

Policy 15.1 Child Protection Policy

Purpose:

To provide a framework of principles, standards and guidelines to recognise vulnerable children in our care, recognise and respond to abuse, ensure safe recruitment of staff and training in our responsibilities and accountabilities. Under the Vulnerable Children Act the Thames Medical Centre Ltd has a responsibility to safeguard children from harm and clearly define what is required in relation to the protection of children. This shows that Thames Medical Centre takes its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

Parties:

This policy applies to all employees of and contractors to Thames Medical Centre Ltd.

This policy covers but is not limited to physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect:

Thames Medical Centre Ltd

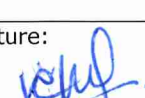
- Will ensure that the safety of the child is always our prime consideration
- Is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of children and young people and acting in their best interest.
- Is committed to dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.
- Acknowledges that in a case of suspected abuse, support for families is important
- Recognises that the family's primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained, however the child's well-being takes priority.
- Will provide training and support for their staff
- Is committed to complying with all relevant legislation
- Will ensure that disclosure of alleged abuse to appropriate authorities is acknowledged and action is taken to ensure the safety of the child or children who make disclosures.

If a complaint of abuse is made, or there is a suspicion of abuse Thames Medical Centre Ltd will:

- Ensure the safety of the child
- Ensure any suspicion of abuse will be reported to the Practice Manager / Directors will investigate the matter.
- Ensure all suspicions and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. Opinions or personal concerns will be recorded as that.
- Consult with Oranga Tamariki to clarify whether notification of concern should take place
- When child abuse is suspected Practice Manager will inform Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- Ensure staff members may contact Oranga Tamariki if they have concerns regarding the safety and protection of a child.
- Notify the parents or care giver, if appropriate.

If a complaint of alleged abuse is made against an employee of or contractor to Thames Medical Centre Ltd will:

- Respond to suspicions and allegations with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person and ensure the child's safety.

Foundation/Foundation Standards 2022/ Children Protection Policy	Date Approved: August 22	Date for Review: August 2024
Prepared by Carolyn Sara	Approved by Carolyn Sara Designation: Practice Manager	Signature: 

- Will not act alone and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to the Police or Oranga Tamariki.
- Ensure the safety of the child.
- Enable the staff member to seek legal and professional advice and be informed fully of their rights.
- Abide by the employer obligations under the Employment Relations Act.
- Provide separation of the roles, so that the person managing child abuse allegation will not be managing the employment issue.
- Ensure the suspected staff member will be prevented from having unsupervised access to children during the investigation.
- In the case where a criminal investigation is undertaken, the staff member may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence is gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.
- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is still "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice.

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