

# Child Safeguarding Policy

## Version history:

Approval Date	Description of Changes
25 April 2024 by ARANZ Board of Trustees	New policy approved by the board by email. Ratified by the board at the 10 June 2024 board meeting.

## Purpose

A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand (ARANZ) recognises a particular duty of care with regard to the physical and emotional wellbeing of children (children are defined here as all those under 18 years of age). We commit ourselves to nurture, protect and safeguard all our members and users, particularly children. We recognise that the wellbeing of children participating in ARANZ activities is the responsibility of all ARANZ workers. We support parents and carers in their role of bringing up children.

## Scope

This policy applies to all ARANZ staff.

## Definition

A child is any person under the age of 18, including youth / young person.

## Police Vetting Procedures

- We undertake to exercise proper care in both the selection and appointment, and the support, of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer.
- Team members must be 18 years of age or older in order to be given legal responsibility to care for participants. Junior team members, who are under 18 years, may be appointed to take on certain roles but carry a reduced responsibility and require closer supervision.
- All job applicants for roles within ARANZ that involve working with children will be required to provide character references.
- A Police Vetting check will be required before any staff member or volunteer begins work with children.

- If the Police Vetting check reveals that the worker has seriously mistreated or caused significant harm to a child or placed a child at risk of significant harm, they will be precluded from any role or responsibility within ARANZ that involves working with children, unless an exemption is granted.
- All ARANZ staff and volunteers are to be re-vetted every 3 years.

### **Safe Environment Procedures**

- ARANZ staff and volunteers who work with children are to be given specific training on keeping children safe.
- If an activity involves children, a suitable adult-to-child ratio will be followed for the activity in accordance with the activity's Safety Assessment Management Plan (SAMP) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- For everyone's safety, every effort should be made to ensure ARANZ staff are not to be alone with children where they cannot be observed.
- ARANZ staff will not visit children or youth in their homes unless a caregiver is present or another staff member accompanies them.
- When transporting children, the driver must be fully licensed, must not be under the influence of any substance, and must have suitable car seats or seat belts as appropriate to the ages of the children being transported.
- When transporting children, every effort should be made for ARANZ staff not to be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical, ARANZ staff will take children directly to and from arranged venues without deviating.
- All personal counselling provided to children is to be carried out within sight of another ARANZ staff member.
- ARANZ staff will respect a child's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.
- All aspects of every child- and youth-related program will be open to observation by caregivers.
- ARANZ staff have a right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child- or youth-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request.

- Some actions may not be regarded as abuse but are nonetheless unacceptable behaviour for staff working with children and may create an unsafe environment for children. These include:
  - Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
  - Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
  - Suggestive gestures or remarks.
  - Jokes of a sexual nature.
  - Inappropriate touching.
  - Inappropriate literature.
  - Acts of violence committed by a staff member in the course of an activity.
- Photographs with the full names of children and young persons including any detailed personal information must not be published online or in print unless you have written parental consent and you have informed the children, young persons, parents, or caregivers and whānau how the photograph will be used.
- Photographs or recordings of children and young people must be kept secure and not shared unless for the purpose the image was taken in accordance with the signed parental consent form.
- An explanation of acceptable and safe behaviour will be given to children participants before any site visits or activities.
- The permission of caregivers of children must be obtained before they may participate in ARANZ activities.
- A sign-in/sign-out system should be used for all activities that involve children in attendance without their parents/guardians.
- Relevant medical information should be obtained from all children participants on ARANZ camps and regular activities.

# Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Policy

*Approval Date: 25 April 2024 by ARANZ Trustees*

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## Purpose

A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand (ARANZ) is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children and young people. The overarching purpose of this policy is to provide information and processes to improve the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect, to better support vulnerable children.

This policy provides the staff of ARANZ with a framework to manage actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect in accordance with the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 and Children's Act 2014.

## Scope

This policy applies to all ARANZ staff.

This policy applies to all allegations of child abuse, whether against ARANZ staff, caregiver(s), or other parties.

## Definition

Child Abuse is defined in the Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 as: "the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person." This includes abuse to oneself (suicide or self-harm), abuse from others (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) and abuse to others (plans, threats or actions).

## Training

ARANZ is committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to recognise and respond to abuse and what is the appropriate action to take when this is disclosed. As part of induction, new staff will be taken through ARANZ's Child Protection Policies.

## Communication

The ARANZ National Director will manage all communications with the child's parents or caregivers about any referral to the police or Oranga Tamariki – with consideration for the safety of the child, staff and other family members.

## **Staff Support**

The ARANZ National Director and/or the Chair of the ARANZ Trust must debrief with any affected staff as part of staff support, and if necessary, staff will be provided with external counselling.

