

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY

Purpose	<p>Children have the right to be protected at all times from abuse of any type including physical, verbal, sexual, neglect and emotional.</p> <p>All Central Kids employees have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in their care and a commitment to the prevention of child abuse, neglect and the protection of all children.</p>
Explanation	<p>Child-centred decision-making informs action, recognising the vulnerability of children.</p> <p>Professional behaviour is the standard for all employees to ensure that children are kept safe.</p> <p>Employees actions and interactions will comply with New Zealand law and support external agencies e.g. Oranga Tamariki policy and procedures.</p> <p>Central Kids support a culture of employees constructively challenging poor practice in which employees feel confident they can raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.</p> <p>Provision of a safe environment, free from physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse is the responsibility of all employees within Central Kids services.</p> <p>The safety and wellbeing of the child is the top priority when investigating suspected or alleged abuse. Central Kids employees recognise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of early intervention. • the principle of applying the least intrusive intervention necessary to protect children. • the importance of concerns about the safety of children being taken seriously and responded to quickly. <p>Families/whānau shall be supported to protect their children.</p> <p>Employees will be inducted and trained in child protection policies and processes.</p> <p>Employees will be supported through any involvement in child protection process.</p> <p>There are clear policies and procedures in place that are accessible to employees, along with sources of advice on best practice.</p> <p>Employees understand safe practice. For example, when and how to touch children and what is expected of them when they are alone with a child.</p> <p>Employees understand the importance of working together with professionals from other agencies, to better address the needs of children.</p> <p>Best practice, safer recruitment procedures are implemented.</p> <p>Central Kids will work towards continuous improvement in their child protection practices.</p>
Scope	<p>This policy applies to Central Kids employees, volunteers, unpaid workers undertaking educational or vocational training courses, itinerant teachers, contractors, parents, visitors</p>

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Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interests and protection of the child is paramount in all actions relating to this policy. • The rights of the family/whānau to participate in the decision-making about their children shall be recognised. • Central Kids has a commitment to ensure that employees are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response. • Central Kids has a commitment to support employees to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are consistent and high quality. • The relevant legislative responsibilities shall be complied with, policies and procedures shall be updated when necessary. • Information regarding any concerns about an individual child shall be shared by close of day with relevant colleagues such as the Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki/Education Leader and/or the Chief Operating Officer or designated child protection person. • Central Kids has a commitment to promote a culture where employees feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice of employees, or other agency employees working with children in Central Kids services, and/or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal. • This policy shall be included for discussion within each initial employee induction programme. • Kaiwhakaako are responsible for ensuring the employees at their service understand and adhere to this policy. Kaiwhakaako are responsible for ensuring employees within their service have undertaken the appropriate training associated with this policy. <p>Confidentiality and Information Sharing</p> <p>The Privacy Act 2020 and the Children, Young Persons, Well-Being Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of this Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived, may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.</p> <p>Potential indicators</p> <p>Indicators are signs or symptoms that, when found either on their own or in various combinations, may indicate possible abuse, family violence or neglect. In many cases, indicators are found in combinations or clusters.</p> <p>All employees who work with children shall become familiar with the potential indicators of abuse.</p>
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Emotional Abuse		
<p>Indicators of Emotional Abuse: There may be physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause • Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains) • Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea • Not attaining significant developmental milestones • Dressing differently from other children in the family • Being deprived of satisfactory physical living conditions compared with other children in the family 	<p>There may also be indicators in a child’s behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffers from severe developmental gaps • Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression • Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse • Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean • Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play • When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home 	<p>There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly calls the child names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child • Continually threatens the child with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one • Has unrealistic expectations of the child • Involves the child in “adult issues”, such as separation or access issues • Keeps the child at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent
Neglect		
<p>Indicators of Neglect: There may be physical indicators that a child is being neglected. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate dress for the weather • Extremely dirty or unbathed • Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time • Malnourished 	<p>There may also be indicators in a child’s behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults • Poor school attendance or school performance • Poor social skills • May steal food • Is very demanding of affection or attention 	<p>There may also be indicators in an adult’s behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to provide for the child’s basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care • Fails to enrol a child in school or permits truancy

