

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY - SOUTH ALIVE**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide board, staff, and volunteers direction and guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

In particular our role is:

1. to protect children,
2. to show our commitment to children,
3. to provide guidance to staff in the event of suspected abuse,
4. to ensure public confidence in the safe practices of the organisation, and reassure parents, whanau and the community,
5. to provide consistency of actions,
6. to avoid allegations of abuse and to protect and support staff in the event that one is made,
7. to provide accountability and meet government legislation and other requirements.

### **2. SCOPE**

This policy covers all staff, whether paid or voluntary, who have direct or indirect contact with children or young persons.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

Under the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014, ‘child’ means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years, and ‘young person’ means a boy or girl of or over the age of 14 years but under 17 years of age.

Child abuse is defined as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.”

[Refer to definition indicators]

‘Staff’ means people working for South Alive and includes employees, contractors, board members and volunteers whether working on a full time, part time, casual or temporary basis.

The ‘Designated Person for Child Protection’ is the Board Chair.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

South Alive is committed to the protection and wellbeing of children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.

This policy has the clear intent to:

- outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide,
- define child abuse,
- outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of abuse or ill treatment is known or suspected,
- establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff,
- explore the implications for staff training.

South Alive will ensure that:

- staff are carefully selected with the principles of this policy in mind,
- staff are aware of this policy and accompanying procedures and / or guidelines.

All services provided by South Alive for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by the Treaty of Waitangi.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff are responsible for the safety and well being of children or young person.

Any member of staff may directly witness child abuse or have allegations made by a child or an adult, reported to them. When reporting an actual or alleged incident, staff should record known facts or observations in writing with time and date, and what was said and by whom.

It is the responsibility of staff to be aware of and have knowledge of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations directly and immediately to the Designated Person (or if unavailable, with the Board Chair) who will then contact external agencies if appropriate.

Staff are not to investigate concerns of abuse directly.

The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse resides solely with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.

The role of the Designated Person for Child Protection is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount. If a child is at immediate risk of harm then the Police should be notified,

- complete a report of concern, when deemed necessary, with Oranga Tamariki and / or the Police,
- keep and safeguard records on all child protection cases,
- check that staff are supported appropriately when dealing with child protection concerns,
- consult with the Board Chair regarding all child protection concerns.

## 6. SAFE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND WORKING PRACTICES OF STAFF

A clear and consistent approach will be taken when employing and training staff and volunteers who will work with children.

Workforce safety checks will be undertaken when prospective employees or volunteers are recruited for roles that will involve interaction with children.

This will include - proof of identity, interviewing, reference / good character checks, police vetting, and assessment of any risk that prior convictions may have.

All employment appointments to positions that have direct and/or frequent contact with children or young people will be conditional on a satisfactory Police vetting check.

Staff will receive child protection training at the level appropriate to their role, but will (as part of their induction) include the basic awareness of child protection, signs and indicators of abuse and reporting procedures.

Staff will sign their acceptance of these responsibilities as part of the South Alive Code of Conduct.

Volunteers under the age of 18 years will be assessed as to their suitability and character. This may be done by contacting their current school, referees, or ensuring that they are not in any situation where they may be alone with children.

In the case that outside providers may be contracted by South Alive for any programmes that involve children or young people, an agreement will be required to ensure that the organisation providing the services takes responsibility for their staff conduct and safety to meet the Child Protection expectations.

Confidentiality is important when dealing with sensitive information that may affect vulnerable children and/or staff privacy. Giving information to protect children and young people better is not a breach of privacy as per Principle 11 of the Privacy Act

which states “disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat.” However such information should not be shared with members of the public to ensure that an appropriate resolution is reached. Confidential and sensitive information that is reported will be only available to the South Alive Board and the designated Staff Member and will be dealt with ‘in committee.’

## **7. STAFF COMPLAINTS OR ALLEGATIONS**

Allegations of complaints of abuse against staff must be taken seriously and reported to the Designated Person or the Board Chair who will deal with these sensitively and expediently within the procedures of this policy and will decide if a notification to Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police is appropriate.

## **8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS THERETO**

Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014

Privacy Act 1993

Employment Relations Act 2000

## **9. INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

As per sample attached Identification of Abuse and Neglect. This policy will be reviewed and updated in line with any changes in legislation and associated policies and as part of the South Alive review schedule.

## **10. ASSOCIATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

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<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>August 2019</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>August 2025</b>

## REPORT OF CONCERN

**Note:** If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation contact Police by dialling 111.

A Report of Concern is the term used by Oranga Tamariki and the Police for the information you provide. This information listed may make it easier for Oranga Tamariki or the Police to identify the child / young person or concerning adult and for them to understand your concerns.

Name of the child	Date of birth (if known) or approx age
Address of child / whanau (if known)	Contact phone number (if known)
Name of the adult you are concerned about and how connected to child	School / Service / Programme attending
What are you concerned about?	
What have you seen or heard?	
Who was present when you noticed something	

When did it happen?

What did the person say or do that concerned you?

What have you already done to safeguard / protect the child?

Who else is aware of your concerns or shares your concerns?

A Report of Concern can also be made by calling 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)  
Email address for sending written report - [contact@ot.govt.nz](mailto:contact@ot.govt.nz)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title / relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number and organisation \_\_\_\_\_

*For a more comprehensive report please refer to the Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children website*

## **IDENTIFICATION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

All staff must be able to clearly identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and have the confidence to take the appropriate action. These definitions provide some indicators of abuse and these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a checklist.

### **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 effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or also the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

### **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 source from 'How Can I Tell' published by Child Matters*