

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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Marlborough Youth Trust (MPT) recognises that safeguarding New Zealand's mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi is the responsibility of everyone. Ensuring the safety and well-being of the mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi is the top priority when investigating suspected or alleged child abuse.

This policy is a requirement under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, to share the organisations commitment to protect vulnerable mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi and to report situations where they have concerns of suspected or being abused or neglected.

### **1. Purpose**

- a) We make the safety and wellbeing of mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi our primary concern, with the child at the centre of all decision-making when responding to suspected abuse or neglect.
- b) We promote a culture where staff feel confident to challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern.
- c) We recognize the importance of whānau and their right to participate in decision-making about their mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi, unless this would result in an increased risk to their mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi.
- d) We all know we can report suspected child abuse and neglect to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children or the Police.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff employed by MYT including contracted providers, contractors, students, volunteers managed or supervised by the staff or contractors to MYT who have contact with mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi as part of their employment MYT.

- MYT Chairperson has the role of Child Protection Officer and will have overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented and used effectively.
- All staff and services (including contracted providers, contractors, volunteers and students) have a responsibility to discuss any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, with their manager or the designated person responsible for child protection.

Under this policy, all staff are required to:

- a) know that the policy exists and know how to access the policy.
- b) understand what this policy covers and what to do if they come across abuse and/or neglect.
- c) take steps to ensure that any concerns about actual or suspected abuse and/or neglect are reported to Oranga Tamariki or the Police. In most cases that will involve making a Report of Concern to the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre – 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459).
- d) recognise the potential indicators of abuse and neglect of children including disabled children (mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi).
- e) be aware of the risk that persons and situations may pose to children (tamariki/mokopuna).
- f) access available child protection information and training, appropriate to their role.

- g) know where to seek advice and know when they should make a Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki and/or Police, or when a referral to community social services agencies for support is more appropriate.
- h) know that if they are uncertain about the level of risk/concern they should contact the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre for advice to make sure a factual account of their concerns and actions taken are recorded.

**a) Recruitment and employment (safety checking)**

All appointments will follow the requirements of the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Staff Policy. Safety checking will be carried out in accordance with the Children's Act 2014. This will include: a) identification verification b) Police vetting c)reference checks d) employment verification checks e) checks with professional registration bodies or licensing authorities f) an interview. If there is any suspicion that an application might pose a risk to a child, that application will not be employed.

**b) Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

The Privacy Act 2020 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989, (Sections 65A – 66K) allows information to be shared to keep mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi safe when abuse and neglect or suspected abuse and neglect is reported or investigated.

Under sections 15 of the Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989, any person who believes that a mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi 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.

Given the sensitivity of this information, appropriate precautions shall be taken including when using, disclosing, and storing the information (including taking care not to discuss it openly).

**c) Responding to suspected abuse or neglect**

All staff are to discuss suspicions with the Child Protection Officer.

Where a staff member has observed incidents, this should be reported directly Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police as soon as possible, then inform the Child Protection Officer who will add to the risk register.

**d) Allegations or concerns about staff**

When a staff member is suspected, the same process applies.

If there is a need to pursue an allegation as an employer, consult with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before advising the person concerned. MYT will then follow its internal processes and inform their employee that they have a right to seek legal advice and providing them with the opportunity to respond.

**e) Training, supervision and support**

MYT is committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction staff are to be made aware of the child protection policy and where to access information and training on identifying possible abuse or neglect.

### 3. Definitions

Mokopuna/tamariki/rangatahi (grandchild/child/young person)	Means a person under the age of 18 years.
Vulnerable children	As defined in the Expert Advisory Panel report “will include children who are at significant risk of harm now or into the future as a consequence of their family environment, and/or their own complex needs, and young people who have offended or may offend in the future”.
All MYT Staff	All persons employed or engaged by MYT, in both paid positions and as volunteers.

### 4. Resources and Documents

- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act 1989
- Children’s Action Plan – Safer Organisations Safe Children
- Safeguarding Children

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

**Chairperson:**



**Date: 28.01.2025**

<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>January 2025</b>
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	<b>December 2028</b>