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no understanding of basic hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves the child home alone Is overwhelmed with own needs and puts own needs ahead of child's needs
Physical Abuse			
	<p>Indicators of Physical Abuse: There may be physical indicators that a child is being abused. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions Unexplained burns Unexplained fractures or disclosures 	<p>There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is wary of adults or of a particular individual Is violent to animals or other children Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations 	<p>There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child Shakes an infant Threats or attempts to injure a child Is aggressive towards a child in front of others May delay in seeking medical attention for a child
Indicators of Sexual Abuse			
	<p>There may be physical indicators that a child is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torn, stained or bloody underclothing Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area Blood in urine or faeces Sexually transmitted disease 	<p>There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this in young children are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self or others Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge Comments such as "I've got a secret", or "I don't like Uncle" 	<p>There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be unusually over-protective of a child Is jealous of a child's relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child May favour the victim over other children Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child which appears

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire lighting by boys • Fear of certain places e.g.: bedroom or bathroom <p>Some examples of this in older children are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating disorders • Promiscuity or prostitution • Uses younger children in sexual acts • Tries to make self as unattractive as possible 	<p>sexual in nature or has sexual overtones</p>
<p>More details and examples of indicators of sexual abuse are available in the book 'How Can I Tell?' (Child Matters)</p> <p>Safe Working Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees shall be aware of the need to avoid being alone with a child or children in secluded areas of the service. • Employees shall not change a child's clothing or bathe a child in a closed area. If it is necessary to do so, in the interest of the child's right to privacy, another adult shall be made aware of this necessity and shall check the area at regular intervals. • Parents/caregivers/whanau shall be advised whenever a child has had to be bathed or changed. • If it is necessary for a child to be withdrawn by an adult for their own safety or the safety of others, or because the child is upset or unsettled, the employee involved must ensure that the child is withdrawn to an open place where both employee and child are visible at all times. At no time shall a child be withdrawn into a closed space/secluded area. • Any employee who is concerned about the behaviour of another employee, or any other person, within the service in relation to the handling of a child or children, shall contact the Kaiwhakaako or a Kaiarataki or the Education Leader for advice on how to proceed. • Employees should be aware of the possibility of being called upon to justify any instance when they touch a child. • Physical contact is necessary when working with babies, toddlers and young children. However, employees should be aware that all physical touch should be in response to a child's needs at the time and should be developmentally appropriate and respectful of culture, background and ethnicity. • Touching should never be initiated to gratify the adult's needs. • It is not appropriate to persist with physical demonstrations of warmth or affection if the child shows that these are not wanted. 			

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- All practicable steps shall be taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, or an explicitly sexual or violent nature). Inappropriate material comes in many forms e.g. websites, magazines, cards and song lyrics. Each service team should discuss and agree to how this is managed at their kindergarten/centre (refer to Annual Plan Workbook).
- No person on the premises shall use, or be under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning. Visitors, volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by employees. Each service team should discuss and agree to how this is managed at their service (refer to Annual Plan Workbook).
- Employees must ensure that any Central Kids policy relating to the issue of child abuse is strictly adhered to.

Recruitment and Employment:

All personnel employed or engaged by Central Kids are safety checked prior to being employed and then every three years after in accordance with the Children's Act 2014. (GMA7A) If there is any suspicion that an applicant may pose a risk to a child, that applicant shall not be employed or continue to be employed.

Safety Checking includes:

- Identity confirmation
- Information about previous criminal convictions (commonly called Police Vet)
- A chronological summary of work history if any for the preceding 5 years
- The name of any professional organisation the person is a current member of
- Any licensing authority (e.g. teachers practicing certificate) and evidence
- The name of at least 1 referee not related to the person (or part of their extended family)
- Face-to face interview including questions related to the persons history with children
- Contact with at least one referee to request information relevant to the persons suitability and history with children

Central Kids can rely on the Police vet undertaken by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa, as part of a teacher's registration and practising certificate process, to fulfil the Police vetting component of the safety check. Where there is any concerns the People and Culture Leader will consult with the Chief Operating Officer before any offer of employment is made.

Using the information gathered from Safety Checking, People and Culture and/or the Kaiarataki will conduct a risk assessment of the persons suitability to be employed as a person of trust working with children.

Training, Supervision and Support:

Training, resources and/or advice shall be made available to ensure that all employees are competent to carry out their roles in terms of this policy.

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- On induction the employee's leader will go through the contents of this policy with the employee. A copy of this induction record will be sent to HR Support within a week of the employee starting their role.
- Employees work training records will reflect their initial induction and subsequent refreshers.
- The services professional learning and development budget will include provision for employees to receive training to ensure that they are able to respond to the needs of children accessing the service, including understanding the signs and symptoms of potential abuse or neglect, cultural frameworks for working with children and their families/whānau and responding appropriately.
- The Kaiwhakaako will have child protection training every two years. A record of this training and the date it was completed will be logged in Discover and Peoples Inc by contacting HRSupport@centralkids.org.nz with this information on receipt of this information.
- The Protection of Children Policy, in its entirety will be reviewed quarterly. Focussing on indicators pages 2-5 and procedures pages 10-15.
- Training may be online may be on-line or in person. Child Matters and Safeguarding Children are preferred providers. Child Matters and Safeguarding Children are registered charitable trusts that provide training, guidance, advice, education and support to protect children.
- A record of this training and the date it was completed will be logged in the employees file on Discover by contacting HRSupport@centralkids.org.nz with this information.
- To ensure that employees who work with children remain conversant with and periodically reflect on the contents of this policy and procedures all teams shall participate in child protection discussions each quarter. A record of these discussions are kept in the Annual Plan Workbook.
- Service teams shall delegate at least one employee to be the child protection advocate – this person should have had child protection training in the last 24 months (each year another person should be selected to take this role).
- Teams shall discuss strategies to implement, should a person enter the premises who is not authorised to have contact with a child.
- To support employees to identify, evaluate and respond to sexual behaviours that may be of concern a printed copy of 'Sexual Behaviours in Children and Adolescents' will be readily available for employees to refer to. This can be downloaded from Central Kids intranet.
- Oranga Tamariki has developed the Working Together guide on inter-agency working to identify and respond to potential abuse and neglect. The Kaiwhakaako shall ensure teachers are familiar with this guide.
- Should employees require support following the involvement in any disturbing child protection matter, Central Kids will arrange appropriate care such as counselling.

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	<p>Non-Employees</p> <p>Central Kids have formed an agreement with other organisations conducting a safety check on our behalf by completing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or similar as well as an identity check and risk assessment e.g. students on practicum or relieving teacher agency.</p> <p>Central Kids will request confirmation (orally or in writing) of the safety checking status of children’s workers employed by other organisations who are hosted at our kindergartens/centre (such as public health nurses or dental therapists) from those organisations.</p>
Definitions	<p>Child: A child is anyone below the age of 18 years. Ref: Children’s Act 2014</p> <p>Child abuse includes family violence, physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child. This includes actual, potential and suspected abuse.</p> <p>Physical abuse: any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person.</p> <p>Sexual abuse: any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including child sexual exploitation, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.</p> <p>Emotional abuse: any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development.</p> <p>Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychology needs.</p> <p>A closed or secluded space: any area which another adult has restricted visual access.</p>
References	
Standards	<p>Ngā Tikanga Matatika - Code of Professional Responsibility for the Teaching Profession</p> <p>Children’s Act 2014</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki Act 1989; Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act 1989</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki Act 1989; Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act 1989 Section 17 VCA Practical Guide</p> <p>Disclosure of health information</p> <p>Early Childhood Regulations Section 56</p> <p>Licensing Criteria for Centre-Based ECE Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS27 • HS31 • HS32 • HS33 • HS34 • HS56 • GMA7a <p>Safer organisation safer children</p> <p>How can I tell?</p> <p>Sexual Abuse Education</p> <p>Privacy Act 2020</p>

