

Boost Your Learning Child Protection Policy 2022 DRAFT January 2022



Statement of Commitment: Boost Your Learning is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of children and their families for whom it provides a service to. We are committed to always acting in the best interest of the children.

Principles:

- Boost Your Learning is committed to dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse/ or neglect and the vulnerability of children.
- Boost Your Learning recognises that staff play an important role in the prevention, detection and reporting of suspected child abuse. We therefore have a commitment to ensure that all staff (employees and subcontractors) can identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- Boost Your Learning will ensure any disclosures about alleged abuse are acknowledged and appropriate action taken to ensure the safety of children who make disclosures.
- Boost Your Learning is committed to promoting a culture where staff feel confident that they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- Boost Your Learning supports the roles of the New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected/alleged abuse to these agencies.

This policy has been written in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Scope

This policy applies to all children and young persons who are attending Boost Your Learning and to those who staff come into contact with during their work with Boost Your Learning (for example, siblings). It applies to all staff (directors, employees, subcontractors).

Definitions

The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse and these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a checklist.

• Staff

Refers to any person conducting work for Boost Your Learning. This includes the director/s, employees, contractors and subcontractors.

• Child

Refers to any young person (under the age of 18) who is engaged in a service relationship with Boost Your Learning.

• Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting,

poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

- Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others, such as exposure to family/whanau or intimate partner violence.

- Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours. Staff should be aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming of a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

- Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: of action, emotion or basic needs.

These definitions are sourced from Child Matters

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/239/childprotection-policy/section-2-child-protection-policy/definition-of-child-abuse> Please refer How Can I Tell? published by Child Matters for further information.

Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

When a staff member is concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect they must report this to their director/ contract manager or general director.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Director has overall responsibility to ensure all Boost Your Learning staff follow the Child Protection policy.
- The Director is the 'Designated Person for Child Protection' at Boost Your Learning. The role of the Designated Person for Child Protection is to:
 - o Ensure the needs and rights of children come first, i.e. the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount
 - o Ensure clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection cases. These must contain all available information relating to the cause for concern and any subsequent action taken, including when it has been decided not to make a notification to Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police.
 - o Establish and maintain close links with relevant local agencies.
 - o Ensure that all staff are supported appropriately when dealing with child protection concerns.
 - o Maintain a current awareness of children identified by kindergartens/schools as at risk.

- The Director has a responsibility to support and foster a culture of child protection within their staff. They will ensure all staff are familiar with the Child Protection policy and reporting procedures. Directors have a responsibility to ensure that any concerns are shared and if after consultation with their other Directors the appropriate authority is notified.
- All staff have a responsibility to understand the Child Protection policy and procedures for reporting concerns. All staff have a responsibility to raise any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse and neglect, with their Director.

Access and availability

- The Child Protection policy will be provided to all staff.
- The Child Protection policy will be available on the Boost Your Learning website.
- All new parents/guardians will be informed of the policy (via Terms and Conditions).

Safe Working Practices

It is expected that staff behave in a professional manner at all times. Behaviour must be in accordance with the 'Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession (New Zealand Education Council, 2017). Failure to adhere to these standards will result in disciplinary action.

- Any person who requests to talk to staff 'in confidence' must be cautioned that if the information shared discloses the likelihood of a child having been or potential to be abused, they are obligated to report this information to Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- When staff are working with students in person where practicable the door is to remain open and curtains/ blinds open.
- When staff are working online they are to record their sessions and store in their personal storage for 1 month.
- Staff are required to complete a 'Post-session Report' and share it with the Director at the end of every working day- any concerns for the welfare of students must be reported.
- Staff can contact external agencies such as Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children or NZ Police, if they believe any parent/caregiver is affected by alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on the person's functioning behaviour, and ability to care for their child/ren. Contact and inform the Director immediately.
- Young people can only be picked up by those designated on the 'student's enrolment form', unless prior consent has been given by the parent/s.

Safe recruitment of Staff:

- All appointments will include safety checks as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- All staff will be informed about the Child Protection policy as part of their induction and review.
- Boost Your Learning recognises the added stress to staff when involved in child protection issues, and will ensure support is available.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Privacy Act 1993, and the Oranga Tamariki (Children, Young Persons and Their Families) Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or

suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Provided a report is made in good faith, no civil or criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against staff.

- Information sharing will be restricted to those who have a need to know, to protect children.
- Staff may be asked to provide information to Oranga Tamariki, the Police, Court or Lawyers, and Psychologists.
- Information provided will be kept as factual as possible, and nothing will be recorded as fact without evidence to back it up.

Responding and Reporting

If there is a concern that a child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, from abuse or neglect, these steps must be followed in all circumstances:

1. Staff must record concern on 'End of Session Report' and be available to discuss concerns with the Director. No decisions or actions are to be made in isolation.
2. Staff must maintain appropriate confidentiality at all times.
3. Staff will not act alone. As concerns arise, statutory agencies, of Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police will be contacted, when necessary, to discuss appropriate next steps when responding to suspected situations of child abuse and that critical information is not held back when a report to the statutory agency is made.
4. Staff are reminded that any disclosure about either a child or adult having either witnessed abuse or been abused themselves (intimate partner violence), that you are obligated to report this information following this procedure to the Police or Oranga Tamariki.

How to Respond:

If disclosure of abuse or neglect is made or is suspected

1. Listen to the child/ adult disclosing
2. Reassure the child/ adult
3. Do not interview the child.
4. Do not make promises that can't be kept.

RECORD: As soon as possible formally record the disclosure or concern ('Report of Concern' form) Include word for word, what was said; the date, time, location and the names of any staff that may be relevant; the factual concerns or observations that have led to the suspicion of abuse or neglect (e.g. any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns).

CONSULT/ DECISION MAKING: Consult with the Director before making any decisions. Consult with outside agencies as required: e.g. Public Health Nurse, Strengthening Families. Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 4459 can be contacted for advice without reporting a concern. No decisions are to be made in isolation.

REPORT / NOTIFYING AUTHORITIES: Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. Email through completed 'Report of Concern' form to: contact@mvcot.govt.nz. Follow up with a phone call to the National Contact Centre: 0508 Family (0508 326 459) to check it has been received. Continue to monitor and record any concerns and follow the process again. Remember that reporting once does not stop this process, staff must remain alert for child protection concerns. If the child is visibly distressed: Provide appropriate reassurance, i.e. 'Thank you for telling me, it's not okay that happened to you' and re-engage in appropriate activities.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Authorised by:

Date:

Review date:

