

January 2024	<b>POLYKIDS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY</b>
<b>Contact Authority</b>	Manager: Polykids
<b>NELP: Objective LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE</b> Learners with their whānau are at the centre of education	<b>Priority 1:</b> Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive, and free from racism, discrimination and bullying
<b>National Guidelines</b>	<p><b>Polykids is committed to the education, care and well-being of all children and their families and to acting at all times in the best interests of children.</b></p> <p><b>The interest, safety and well-being of children are paramount.</b> Staff are made aware of this Policy and operate within the Education Council Of New Zealand - Our code Our standards - Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession, and Te Whariki.</p> <p><b>This child protection policy also adheres to the following acts:</b>  Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994  Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (as at 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017)  Privacy Act 1993  Human Rights Act 1993  Education Act 1989/1998  Education Council of New Zealand- Our code Our standards-Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession (June 2017)  Domestic Violence Act 1995  Care of Children Act 2004  Employment Relations Act 2000  Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights  Vulnerable Children's Act 2014  Licensing Criteria HS31; HS32; HS33</p> <p>It is to be used in conjunction with all other Polykids Policies and Procedures</p> <p><b>Any person who suspects that a child is suffering abuse at the hands of any other person can report this directly to Oranga Tamariki free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the Police (111).</b>  <u><b>ANY PERSON – ANY TIME</b></u></p> <p>Te Whariki  Well-Being - Goal 3: Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.</p>

<p><b>Designated person for Child Protection</b></p>	<p><b>Myone Raynbird is the Polykids Designated Person for Child Protection: Contact Details: mraynbird@op.ac.nz</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Principles</b></p> <p><b>Basic Principles continued</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This Policy applies to all children who are attending Polykids, all staff, management, contractors and volunteers and all persons onsite from services providing support to Polykids staff and children.</b></li> <li>• Abuse within the context of this policy shall cover physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. (See definitions at end of Policy)</li> <li>• This commitment means that the interest and the welfare of the child are the prime consideration when any decision is made about suspected abuse.</li> <li>• Polykids supports the role of the Police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected abuse to these agencies.</li> <li>• We maintain knowledge of, and relationships with, agencies and individuals in the community available to support and counsel families.</li> <li>• All practical steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material such as over the internet. Children do not have internet access without a teacher. All magazines bought into the Centre for use by the children are vetted by staff.</li> <li>• No children have access to the internet without an adult present and teachers are required to log on to the internet first with their username and password.</li> <li>• Polykids believes that as far as possible, staff working with children and their families should keep their personal and professional lives separate and does not encourage the development of close personal relationships or care taking activities outside the work environment such as “baby sitting” for parents. With regard to social media, Polykids believes that teachers should work with the Education Council Of New Zealand - Our code Our standards -Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession</li> <li>• At all times social media is a strictly personal form of correspondence and should at no time involve any discussion related to Polykids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent and respond to abuse.</li> <li>• At a minimum all staff will complete the Ministry of Education online training (1.5-2 hr) <a href="https://training.education.govt.nz/">https://training.education.govt.nz/</a></li> <li>• As part of their induction, new staff will familiarise themselves with the centres policy about Child Protection and will be encouraged to read any resource material.</li> <li>• This Childcare Centre ensures that teachers attend at least one workshop or training session on child abuse if such a session is available.</li> <li>• As part of their induction, new staff will familiarise themselves with the Centre’s policies about child protection and will be encouraged to read any resource material</li> </ul> <p><b>Myone Raynbird is the Polykids Designated Person for Child Protection: Contact Details: mraynbird@op.ac.nz</b></p>

**Keeping in touch with professional Agencies**

- This Childcare Centre maintains a working relationship with the Care and Protection division of Oranga Tamariki Service and is familiar with the laws and regulations which serve to protect children from abuse.
- We consult with appropriate agencies which have specialist knowledge to help us protect children from abuse.
- Polykids believes that in order to keep children safe, people who suspect or uncover abuse should not be tempted to deal with cases themselves without support and advice. When there is a relationship of trust and understanding with the statutory agencies, people are more likely to report and enable professional investigation to ensue.
- If an appropriate agency is notified and asked for advice or intervention, a record of their response is kept via the confirmation letter that is sent from the agency.
- Polykids encourages the networking of agencies, and staff will maintain the relationships between agencies when working together with them.
- We do not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise.
- Our prime considerations in choosing staff are ensuring that they have the skills and attributes which contribute to the children's safety and to healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.
- We maintain high teacher to child ratios