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Service Documents	<p>Appointments</p> <p>Appointments of Relievers</p> <p>Annual Plan Workbook</p> <p>Changing children procedure</p> <p>Childhood Sexualised Behaviours – Traffic Lights</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p> <p>Complaints</p> <p>Custodial Issues</p> <p>Hazard Risk Register</p> <p>Incident Form</p> <p>Induction Checklist</p> <p>Information and Communication Technology</p> <p>Fairness & Disciplinary</p> <p>Health & safety</p> <p>Supervision Plan</p> <p>Trauma policy</p> <p>Use of Kindergarten/Centre</p> <p>Work training records</p>
Policy Review	<p>Central Kids may amend and vary its policies from time to time at Central Kids discretion and employees are required to observe such policies.</p>

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Procedures

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT:

If an employee has a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing they will, in all instances, report this to their Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki. This will be done at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child. The exception to this is when the concern is around the practice or behaviour of the Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki in relation to a child's safety or wellbeing and the employee feels unable to raise the issue with that person. In this case the employee will discuss the matter with a Kaiarataki or the Education Leader (Kaitiaki Ako Torowhānui).

The severity of the suspected abuse or neglect is not up to the employee or Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki to determine. The Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki has the ultimate responsibility to ensure appropriate authorities are notified. Each situation needs to be taken on its own unique circumstances when deciding how to proceed.

In consultation with their Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki, employees should always respond if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child, regardless of who may be involved, as follows:

- i. **Contact the Police** immediately if a child is in immediate danger. The primary response must be to ensure the safety of the child.
- ii. **Contact Oranga Tamariki** to discuss appropriate steps where:
 - a) A child has disclosed abuse or neglect (see table below)
 - b) Abuse or neglect of a child has been disclosed by the person responsible
 - c) An employee has observed abuse or neglect, or suspects abuse or neglect on the basis of their own observations
 - d) A third party has told an employee of known child abuse or neglect, or of their suspicions of possible child abuse or neglect
 - e) There is child on child sexualised behaviour that is not considered 'normal' (refer to the Sexual Behaviours document – green is normal, orange and red are not). Explicit sexual acts are deemed 'red'
- iii. When an 'Outside Agency' has been informed the Chief Operating Officer will be informed. A record of this notification shall be taken.
- iv. Where there is an incident involving tamariki at the service whānau should be informed immediately both verbally and in writing (use the Incident Form). Additional information following conversations with whānau shall be recorded and kept with the Incident Form. Should the Kaiwhakaako believe that this will put the child at more risk advice will be sort directly from Oranga Tamariki by the Kaiwhakaako or Kaiarataki. A record of this advice shall be recorded (date, time and person spoken to)
- v. **Contact local family/whānau social service providers** (such as Whānau Ora or Strengthening Families) where the concern is more of a general, wellbeing related concern and not specifically about abuse or neglect. The services available in each community will vary and may include a range of government and non-government providers who will be able to help the child and their family/whānau. Each Ministry of Education office will have a readily accessible and up to date list of contact details of local social service providers.

Kaiako and support staff have a responsibility to discuss any child protection or wellbeing concerns with their leader before contacting Oranga Tamariki in relation to any of the above. An exception to this should the child be in immediate danger.

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Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki have a responsibility to ensure that the appropriate authority is notified when an employee informs them that a child has been, or is likely to be, or is suspected of being, abused or neglected. This extends to ensuring that all known information about the child, young person, and their siblings and family/whānau, is shared in full with the appropriate authority, to determine the most appropriate response.

Where a **third party** has advised of the abuse, that person should be encouraged to report the information to Oranga Tamariki. The employee should ensure that this is done by following up with Oranga Tamariki.

