

**Purpose:** Papakura Support and Counselling Centre (PSCC) values its duty of care to protect the children who are impacted by our work (directly or indirectly) and to act in their best interest. PSCC is committed to the protection of children from harm, abuse, and exploitation as expected in the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of the Child. This policy also takes into consideration best practice and requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 in keeping with New Zealand legislation. At PSCC, we regularly review our Children Protection Policy and Procedures, which are outlined below.

**Scope:**

1. All Employees, Contractors, Student Placements and Volunteers
2. All children that receive services and all parents or guardians who take care of children and are persons receiving services from PSCC
3. This Policy and its procedures applies to PSCC services that include work carried out off site and/or onsite including courses.

**Roles and Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of the Governance Team to ensure that PSCC takes every precaution to protect the children and young people we serve and encounter during the course of our work.

**Rationale:**

Child Protection includes the prevention of and response to any risk or actual instance of physical, sexual and emotional harm, exploitation or abuse, whether done directly to a child, or with communications or technology. A **child** is any person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse is defined in The Children, Young Persons and Families Act 1989, as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person."

- ❖ The safety and security of children is paramount
- ❖ This document fulfils PSCC's commitment to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect and the vulnerability of children in a timely and appropriate way.
- ❖ PSCC recognises that there is increasing awareness that abuse and neglect of children can, and does happen, and PSCC is determined to make a positive difference to this problem.
- ❖ PSCC is committed to promoting a culture where employees feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

**Recruitment:** Recruitment involves the hiring of employees, contractors, student placements and volunteers to work for PSCC. We seek to minimise child abuse risk through every step of the hiring process by including well-advertised child protection commitments and thorough background vetting systems of potential hires (including the use of police checks for those in regular contact with children).

**Education, Training and Awareness:** PSCC will ensure all stakeholders are aware of and uphold the Child Protection Policy. Education around the Child Protection Policy will be provided to all staff through inductions and regular training, so staff remain informed of current best practice.

**Misconduct:** PSCC will promptly investigate all reported actual or suspected breaches of this policy and, where grounds are found to exist, will take appropriate corrective measures and/or report the matter to the relevant authorities. PSCC reserves the right to initiate appropriate action up to and including employment/contractual termination for staff or other representatives, or for volunteers, to sever the volunteer relationship.

**Reporting:** It is mandatory for all PSCC staff to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse or any breach of this policy. These concerns may relate to a child or a staff member involved in the Centre or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the Centre's services. PSCC strived towards incident reporting which is child friendly. **If you do have a concern you should immediately follow PSCC Disclosure, Responding and Report of Abuse Procedures (please ask the Centre Manager or Senior Administrator for a copy of these procedures).**

