



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira (the Rūnanga) is committed to the prevention of abuse of children and will act on any concern or notification of abuse. The Rūnanga has implemented Mauri Ora to ensure its programmes and interventions support orange whānau (family wellbeing), whānau manaaki (family care) and whānau tiaki (family protection).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure child paramountcy is understood, taken seriously and legislated responsibilities are understood. Additionally, it provides key principles that ensure kaimahi working with children are selected with care, and there is guidance to ensure all child abuse and suspected child abuse is handled according to best practice, with a child paramountcy lens and the safety of all parties involved are maintained.

Scope

This policy applies to Toa Te Roopu Āwhina, Ora Toa, Puna Reo, Piki Te Mauri, and Ahurea Taiao kaimahi, contractors, sub-contractors, matua whangai, and volunteers (where the volunteer is part of the regular structure and activities of these business areas of the Rūnanga).

Key Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	Any person aged under 17 years who is not married or in a civil union
Child protection	Activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in situations where abuse or neglect is suspected, or a child is at risk of abuse or neglect.
Child abuse	Refers to the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or serious deprivation of any child. It includes actual, potential, and suspected abuse.
Physical abuse	Any acts that may result in physical harm
Sexual abuse	Any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not.
Emotional abuse	Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual, or emotional functioning or development
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet the physical or psychological needs of a child, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development
Designated Person for Child Protection	The person or position who is responsible for providing advice and support to a kaimahi or another person about an individual child
Disclosure	Information about abuse or neglect given to the Service(s) or its representative by a child, or parent, or caregiver, or any other person.
Kaimahi	Includes employees, contracted workers, matua whangai, and volunteers engaged in the delivery of services or programmes for the relevant business areas of the Rūnanga.

Application of Our Organisational Values

This policy applies to the following organisational values.

Core Value	Definition
Manaakitanga	Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of tamariki, rangatahi and kaimahi working with them
Kotahi Tātou	Working with you and for you to mitigate risks
Whakatau Tika	Maintaining checks and balances that protect
Kaitiakitanga	Wellbeing and safety sustain our people, resources, and those we care for and serve
Wairuatanga	Preserving a healthy wairua for our kaimahi, and the tamariki/rangatahi they care for and serve
Whanaungatanga	Maintaining positive connections through safe practice
Ahi Kaa	Our values and culture support a safe environment in which to grow and develop
Rangatiratanga	Preserving the mana of our people

Policy Statements

The policy statements or 'must do' requirements are:

1. The Rūnanga provides supervision and support to children in care and works with and/or provides services to children in various ways and numerous programmes. Any disclosure about alleged abuse will be acknowledged and appropriate action will be taken to ensure:
 - The safety of the child
 - The safety of the person who reports abuse (child, kaimahi)
 - Support is in place for the perpetrator if they are the kaimahi, the caregiver or the whānau.
 - Compliance with all relevant legislation.
 - Adherence to the organisation's child protection policies, processes, and procedures.
2. The Child Protection Policy provides:
 - a. A framework within which kaimahi are proactive in the care and protection of children from abuse.
 - b. Each business area maintains a procedures manual or equivalent process documents that provide:
 - i. The contact details for two (2) Designated Persons for Child Protection at all times.
 - ii. Information about the steps kaimahi should take when they are aware of, or suspect there is, any instance of child abuse.
 - iii. Guidance to kaimahi to refer instances or suspicions of abuse to the appropriate agencies or authorities.
 - iv. Help to kaimahi to identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable children whose welfare is our concern.
 - v. Support to kaimahi to protect vulnerable children by seeking expert advice and assistance where needed and providing appropriate training and information.
3. The Rūnanga will work with Oranga Tamariki to provide training, that ensures kaimahi receive professional training and guidance about what to look for and how to act professionally in cases of suspected child abuse.
4. Training plans, linked to kaimahi performance plans, will be reviewed annually, and refresher training will be provided as required.
5. The Rūnanga's recruitment and vetting of kaimahi complies with the Children's Act 2014 and involves:
 - a. Confirmation and verification of staff's identity.
 - b. An application form that includes the referees' names and contact details, one of whom will be the applicant's present or immediate manager.
 - c. A carefully planned interview schedule.
 - d. At least two referees being contacted for responses to questions about the applicant's character, strengths, and any concerns. One of the referees will be the applicants present or immediate-past manager. If a discussion with a past manager is not

