

Queenstown Preschool & Nursery

Child Protection Policy

Reference and key text

*Licensing Criteria 2008.
Health & Safety HS32
Child Protection*

- HS31: a process for the prevention of child abuse and a procedure for responding to suspected child abuse. Documents are consistent with Child, Youth and Family or NZ Police guidelines

1. Rationale:

We believe children have the right to be kept safe from harm and we aim to protect all children who attend our centre from the harmful effects of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect, by teaching children about how to keep themselves safe and ensuring children's holistic needs are met.

2. Objectives

- Safe visibility in children's areas.
- Supervision of new employees.
- Appropriate personnel involved in nappy and toilet training routines.
- Staff education and professional development with a focus on All About Me.
- Parent information evenings and resources are available.
- Management will ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in regard to this policy and will ensure all members of staff have sufficient information and adequate skills to implement it.

3. Procedures

1. It is the **expectation of this centre** that no person; be they staff member, trainee, parent or visitor; shall by their act or failure to act, collude in or cause any instance of child abuse. We are committed to ensuring, to the best of our ability that every child attending our centre will receive quality education regarding keeping themselves safe through the use of 'All About Me, Tòku Àhutatanga Whànui'.
2. All staff are to attend **professional development training** relating to 'All About Me, Tòku Àhutatanga Whànui' (**when available**), to develop their understanding and knowledge of child protection. New staff will be given the All About Me manual to read so they will have an understanding of 'All About Me, Tòku Àhutatanga Whànui'.
3. At any time, if a **staff member believes abuse is present** within any child's environment, they must take this information to the Team Leader, or the Centre Manager; (or most senior staff member available); or Child, Youth and Families (CYFS); or the NZ Police. The Head or Assistant Head Teacher or Centre Manager will pass the information on as necessary to CYFS or NZ Police. No discussion of any events will take place with any persons involved with the centre until a full and fair investigation has taken place.

4. **Children's Rights**

Children have a right to feel safe.
Children have a right to our protection.
Children have a right to be heard.
Children have a right to information.
Children have a right to talk to us about anything.
Children have a right to tell secrets that worry them.
Children have a right to trust their feelings.
Children have a right to say 'no' to touch, words or behaviour that worries them.
Children have a right to be taken seriously.
Children have a right to express anger.
Children have a right to ownership of their bodies.
Children have a right to feel good about themselves.

5. When any member of **staff is responding to suspected child abuse**, they must ensure:
- Confidentiality of the child and their family and any matters relating to information regarding the abuse is maintained at all times. No case will be discussed at any time with other staff, parents or any person related to the centre. Failure of staff to comply with this policy is regarded a serious offence against the 'rules' of the centre.
 - All information regarding any suspected abuse is recorded, including the date, time, and what was said or noticed, by whom and who the information was passed on to.
 - The appropriate agency will inform parents of any suspected abuse once the information has been handed on to that agency.
 - The NZ Police will inform the 'other persons' if someone outside the family and centre environment is suspected of abuse.
 - Any persons suspected of child abuse will not be allowed on the centre premises until the investigation is complete.
 - Counselling will be available to members of staff who have been involved in working closely with any case of child abuse.
 - Management and staff will be available to work with the child and their family to ensure they feel safe in their preschool environment.
 - If it is felt that any child could be in immediate danger by staying at the centre, the Team Leader or Centre Manager, will call NZ Police immediately to have the child removed from the centre and take all reasonable steps to keep the child safe from harm.

6. **Suspected Abuse by a Member of Staff**

- The Centre Manager and Team Leader will inform a staff member of any report of suspected abuse. They will discuss the incident – all information collected will be recorded, dated and signed by all parties present.
- The Manager will advise about where they can seek appropriate legal advice and professional support.
- The staff member will be asked not to return to work (will remain on full pay) until the matter has been resolved.
- Where there is reasonable cause to believe that an instance of child abuse has occurred, the Manager, or Assistant Manager or Team Leader will contact the President of the Queenstown Preschool & Nursery committee and the NZ Police and / or CYFS for a full investigation to take place. All information concerning the complaint and the procedures taken to deal with the complaint will be documented.
- It is noted that staff can be falsely or wrongly accused of abuse. Employees who are falsely accused will be given support, time off work and counselling to overcome the incident.