## Legislation:

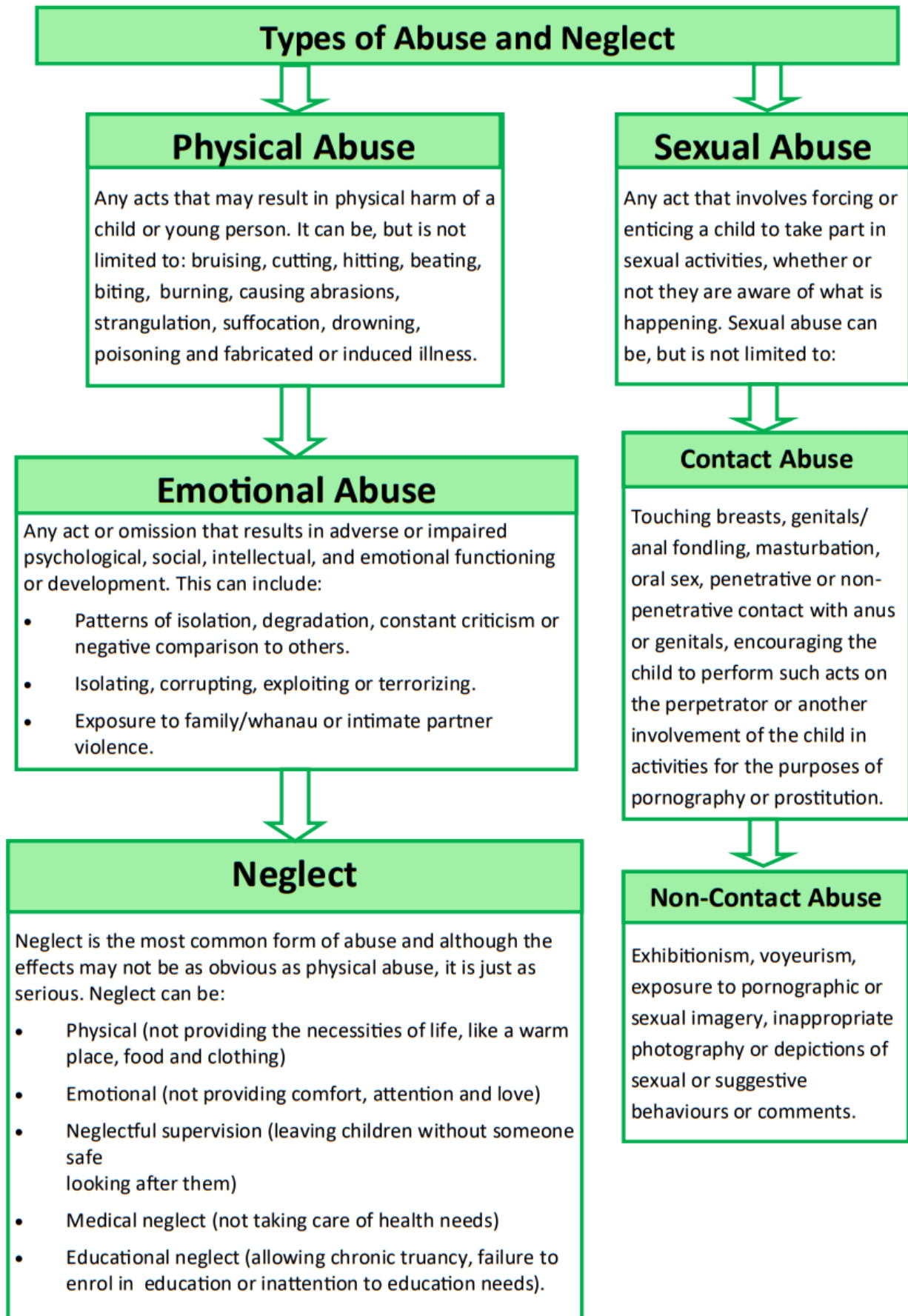
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989
- Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015
- Children’s Act 2014

## Guidelines:

- About the Children’s Act 2014
- Children’s Action Plan
- Children’s Worker Safety checking under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Safer Organisations, Safer Children
- Ministry of Health NGO and Disability Network
- Working together to keep Children and Young People safe

## Definitions and Roles:

<b>Child</b>	<i>A child or young person aged under 17 years (who is not married or in a civil union)</i>
<b>Support for Families</b>	<i>Is a contact point for frontline professionals and practitioners in some New Zealand communities to raise concerns about vulnerable children whose needs are not serious enough to contact Oranga Tamariki or the Police.</i>
<b>Child Protection</b>	<i>Activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or they are at risk of abuse or neglect.</i>
<b>Core Children’s Workers</b>	<i>Work alone with children, or have primary responsibility for, or control over, them. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are doctors, teachers, nurses, paediatricians, youth counsellors, support workers and social workers.</i>
<b>Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki)</b>	<i>The agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.</i>
<b>Designated person for Child Protection</b>	<i>The manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to employees where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy.</i>
<b>Disclosure</b>	<i>Information given to an employee by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.</i>
<b>Non-core Children’s workers</b>	<i>Are workers who have regular or overnight contact with children, without a parent or guardian being present. Examples of roles: Social and/or health workers</i>
<b>New Zealand Police</b>	<i>The agency is responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.</i>



**Signs of Potential Abuse**

**Physical Signs**  
Unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.

**Developmental Delays**  
Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills.

**Emotional Abuse/Neglect**  
Sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness, loneliness, and evidence of self-harm

**Behavioural Concerns**  
Age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement, neediness, aggression

**Disclosure**  
The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure)



**Signs of Potential Neglect**

**Physical Signs**  
Looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight

**Developmental Delays**  
Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills.

**Emotional Abuse/Neglect**  
Sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness, loneliness, and evidence of self-harm

**Behavioural Concerns**  
Disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance misuse, aggression

**Neglectful Supervision**  
Out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to.

**Medical Neglect**  
Persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical conditions.

**Factors to be considered...**

Each situation is different. Consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching any conclusions.

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