- possible a written explanation needs to be provided by the applicant for acceptance and approval by the appointment panel.
- e. A copy of relevant work history, covering the preceding five years.
 - f. A police check for all kaimahi, including for management, non-teaching staff, non-registered relievers, non-tamariki facing roles, and volunteers.
 - g. A confirmed Police Vetting Report before commencing employment.
 - h. A CYRAS check in line with Oranga Tamariki Care Standards Legislation
 - i. Provides a Code of Conduct standard at the time of employment which covers professionalism, honesty, integrity, respect, and discretion.
6. Each business area shall assign two designated people for child protection, and these must be communicated to all kaimahi and appear in the operations manual or equivalent, along with all contact details.
 7. Kaimahi will report all cases of abuse when it is:
 - a. Disclosed by the child.
 - b. Disclosed by someone known to the child.
 - c. Suspected by anyone observing the child.
 8. The kaimahi of the Rūnanga will commit to the following safe practices:
 - a. The highest child ratio requested/required will always be maintained, on excursions and outings.
 - b. Kaimahi being encouraged to keep their professional and personal lives separate.
 - c. Kaimahi touching of children will meet the needs of the child.
 - d. Volunteers will only work alongside paid staff and in no circumstance be alone with a child.
 - e. Remain familiar with and access regularly abuse prevention resources found online from www.childmatters.org.nz
 9. Each business area shall maintain a clear process diagram and written process for reporting abuse in the operations manual or equivalent process documents and kaimahi will follow these.
 10. When child abuse is identified:
 - a. All situations are different. All available information about a child and the environment must be considered before any conclusions are drawn. Ref: <https://safeguardingchildren.org.nz/>
 - b. Whenever a kaimahi is concerned that a child may be suffering abuse of any form in any degree, the kaimahi should talk with a manager or the designated person for child protection. No kaimahi should act without seeking the advice and support of others.
 - c. It does not matter what kind of abuse a child is suffering. Definitions can be difficult and debatable. What is important is the overall well-being of the child. In the same way, it is less important for a staff member to be certain about a diagnosis than to identify there is cause for concern.
 - d. Where appropriate, the Rūnanga will work with relevant agencies (including Oranga Tamariki and the Police),
 - e. The Rūnanga will inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after discussions with the appropriate official agencies.
 11. Allegations against staff members
 - a. Any complaints or allegations of misconduct against a kaimahi of the Rūnanga must be reported to the Manager immediately. The failure to make a complaint or report an allegation immediately will be treated as a very serious matter.
 - b. When a complaint or allegation is reported, the Manager may decide that, to protect the child, the kaimahi should be removed from the role or the work environment. The Manager should discuss the situation with the People and Capability Business Partner. Decisions are subject to the duty of good faith and any relevant provisions in an employment agreement or other contract. Ref: <https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/>
 - c. Refer to the Manager to review the complaint or allegation and initiate an internal investigation in accordance with the organisation's policy workplace investigations

and with guidance from a People and Capability Business Partner. Also note Oranga Tamariki will likely launch an investigation alongside any internal processes.

- d. The outcome of any investigation will be managed in accordance with applicable Rūnana policies and processes.

12. Confidentiality and information sharing

- a. Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, 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 a social worker or the Police. The Social Worker must complete a Report of Concern. No civil, criminal, or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against the person who makes the report, provided it is made in good faith.
- b. When gathering, storing, or disclosing personal information about individuals, staff members must comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1993 and any Rūnanga Privacy Policy.
- c. However, staff members may disclose information under the Privacy Act where there is good reason to do so, such as a serious risk to health and safety. Disclosure about child abuse may be made to a social worker or the Police under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

13. A breach of or failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action including up to immediate dismissal.

Related Procedures and Guidance

Additional information that supports this Policy can be found in the:

- Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy
- Children's Act 2014
- Section 4 – Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Privacy Act 2020
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Pae Ora Act 2022
- Victims' Rights Act 2002

Key Accountabilities and Responsibilities

The key roles and responsibilities relating to this policy are outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibilities
Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support designated Child Protection leaders
Other parties such as Users, Human Resources, Finance	Advice regarding any arising matters that involve or may potentially involve kaimahi Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where it is alleged that kaimahi is at fault, has been negligent, failed to follow this policy or their performance has impacted the wellbeing of a child• Where kaimahi require support and care for their wellbeing because of child abuse or suspected child abuse

Document Management

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