

Child Protection Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to set a clear protocol of action and a framework for our responsibilities and legal duties in relation to each child’s vulnerability and protection. This document will ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of any concern for a child’s welfare, and to support any child or young person.

This policy explains Medical and Injury’s commitment, demonstrating new ways of working to foster joint responsibility for all children/tamariki and young people/rangatahi.

Scope:

As a provider of healthcare this policy applies to:

- All of Medical and Injury (MIC) work, directly or indirectly related to children and families/whānau.
- All employees of MIC

Policy Statement:

Medical and Injury Centre is passionately committed to providing support, care and protection to our children through our pharmacies, medical centres and community health services. This commitment is based upon the understanding that most vulnerable and at-risk children may be known to, or have contact with, a healthcare provider who may be in a position to help or intervene to protect a child or young person.

Medical and Injury Centre ensures that any actions taken in respect of actual or suspected child abuse and neglect are guided by Child Protection Policy and Procedures, under section 15 of the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014. This includes sexual exploitation and help for those children and young people who are identified as vulnerable, to ensure they get help early to prevent child abuse or neglect occurring.

Our Responsibility:

Medical and Injury Centre takes responsibility for the well-being and protection of children by ensuring the organisation has the information, tools and support to be able to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of children is at the forefront of all we do and provide
- Have workable and a robust child protection policy and procedures
- Create opportunities for staff to:
 - be informed and gain understanding,

Increase knowledge, skills and confidence to implement procedures,

Create opportunities for staff to become trusted child safety contacts.

Provide child protection guidance and support to staff and patients when needed.

What we will do

- Create a Child Protection folder, which will include ongoing procedure development, education opportunities, staff and patient resources, and child protection record keeping.

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- Have a designated person for child protection
- Facilitate workplace connections with local services and agencies that support families.
- We will review this policy and any operational procedures annually, or after an incident or a sentinel event, for role modelling and supporting a quality improvement culture.
- Partner with Safeguarding Children Initiative to create a culture where care and protection of children and young people are paramount.

Principles:

For child protection to be embedded in our culture, MIC seeks to develop a learning environment and a fair and just culture, in which every individual understands what child abuse means and what their responsibilities are.

In line with this policy, MIC will:

- Provide clarity and ensure consistency on the terms used in relation to, and meanings of, child protection and neglect.
- Individuals, staff are responsible for reporting disclosures and any provision of care concerns. Giving information to others for the protection of a child is a justifiable breach of confidentiality and, where a vulnerable child is at risk of harm,

Definitions:

Child/tamariki - Individuals aged 0-14 years

Young person/rangatahi - Individuals aged 15 – 18 years

Bullying and cyberbullying [1]

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It’s usually repeated over a long period and can hurt a child/young person both physically and emotionally.

Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, and is often called cyberbullying. A child/young person can feel like there’s no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Child abuse and neglect

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

Physical abuse - Is any behaviour or action which inflicts physical harm to a child or young person, which can include unexplained bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions, unexplained fractures and dislocations, burns, fabricated illness such as Munchausen by proxy.

Sexual abuse - Is any act where an adult or a more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose. This can be direct contact or exposing children to adult materials.

Emotional Abuse - Any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and or emotional functioning

Neglect - Any act or omission that results in impaired physical/emotional functioning, injury, and/or development of a child or young person and can include:

- **Physical neglect** – not providing the necessities of life.

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- **Neglectful supervision** – leaving children alone or without someone safe looking after them.
- **Emotional neglect** – not providing the comfort, love and attention the child needs.
- **Medical neglect** – the failure to ensure their health needs are met.

Educational neglect – allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol children in school, or inattention to their special education needs.

Child protection - The activities carried out to ensure the safety of a child/tamariki and young person/rangatahi, in cases where there is abuse or neglect.

Child sexual exploitation

When people use the power, they have over young people to sexually abuse them. Their power may result from a difference in age, gender, intellect, strength, money or other resources.

Cumulative harm

Cumulative harm refers to the effects of patterns of circumstances and events in a child or young person's life, which diminishes their sense of safety, stability and well-being.

Cumulative harm is compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or layers of neglect. Constant daily impact on the child or young person can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of their life.

<https://practice.mvcot.govt.nz/policy/assessment-and-decision-making/key-information/cumulative-harm.html#null>

Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection:

It is recommended each organisation or service has someone who holds the responsibility for child protection for that organisation. The designated person (DP) takes the responsibility within their agency for ensuring child protection is a key focus, and that appropriate protocols and procedures, such as child protection policy implementation, staff training, and support is in place. This role is not a 'job' within itself but usually sits as a function of an established role.

- Being a source of advice, guidance and support for staff who may have child protection concerns.
- Ensuring the Child Protection Policy is reviewed regularly, and that staff are informed.
- Ensuring required staff have received regular child protection training, and that this is recorded.
- Ensuring practices and procedures within the organisation have a child protection lens applied.

MIC designated champion is Andrea Chapman NP.

She will oversee the maintenance and confidentiality of child protection records and documentation.

Family violence:

Family violence covers a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature, that typically involves fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation. It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family.

Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:

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- spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners).
- child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult).
- elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust).
- parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent).
- sibling abuse (violence among siblings).

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. Such behavior includes:

- Acts of physical aggression – such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating.
- Psychological abuse – such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating.
- Forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion.
- Various controlling behaviors – such as isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting their access to information or assistance.