Allegations or concerns about Central Kids employees specifically

As an employer, Central Kids has a dual responsibility to the child and the employee. The decision to follow up on an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against an employee should be made by the Chief Operating Office and/or People and Culture Manager in consultation with The Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, the Police, and if relevant the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, to ensure that any actions taken do not undermine any investigations being conducted, or to be conducted, by the external agencies.

If Central Kids has reasonable grounds to believe that a person employed or engaged in the service, or any other person has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children; or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter or protection then that person will be excluded from coming into contact with the children participating in the service, Central Kids will:

- ensure that the person is excluded from the service and does not enter or remain in any premises where the service is provided while an investigation takes place.
- recommend that the suspected abuser seeks support from their union or lawyer.
- ensure records are kept in regards to the complaint or complaints and or allegations and follow-up action is taken and documented.
- seek legal employment advice where appropriate.

An investigation will be conducted following the protocols of the Serious Incident Policy. The protocols of the Fairness & Discipline Policy will be adhered to.

Where there is an allegation pertaining actions of an employee or there is an incident where the care and protection of tamariki is compromised the Chief Operating Officer will inform the local MOE office and Teaching Council (certificated teacher actions) of the situation and ensure each organisation is kept informed of the situation. (HS34)

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RESPONDING TO A CHILD WHEN THE CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE:

Listen to the child	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with care, including an awareness of the child’s cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language. Tell the child that “you believe what they are saying/showing you”. It is important to allow time when a child discloses and show compassion and empathy – that the adult really cares about what the child is telling them.
Reassure the child	Let the child know that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing. While reassuring the child it is important that you do not agree ‘not to tell anyone’.
Ask open ended prompts, e.g. “What happened next?”	Do not interview the child (do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue).
If the child is visibly distressed	Provide appropriate reassurance and engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
If the child is not in immediate danger	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
As soon as possible formally record the disclosure	Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word for word, what the child said. • The date, time and who was present.

RECORDING AND NOTIFYING CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT:

What process to follow	For example	Key considerations
Recording	Formally record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything said by the child. • 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). • The action taken by Central Kids. • Any other information that may be relevant 	Relevant information can inform any future actions.
Decision- making	Discuss any concern with the Kaiwhakaako/Kaiarataki	No decisions should be made in isolation
Notifying authorities	Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a suspicion that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. A phone call to the National Contact Centre is the preferred initial contact with Oranga Tamariki (see below) as	Oranga Tamariki will: Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers, in consultation with our organisation.

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	<p>this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options.</p> <p>Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459) Email: contact@ot.govt.nz</p>	<p>Advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police.</p>
Following the advice of Oranga Tamariki	<p>Oranga Tamariki advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police.</p>	<p>Oranga Tamariki is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether Central Kids needs to work with the family/whānau or put them in touch with people in their community who can help.</p>
Storing relevant information	<p>Securely store: The record of the concern.</p> <p>A record of any related discussions (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of any advice received • The action Central Kids took, including any rationale. • This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident). 	<p>Records assist in identifying patterns.</p>

Sexual development and sexual play are natural and healthy in children. (Eric Hollis)

Knowing how to identify and respond to sexual behaviours in children and adolescents helps adults to support the development of healthy sexuality and protect young people from harm or abuse.

Sexual behaviour may be expressed in a variety of ways including language; touch; exploring one's own body or another's; sexual activity; games and interactions.

When children or adolescents display sexual behaviour that increases their vulnerability or causes harm to another, adults have a responsibility to take action to provide support and protection.

Adults who care for these young people have a duty of care to provide relevant information and support.

By following steps 1, 2 and 3 adults can learn to identify, assess and respond to sexual behaviour in children and adolescents.

Reference: 'Sexual Behaviours in Children and Adolescents'

1. IDENTIFY: What is the behaviour? Green, Orange or Red?

Sexual development is influenced by many factors.