## Supervision

- **All children's workers who have access to children are safety check in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 - including volunteers. This includes Police Vetting.**
- **Polykids has a Staff Safety Check Procedure that is carried out for all new employees.**
- **All Polykids staff and adults working with children are to be police vetted every three years.**
- This Childcare Centre ensures that its staff and other adults visiting or working in the Centre are well supervised and visible in their interactions and activities with children.
- This includes toilet and "changing" spaces where intimate care giving for children is required.
- Opportunities for staff and other adults to be alone with children are kept to a minimum. Teachers try and ensure that they are visible to other staff at all times.
- Students on placements for the purposes of training are not allowed to change or toilet any child unsupervised and are not to be left alone with any group of children. Parental consent with regard to nappy changing by students on placement is always sought.
- Students are Police vetted by their institution. A statement about this is kept alongside the Child Protection Policy.
- Casual staff employed by the Otago Polytechnic as relieving teachers will be allowed to toilet or change children. They have been Police vetted and are familiar to the children. As with all staff, they do not put themselves in a position where they cannot be seen by others.
- All other relievers who are provided by Preschool Staffing Solutions, do not change or toilet children. These staff have been police vetted by Preschool Staffing Solutions.
- Children will not be taken from the Centre for excursions without parental approval in writing (blanket approval on enrolment form or individual forms for planned outings).
- Even in a Civil Defence/ Emergency Evacuation, only adults named on the child's enrolment form, or specified in writing by the parent, are able to collect the child from the centre
- Where children are taken on approved outings, a register is kept detailing the names of the children, the teachers who accompany them, and the destination of the journey and a risk analysis.
- This register is in the "Excursions folder".
- A cell phone and first aid kit will be taken on every journey outside the Centre.
- There will always be at least two teachers accompanying children on an excursion.
- Personal vehicles are not used for Polykids excursions.
- No person on the premises uses, or is under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour at any point during the service's hours of operation
- All visitors to Polykids must identify themselves and are required to sign the "visitors" book.

Measures to be taken by all teachers regarding suspected abuse:

**ANYONE AT ANYTIME CAN AND SHOULD REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE BY RINGING ORANGA TAMARIKI free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the police (111)**

- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously.
- Any staff member can report suspected abuse and may ring Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the Police (111)
- Staff will not act in a way that is outside their knowledge or capacity
- Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern teachers' may note about a child. Full, relevant, factual information will be recorded and held confidentially.
- If it is decided that concerns do not require a notification to statutory authorities, the child will continue to be monitored and records kept.
- When we suspect that child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe, we are committed to reporting this to the Police or external Agencies. All staff/parents are able to do this, and we also ask that they notify the Manager of the Centre or person in charge.
- No teacher should feel they must act alone regarding suspected child abuse. The Centre Manager and Polytechnic Health and Safety and Human Resources staff will be consulted and take action as a team.
- Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by the law.
- Polykids recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements of the Privacy Act, Oranga Tamariki Act, Health Information Act and other statutes. There are provisions within each of these Acts for sharing information needed to protect children and enable other people to carry out their legitimate functions. However, staff will not share information if they feel that this would endanger the child.
- Staff may be asked to provide information to Oranga Tamariki, the Police, Court or Lawyers and Psychologists.
- Information sharing will be restricted to those who need to know in order to protect children.
- When any of the above contacts a staff member for information, that staff member must refer to the manager and person dealing with the allegation for clearance before providing information.
- Information will only be provided when that staff member has identified the person making the request, the actual purpose of the request, what use the information will be put to, and who will see the information.
- Any requests to interview a child while on Polykids premises by Counsel for the Child or a social worker must be considered in the best interests of the child and with legal advice.

