

Policy

Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Kaweka Hospital's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children. It ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities in identifying and responding to concerns about child abuse or neglect.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and any other individuals working within or on behalf of Kaweka Hospital.

3. Policy Statement

This policy aligns with:

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Oranga Tamariki Legislation Act 2019)
- Health and Disability Services Standards NZS 8134:2021
- Privacy Act 2020

4. Definitions

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years, as per New Zealand law

Abuse: Any form of physical, emotional, sexual harm, or neglect that could cause or has caused significant harm to a child. This includes:

- Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental act that results in physical injury.
- Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional ill-treatment that can affect a child's emotional development.
- Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not.
- Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, and psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.

Harm: Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being.

5. Recognizing Abuse and Neglect

Physical:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or lacerations.
- Injuries in various stages of healing or repeated injuries.
- Fearfulness or wariness around adults, reluctance to explain injuries or reluctance to go home.

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- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour.

Emotional Abuse:

- Low self-esteem, excessive withdrawal, or aggression.
- Developmental delays or difficulty forming relationships.
- Extreme attention-seeking or disruptive behaviour.

Sexual Abuse:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour.
- Unexplained pain, bleeding, infection, or discomfort in genital areas.
- Fear of certain places, people, or activities.

Indicators of Neglect:

- Consistently dirty or malnourished.
- Wearing unsuitable clothing for the weather.
- Frequent absenteeism from school or medical appointments.
- Frequent medical issues that are not addressed by caregivers.

6. Guiding Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of children are paramount and must be upheld in all decisions and actions.
- All children have the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Early identification and intervention are critical to preventing harm.
- Cultural safety, including recognition of Māori as tangata whenua and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is central to all child protection responses.
- Children and their whānau will be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- All staff have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the child and must be supported to do so.

7. Objectives

- To clearly define the responsibilities of staff in identifying and responding to suspected or disclosed child abuse or neglect.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people in our care.
- To ensure that all concerns about child safety are taken seriously, documented appropriately, and responded to in accordance with relevant legislation and best practice.
- To promote a culture of vigilance, accountability, and continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.
- To ensure all staff are trained and confident in their child protection responsibilities, including referral pathways and legal obligations.

8. Procedures

All staff at Kaweka Hospital are required to follow these steps if they suspect or are informed of child abuse or neglect:

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Step 1: Immediate Safety

- If a child is in immediate danger, call 111 for the New Zealand Police.
- Ensure the child is in a safe environment without putting yourself or others at risk.

Step 2: Notify the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

Contact the DCPO:

Name: **Anouk Doevendans-Lumb**

Role: **Perioperative Manager**

Email: anouk@kawekahealth.nz

Contact Number: 06 241 4114

If the DCPO is unavailable, escalate to the General Manager or Clinical Director

Step 3: Document the Concern

- Record the following in progress notes in CWS.
- Date, time, and location of the incident or disclosure.
- Exact words used by the child (if applicable).
- Observations (e.g., physical signs, behaviour).
- Your response and actions taken.

Step 4: Report to Oranga Tamariki

- The DCPO (or staff member if urgent) will contact Oranga Tamariki on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or via email to contact@ot.govt.nz
- Provide all relevant information and cooperate with any follow-up.

Step 5: Maintain Confidentiality

- Do not discuss the concern with anyone not directly involved.
- Store all documentation securely in the hospital's protected records system.

Step 6: Follow-Up and Support

The DCPO will:

- Liaise with Oranga Tamariki and/or Police.

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- Provide support to the child and family as appropriate.
- Offer debriefing and support to staff involved. EAP services are also available for staff for support.

9. Responsibilities

All Staff must report any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO): Anouk Doevendans-Lumb, Perioperative Manager at Kaweka Hospital, is responsible for managing reports, liaising with Oranga Tamariki, and ensuring staff training.

10. Staff Conduct and Boundaries

- Always Maintain professional boundaries.
- Avoid being alone with a child unless necessary and approved.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour.

11. Recruitment and Training

All staff undergo police vetting.

Mandatory child protection training is provided on induction and refreshed every 2 years. This will be provided inhouse by Senior Nursing Staff

12. Confidentiality

- All reports and records are kept secure.
- Information is shared only with those who need to know, in line with the Privacy Act.

13. References

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (as amended by the Oranga Tamariki Legislation Act 2019)
- Privacy Act 2020
- Health and Disability Services Standards NZS 8134:2021
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi
- Ministry of Health. (2019). *Health Worker Guide to Child Protection*.
- Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children: www.orangatamariki.govt.nz
- New Zealand Police: Child Protection Protocol
- Safeguarding Children NZ: www.safeguardingchildren.org.nz

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Clinical Advisory Committee Approval

Chair of Clinical Advisory Committee: Dr John Rose

Date: 17/10/2025

Signature:



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