When using the traffic lights framework to categorise behaviour, it is necessary to consider the current social, cultural and familial context.

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The table in 'Sexual Behaviours in Children and Adolescents' on the centrefold lists specific examples of red, orange and green light behaviours at various ages. Note that these are examples only and must be considered in context.

Use the traffic lights framework to identify the appropriateness of the behaviour and then follow steps 2 and 3 to evaluate and respond.

All green, orange and red behaviours require some level of attention and support.

Sexual behaviours that are outside what is considered 'normal' – behaviour that is excessive, secretive, explicit, compulsive, coercive or degrading indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

Sexual behaviours that are outside 'normal' behaviour in terms of persistence, frequency or inequality in age or developmental abilities signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

Sexual behaviours that are 'normal', considered healthy – spontaneous, curious, light hearted, easily distracted, experimentation and equality of age, size and ability levels provide opportunities to give the child or adolescent positive feedback and information.

2. EVALUATE: What is the behaviour communicating?

All behaviour communicates.

When children or adolescents do not have the language, experience or ability to seek help, adults must look carefully at their behaviour to find out what they need.

When sexual behaviours are identified as inappropriate or offending, adults must think about why the young person is exhibiting the behaviour.

Understanding the child and the issues that may be contributing to the behaviour, guides the planning of effective responses.

3. RESPOND: What can be done to address the child's needs?

All behaviour has a function.

When adults understand why the behaviour may be occurring, they can respond by helping to meet the needs of children and adolescents in more appropriate ways.

Behaviour usually reflects a range of needs. Many strategies may be required to respond to these needs.

It is also important to address the needs of the people who have an impact on the lives of children or adolescents, e.g. family, carers, teachers and support workers.

What action should adults take?

All green, orange and red-light behaviours require some form of attention and response.

It is the level of intervention that will vary. Form agreements with the team on how you will deal with sexual behaviour.

Green light behaviours may be opportunities to provide positive feedback and information which supports healthy sexuality.

Orange and red light behaviours may require observation, documentation, education, reporting, increased supervision, therapy and/or a legal response.

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How serious is the behaviour?

When sexual behaviour raises concern or involves harm to others, the behaviour is serious. Thinking about the context in which the behaviour occurs helps to establish the seriousness of the behaviour.

If sexual behaviour is observed

1. Redirect children to other areas of play following team protocols
2. Inform the person responsible immediately
3. Inform parents/caregivers (verbally and in writing – Incident Form) – provide a copy of Sexual Behaviours in Children and Adolescents and Childhood Sexual Behaviours to the whānau.
Should the Kaiwhakaako believe that this will put the child at more risk advice on how to proceed will be sought directly from Oranga Tamariki by the Kaiwhakaako or Kaiarataki. A record of this advice shall be recorded (date, time and person spoken to). Include in this record why the decision was made not to inform whānau.
4. Work with the parents/caregivers to form an agreement on how you will work together to respond to this behaviour
5. Forward a copy of the Incident Form to the Kaiarataki

PROTOCOLS TO FOLLOW WHEN INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FROM KINDERGARTENS/CENTRES BY EXTERNAL AGENCIES:

These include but are not limited to Oranga Tamariki, lawyers, Psychologists, NZ Police.

1. Should an employee receive a request for information about a child from an external agency the request shall be immediately forwarded to the Executive Assistant.
2. The Executive Assistant will request information from the Kaiwhakaako.
3. The Kaiwhakaako will provide written Information to the Executive Assistant within the time specified in the request for information.
4. The Executive Assistant will collate the information and prepare a response on Central Kids letterhead. This will then be reviewed and approved by the Chief Operating Office or Education Leader (or a delegated person - Kaiarataki or CEO).
5. The letter and any supporting documentation shall then be e-mailed to relevant agency.
6. The electronic copy is filed securely at Head Office. No copies are to be retained at the service, all requests for information sent to the service shall be destroyed once forwarded to the Head Office.