**Managing Allegations Against Staff**

- If there is an allegation that the abuse has been perpetrated by a staff member or other person at the Centre we will report the matter promptly to the appropriate authorities and Otago Polytechnic's People and Culture.
- Staff will follow the guidelines for dealing with allegations of abuse
- Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration
- Polykids will adhere to the principles of the Employment Contracts Act and give the staff member all information regarding their rights.
- When abuse is alleged, staff will follow the process for responding to suspected abuse.
- The staff member under investigation will be prevented from having further access to children during the investigation and will be fully informed of their rights
- The person managing the child abuse concern will not be the same person who is managing the employment issue.
- If police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, then a staff member may be suspended while the matter is investigated and they will be fully informed of their rights. Otago Polytechnic will offer support to staff involved in such a procedure.
- Polykids will liaise with Oranga Tamariki and the Police regarding the process of the investigation.
- Polykids recognises the added stress to fellow staff in such a situation and will ensure that support is available.
- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent poor practice or inappropriate behaviour by a staff member which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.
- We believe that children, families, staff and others involved in the investigation of suspected child abuse should have support and we will maintain knowledge of individuals, agencies and organisations in our community that we can refer them to for support.

**RESPONDING TO  
CHILD ABUSE**

**ABUSE SUSPECTED**

Child abuse or potential child is suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed. If the child is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.

**LISTEN, RECORD AND CONSULT**

**Listen** to the child and reassure them, but DO NOT make promises or commitments you cannot keep. DO NOT formally interview the child- obtain only the necessary FACTS if and when clarification is needed.

**Carefully record** any physical or behavioural observations and anything said by the child, (using the child's words as far as possible. Include date, time, who was present etc.)

**Consult** immediately with the manager or senior person in charge. Discuss and agree on an appropriate course of action, including whether a report of concern is to be made.

**REPORT YOUR CONCERN**

The person who received the information in conjunction with the manager or senior person, should contact Oranga Tamariki, (0508 326 459) or the Police (111) and make a report of concern.

**If the alleged abuse is by a staff member**

Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki /Police

Ensure there is no contact between the child and the staff member who the allegation is against.

**If the alleged abuse is by a non-staff member**

Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki /Police.

Ensure the child is in a place of safety- their safety is PARAMOUNT

**INFORM**

Consultation will take place between the person to whom the allegation has been made, the manager and CYF to decide who will inform the parents of the child and support the family.

**ANYONE AT ANYTIME CAN AND SHOULD REPORT  
SUSPECTED ABUSE BY RINGING ORANGA TAMARIKI free  
on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the police (111)**

<p><b>Glossary</b></p>	<p><b>Child Abuse:</b>  “The harming, (whether physical, sexual, emotional or by neglect. Abuse is generally seen as an act of omission or failure to do something. The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, section2 (1) defines child abuse as “the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.</p> <p><b>Child Protection:</b>  An activity or initiative or project designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.</p> <p><b>Emotional Abuse</b>  The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child adversely affects their development, it may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed on them. In addition it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted.</p> <p><b>Family Violence</b>  Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.</p> <p><b>Neglect</b>  The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical/psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development, such as failing to provide adequate shelter, food and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.  Notification, referral, reporting  Notification, referral and reporting are all terms used to describe making a report of concern to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.</p> <p><b>Personnel/Staff</b>  Personnel either employed by an organisation, or engaged by an organisation in a contract basis, or engaged by an organisation on a voluntary or unpaid basis.</p> <p><b>Physical Abuse</b>  May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including fabricating symptoms of, or deliberately causing symptoms of, ill health to a child.</p> <p><b>Sexual Abuse</b>  Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts and non-physical contact. Sexual abuse may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.</p> <p><b>Using force</b>  Using Force for the purpose of disciplining a child is a criminal offence Section 5, Crimes (Substituted section 59) Amendment Act 2007 (2007 No 18).</p>
<p><b>Review Date 2025</b></p>	

*This Policy has had full consultation with parents and Polykids Staff*