## **Procedure to Respond to Allegation/Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect:**

Anyone who witness or becomes privy to information from a child about any situation which leads them to believe the child is the victim of abuse or neglect should respond in the following manner:

1. If the child is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety. Call the Police on 111.
2. At all times appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained.
3. When responding to suspected child abuse, listen and do not put words into a child's mouth.
4. Allow them to tell only as much as they want and ensure the child's immediate safety.
5. Avoid in-depth questioning.
6. Let the child know that you are glad they told you, that you are sorry it has happened, that it is not their fault and that you will help.
7. Do not make promises or commitments that you cannot keep (e.g. "It will be okay").
8. Tell the child that you need to inform other safe people (e.g. the ARANZ National Director) to help the child.
9. Do not over-react / panic or ask leading questions (i.e. a question that encourages a certain answer). Instead use open ended questions ("tell me about..., how did...") that cannot be answered with a yes or no to paint a big picture and follow up with closed-ended questions starting with "who, what, where, when, why" to get simple factual response.
10. Document any details as soon as possible said by the child and yourself, recording as far as is possible the exact words used.
11. Inform the ARANZ National Director of the situation.

### **Allegation/Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect against a Child's Caregiver(s) or Third Party:**

If the allegation/suspicion of abuse or neglect is directed at a child's caregiver or third party, the ARANZ staff will:

1. Inform the ARANZ National Director of the situation.
2. In consultation with the ARANZ National Director, assist with an immediate plan to keep the child safe if necessary. For example, do not send the child home if there is serious concern about abuse in the home.
3. The ARANZ National Director will inform the Chair of the ARANZ Trust who should be kept in the loop for the remainder of the process.
4. Contact Oranga Tamariki and follow their advice.
5. The ARANZ National Director will support the staff to file a Report of Concern if required to Oranga Tamariki.

Reporting should be made to:

**Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children**

Phone Number: 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) – 24 hours

Email: [contact@ot.govt.nz](mailto:contact@ot.govt.nz)

Website: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/>

### **Allegation/Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect against an ARANZ Staff:**

If the allegation/suspicion of abuse or neglect is directed at an ARANZ staff member, the ARANZ National Director will:

1. Inform the Chair of the ARANZ Trust who must oversee the remainder of the process.
2. The ARANZ staff against whom the allegation is made is to be informed as soon as practically possible and removed from any role involving children/youth until an investigation is completed, at which time a decision is made on whether the person returns to the role.
3. The ARANZ National Director and/or the Chair of the ARANZ Trust is to arrange to meet with the caregiver as soon as possible to discuss the issue. The caregiver may then decide whether they wish to pursue a complaint.
4. If required, the Chair of the ARANZ Trust, in consultation with the ARANZ National Director and the caregiver will either:

- Instigate an internal independent review; or
  - Refer the issue to Oranga Tamariki (see contact below). All relevant documentation is handed to the relevant government agency.
5. An incident form is to be generated and entered into Safety Seek. The incident is not closed until the Chair of the ARANZ Trust is satisfied that the issues have been resolved and after consultation with the child's caregiver and the ARANZ National Director.

Reporting should be made to:

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**Procedure to Respond to Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour by Staff:**

In the event of an ARANZ staff member is alleged to have acted in an inappropriate manner (though not regarded as abuse) while working with children or young people, ARANZ will take appropriate measures to help prevent repeat behaviour by the ARANZ staff member. The objective should be to bring about restoration of relationships.

1. In the first instance, allegation of the inappropriate behaviour by an ARANZ staff member should be reported to the ARANZ National Director and the ARANZ Chair of the Trust.
2. The ARANZ National Director and ARANZ Chair of the Trust should investigate the matter ensuring that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process and meet with the caregiver of the affected child.
3. The staff member that is affected should be informed as soon as possible and given a chance to address the concern raised.
4. Whenever possible the allegation of inappropriate behaviour should be corroborated by witnesses to the incident.
5. An incident form is to be generated and entered into Safety Seek. The incident is not closed until the Chair of the ARANZ Trust is satisfied that the issues have been resolved and after consultation with the child's caregiver and the ARANZ National Director.

6. If the allegation of inappropriate behaviour by staff is found to be true, and if the child / young person or their caregiver requests a restorative process – ARANZ will endeavour to set up a restorative process meeting between the child / young person and their caregivers, and the staff member and ARANZ management.
7. After the issue has been resolved, the ARANZ National Director and the ARANZ Chair of the Trust must follow-up on the welfare of the staff member and the affected child / young person after an appropriate interval of time.