Grooming

People who engage in grooming behaviour are in the process of preparing a child or young person for sexual abuse. Grooming behaviour involves the perpetrator manipulating a child to gain their trust and exert power over them.

Ministry for Vulnerable Children/Oranga Tamariki

Ministry dedicated to supporting any child in New Zealand whose well-being is at significant risk of harm now, or in the future.

Sexual Assault

Includes forced sexual contact without a person’s permission, sexual harassment, and inappropriate contact.

Vulnerability

Children/young persons who are at significant risk of harm to their well-being now, and into the future, as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised, and in some cases, due to their own complex needs.

References

- [1] <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>
- [2] http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/full_en.pdf
- [3] <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/abuse>
<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/file/Policy/Fact-sheets/dp-factsheet-3.pdf>
- Ministry for Vulnerable Children/ Tamariki Oranga
 Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014
 Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989

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Cross Reference

Associated documents include (but not limited to);

- Complaints Procedure
- Health Information Privacy Policy
- Incident and Feedback Management Policy and Procedure

Supporting Legislation

Childrens Act, 2014

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act, 2017

Family Violence Act, 2018

Health and Safety at Work Act (in effect from April 2016)

Human Rights Act 1993

Privacy Act, 2020

The Treaty of Waitangi, 1840

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What to do if you have concerns about a child or young person:

Go to Health Pathways (Nelson/Marlborough) and follow algorithm for *Abuse and Neglect of Children/Child or Adult Sexual Abuse*

1. If any red flags, arrange urgent admission under child health services
2. Document all observations, evaluations, and actions taken
3. If possible, abuse or neglect.
 - Manage according to risk. If:
 - High risk, notify Oranga Tamariki
 - Low risk, request community support services
 - If it is unclear if there is abuse or neglect, seek more information or advice eg:
 - Call Oranga Tamariki to speak to a social worker.
 - Seek advice from a senior colleague
 - Phone for paediatric medicine advice
 - Email the Child and Family Safety Service at CFSS@nmdhb.govt.nz for additional information
 - Explain your concerns to the caregiver (if it is safe to do so)
1. Manage any injury according to assessment
2. Consider involving support agencies if vulnerability is identified. Offer cultural support services e.g. Kaupapa Maori providers
3. If it is necessary or there is a request to share information with an agency involved in the care of the patient or family, be aware of legal requirements as per MIC privacy policy

Request:

Arrange acute paediatric medicine assessment or admission if:

- Any red flags present (as per pathway)
- Inconsistency between history and examination findings, and injury without adequate explanation or possibly inflicted
- If unsure of significance of injury, phone for paediatric medicine advice
- Notify Oranga Tamariki if:
 - High risk of neglect
 - Suspicion of inflicted injury
 - Concerned for a child and needing further advice

IF IMMEDIATE SAFETY CONCERNS, PHONE THE POLICE IN ADDITION TO ORANGA TAMARIKI

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Referring to Oranga Tamariki (OT)

ORANGA TAMARIKI WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?

If you are worried about a child or young person and they are in immediate danger call:

POLICE ON 111

Need to talk to Oranga Tamariki? Call freephone:

0508 326 459 and or complete and email a report of concern form (available on S-Drive desk top OR HARD COPY IN Child Protection yellow folder)

Lines open 24/7, email OT at contact@ot.govt.nz

After 5pm and on weekends social workers are only available for emergency situations, but we still urge you to call so we can assess your needs.

COMMUNITY HELP

WHAT'S UP

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Young people can call **0800 WHATSUP (0800 942 8787)** free from 12pm-11pm Mon-Fri, or 3pm-11pm on the weekends, 365 days of the year. This is a cool helpline just for kids and teens, where you can talk or web chat to caring people about anything that's on your mind. Web chat's open 5pm to 10pm every day. You can also visit them online:

[What's up on Facebook](#)

[What's up website](#)

YOUTHLINE

Youth line is a community organisation based in centres across New Zealand. Get in touch if you need help, are interested in learning and growing opportunities or if you want to volunteer. To speak with someone confidentially who will listen without judgement, choose which way you want to get in contact:

Phone: **0800 37 66 33**

Free text: 234

Email: talk@youthline.co.nz

Chat: between 7pm and 11pm on the [website](#)

The friendly Youthline team can also suggest how to access face to face support like mentoring, counselling and youth development programmes.

OTHER HELP LINES

Barnardos:

Contact Barnardos for family counselling.

Phone: **0800 227 627.**

[Barnardos website](#)

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Plunketline:

This is a free, 24 hour help with anything to do with parenting and children under five.

Phone: **0800 933 922.**

[Plunket website](#)

Parent Help:

This is a great place to get parent and family support.

Phone: **0800 568 856.**

[Parent Help website](#)

The Family Services Directory:

This is a user-friendly wealth of information about all the services available to children, young people, families and whānau.

[Family Services Directory website](#)

Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC):This website has a range of information about the Child Rights Line and other services for children such as Lifeline, Suicide Crisis Helpline, Kidslines and Youthline. A good place to go if you can't find the type of help you're looking for above.

[Office of the Children's Commissioner website](#)

VOYCE - WHAKARONGO MAI

If you're a young person or child in care and would like to connect with others who have had similar experiences, you should check us out at VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai.

A big part of what we do is organise fun and engaging events for people with care experience. We're an independent connection and advocacy service, separate from the Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children, and we're here to support you and be 100% on your side.

[VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai](#)

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