
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Internal Strength acknowledges that the rights, welfare and safety of children are of first and paramount consideration. We believe 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, psychological abuse and neglect.
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Purpose:

Internal Strength has a commitment to:

- Recognise the rights of family/ whānau to participate in the decision making about children and voice their opinion.
- Ensure that all staff members are able to identify the sign and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy and to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and of a high quality
- Share information with other professional staff and agencies as appropriate to minimise the potential for ongoing abuse and neglect of children.
- Promote a culture where staff feel confident that they can constructively raise issues of concern about the safety of children.
- Promote awareness of child abuse, the unacceptability of child abuse, ways in which child abuse may be prevented, and the need to report cases of child abuse.

This policy is to be read in accordance with the following legislation:

- Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Health and Safety in Employment Act
- Privacy Act 1993
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

Scope:

For the purpose of this policy, the definition of 'staff' includes anyone that Internal Strength relies on to deliver its services. This includes Board members, Trustees and Volunteers. All 'staff' will undertake NZ Police Vetting Process prior to commencement of employment or placement and every two years thereafter.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this Policy a child is defined “as anyone 14 years and under”. Anyone 15 – 18 years is defined as a “Young Person”.

“Abuse” is defined in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 as:

“The harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person”

(See Appendix One: Types of abuse)

1. Staff Screening

- Internal Strength ensures that all staff working with children (voluntary) have been appropriately safety checked. Prior employment, health and criminal history will be screened to ensure no offence towards children has occurred.
- A police check will routinely be requested to ensure adequate screening is completed and this will be repeated every two years.
- Staff must undergo thorough reference checks by consultation with at least two referees.
- All visitors to Internal Strength must not be left alone with children or young people (i.e. they must be supervised at all times when working, training or visiting).

2. Training and Community Involvement

- All staff will read and have a copy of the Child Protection Policy.
- Reference to the Child Protection Policy will be made on a regular basis in meetings and training sessions, so that staff remain familiar with and up to date with the Policy statements and procedures.

3. Responding and Reporting Abuse

- Staff must be aware of the signs and behaviours that may identify abuse may have or is occurring for a child (See Appendix 2)
- If a child discloses that they have been abused, a parent/ caregiver or family member discloses the occurrence of abusive behaviour against a child in their care or if a staff member has reason to believe that abuse may have or is at immediate risk of occurring to a child, the staff member will follow the steps outlined in appendix 2.
- All visitors to Internal Strength must not be left alone with children or young people (i.e. they must be supervised at all times when working, training or visiting).

4. Allegations of Abuse Against Internal Strength Staff Member

- Any incident involving a staff member should be recorded in detail as soon as possible.
- Internal Strength will not act alone, and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to Police and Oranga Tamariki.

- The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organisation will collude to protect an adult or an organisation.
- The suspected staff member will be prevented from having further unsupervised access to children during any investigation and will be informed fully of their rights as per the Employment Contracts Act 2000.
- Should there be substantive evidence that a child abuse incident has occurred; an outside agency should be contacted by the Director of Internal Strength. Following a completed investigation, with reasonable grounds to believe a child abuse incident has occurred, the Director of Internal Strength will take all necessary steps to comply with New Zealand law.

Appendix One: Types of Abuse:

Emotional Abuse	Neglect
<p>Emotional abuse occurs when a child's emotional, psychological or social wellbeing and sense of worth is continually battered.</p> <p>It can include a pattern of criticizing, rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting and terrorizing a child. It may result from exposure to family violence or involvement in illegal or anti-social activities.</p> <p>Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms of abuse occur.</p> <p>The effects of this form of abuse are not always immediate or visible. The long-lasting effects of emotional abuse may only become evident a child becomes older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviors or symptoms.</p>	<p>Neglect is a pattern of behavior which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs.</p> <p>Neglect may be:</p> <p>Physical – failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter or warmth</p> <p>Medical – failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child</p> <p>Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision</p> <p>Refusal to assume parental responsibility – unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child</p>
Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
<p>Physical abuse can be caused from punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning, or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family and is considered abuse regardless of whether it was intended to hurt the child or not. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.</p> <p>Injuries to a child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks, major fractures of the long bones or skull, to its most extreme form, the death of a child.</p>	<p>Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviors where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose.</p> <p>While it may involve a stranger, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts.</p> <p>It includes any touching for sexual purpose, fondling of breasts, buttocks, genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, an adult exposing themselves to the child, or seeking to have a child touch them for a sexual purpose. It also includes voyeurism, photographing children inappropriately, involving the child in pornographic activities or prostitution or using the internet and phone to initiate sexual conversations with children.</p>

Appendix Two: Internal Strength Procedures for Suspected Abuse, Abuse or Lack of Safety

If you have reason to believe, evidence or suspect that a child or young person on Internal Strength programme is not receiving the care and respect that they are entitled to then you must

- Remain calm
- In the first instance believe and support the young person
- Listen attentively and reassure them
- Seek immediate medical advice if appropriate
- Document your information on file
- Discuss it with either a Senior Social Worker / General Manager immediately
- Keep the young person at the work base of Internal Strength LTD until you can follow it up

Depending on your assessment and the outcomes of the discussion with a Director/General Manager the matter/ your concerns will then either

- Be reported to Oranga Tamariki verbally and / or in writing
- Reported to the police
- Reported to a specialist provider e.g. HELP, CAMHS, Te Whare Marie, ACC, GP
- Monitored by the Director and GM with you at regular intervals
- The Director will document the outcome in a file note record

Where abuse has obviously taken place and we are sure that care and protection issues are evident Internal Strength will report it to Oranga Tamariki Abuse line (0508 326 459) and if deemed necessary, to the Police.

This is a serious issue and it is critical that all incidents or event faint feelings of discomfort that you may have are discussed and dealt with.

The rights and safety of children are of first and paramount consideration. We believe 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, psychological abuse and neglect.

Even if it seems little, follow it up!

Appendix Three: Warning Signs of Abuse and Neglect





Appendix Four: Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki

Below is link to Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern:

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/contact-us/contacts/>