7. **Personnel policies:** which include procedures for selecting suitable staff:

- Every new employee will have a Police Check (criminal record screen) before they are able to commence un-supervised duties.
- The Manager, Assistant Manager and/or Team Leader interviews all new employees.
- All students and volunteers are supervised at all times and are not able to work with children in the toilet, sleep room and nappy room areas

8. **Statements about staff supervision:**

- The children's areas are designed to ensure best possible visibility, through to the bathroom, nappy room and sleep room and within the classrooms. Our teaching team structure ensures every teaching role has another teaching role working alongside in most cases.
- Careful consideration has to be taken in the deployment of staff to ensure children are supervised at all times, and staff are at all times visible to other staff. When staff are changing young children's nappies, or bathing them, other staff should be made aware that they are carrying out these duties.
- Children are not to be taken into areas other than those specifically designated for children.
- Teachers are to ask for support when they feel uncomfortable in a situation where there are no other teachers in immediate vicinity.
- All teachers within their probationary period and volunteers must avoid entering the bathroom.
- Children cannot leave the centre without written permission from a parent/caregiver. At least two staff members must accompany any child/ren on any outing – except in an emergency or school visit. Any emergency where any child must leave the centre must be under notification of the Manager and the Team Leader. The Manager, Team Leader or Assistant Team leader must make every effort to notify the child's parents/caregiver as soon as possible.
- On all outings, every effort must be taken to prevent harm or injury to any children associated with the centre. Possible hazards must be anticipated on the outing form and any injuries or incidents that occur on any outing must be recorded in the accident folder upon return to the centre and the Team Leader notified.
- All staff must ensure only acceptable touching occurs in any situation relating to the children who attend the centre. Whilst it is appropriate to respond to a child who initiates physical contact in seeking affection, or who needs reassurance or comfort, it is not appropriate to force any form of unwanted affection or touching on a child. Touching will not be initiated to gratify adult's needs. Physical contact of children during changing or cleaning must be for the purpose of that task only and not be more than is necessary for that job.
- No person, other than recognised members of staff shall perform any changing or cleaning of any child but a parent may change their own child only and seek assistance from staff if they require help. If parents notice other children needing assistance they must advise a member of staff.
- A recognised member of staff must supervise all children's areas when children are present. All visitors, students and trainees must be supervised at all times.

9. **Professionalism**

- Staff will interact appropriately, respond quickly and provide suitable education in regard to child protection throughout the programme.

- Staff will interact with each other in an appropriate, professional, respectful and positive manner and talk only about centre related topics within the learning environments.
- Members of staff are encouraged to keep their professional and personal lives separate. Members of staff working outside Centre hours as babysitters for parents are not acting as employees of the Centre. All staff should be aware of strategies for protecting themselves from suspicion of abuse.

10. **Relationships with Parents**

- We have an 'Open Door Policy', which invites parents/whānau and caregivers into our centre as they choose to participate and observe their child's progress and interactions. We invite parents on regular outings to include them in our programme and invite them to add to our profiles and learning journeys.
- Parents/Whānau and caregivers are required to read, sign and adopt or question this policy to ensure everyone knows of their responsibilities in regard to child protection in our centre.
- Please note our complaints procedure – it is posted on the wall in the foyer outside the Preschool door.

11. **Preventative Education**

- Preventative education is provided to all staff (**when available**), and is available to parents through parent information evenings. All staff are trained by 'in house' trainers who have been specifically trained in 'All About Me, Tòku Àhuratanga Whànui' on how to keep children safe, how to teach children to keep themselves safe and how to notice, recognise and respond to suspected abuse.
- All members of staff are required to read and adopt this policy in accordance with our policy review system.
- Regular professional development is attended when available in the area of child protection.
- 'All About Me, Tòku Àhuratanga Whànui' is available to all staff to use with the children and with families/whānau and it is available for parents to view during the parent information evenings and upon request.

Relevant contact numbers:

Queenstown Police..... 4411600
 Child, Youth & Family..... 03-901 6683
 Freephone.....0508 326 459

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Written & Reviewed June 2008
 Reviewed: April 2010
 Reviewed august 2011
 Next review: October 2012