions pertaining to the Children's Act.

Senior Teacher will complete Referee Checks to determine suitability of applicant

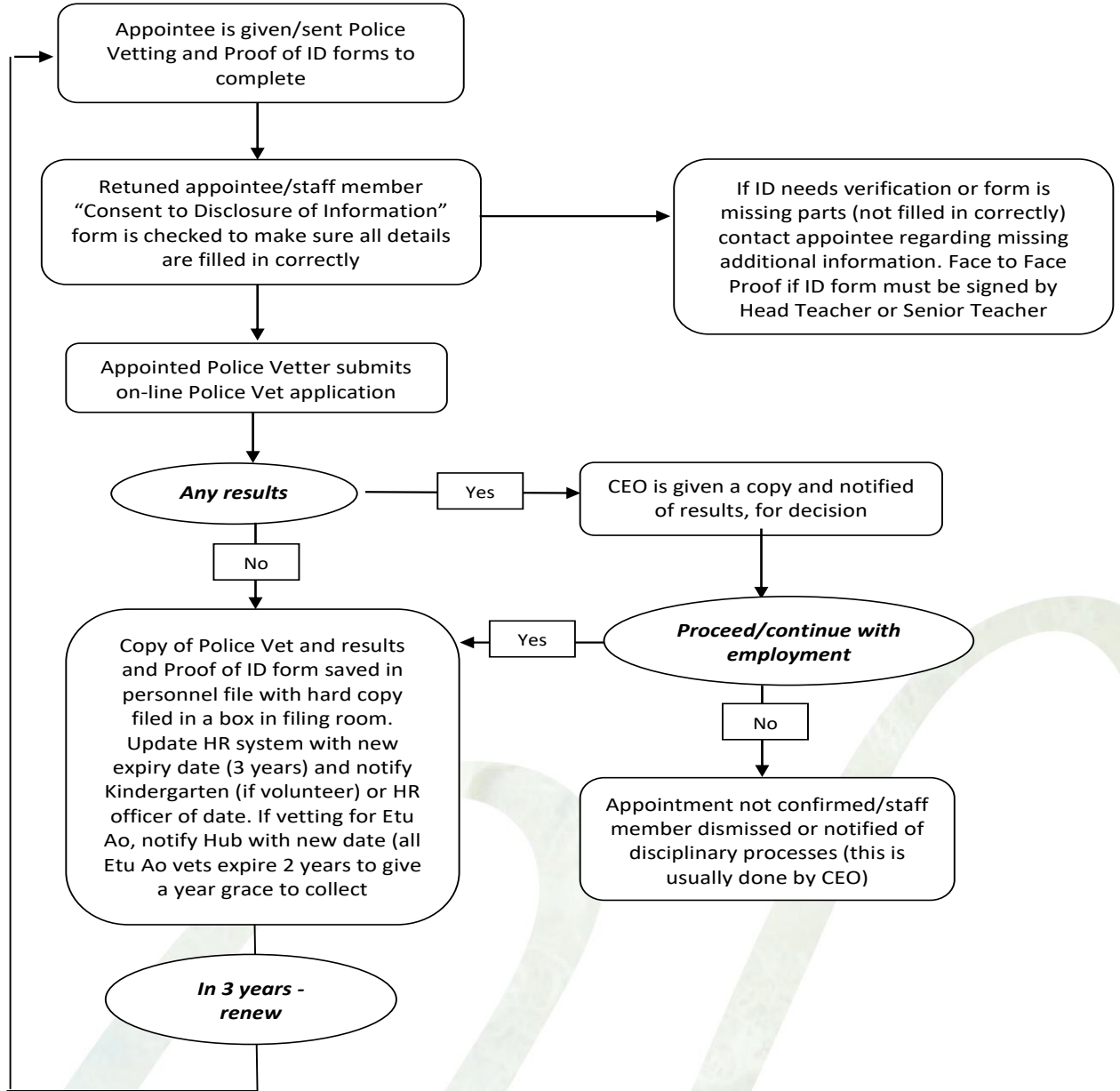
Copy of Proof of ID form saved in personnel file. Police Vet is not required for Registered Teachers as this process is completed by the Education Council during registration process every three years.

Permanent or Long Term Registered Teacher

Short listed applicant is given Proof of ID forms to be completed face to face by Senior Teacher at Interview Stage. Included in this interview are questions pertaining to the Children's Act.

Senior Teacher will complete Referee Checks for the successful applicant and will complete appointment process

Identification Check of Non-Teaching Staff



Concerns for the Child.

Is the Child in Imminent Danger?

