

## Child Protection Policy

### Statement of Commitment

The Featherston Community Centre Charitable Trust is committed to the well-being of children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.

We are committed to creating a community culture where the protection of children and young people is paramount.

The Board is committed to ensuring members, volunteers, and contracted and employed staff comply with all relevant legislation.

### Purpose

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to set a clear protocol of action in the event of any concern for a child's welfare. This document will ensure a consistent and effective response and to support any child or young person.

### Scope

This policy applies to all attendees, board members, volunteers, and contracted and employed staff of the Featherston Community Centre. The protection of children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

The child protection policy is to be used in conjunction with all hire agreements and the following policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Appointment of Featherston Community Centre Board Members

### Definitions

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years old.

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".

The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse though these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

**Physical abuse** is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting,



poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours. Any person with a hire agreement, board member, volunteer, or contracted or employed staff member should be aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming of a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion, or basic needs.

### **Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse**

If any attendee of the Featherston Community Centre has any concerns for a child's welfare we strongly encourage you to report such behaviour. If it is an emergency and the child is at serious risk dial 111 and ask for the police.

A lot of the time it may not be obvious that a child is at risk. If you have any concerns do not wait until you are certain and always put the child first. Talk over your concerns with the Child Abuse Prevention Parent Helpline (Parent Help) on 0800 568 856 or the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459.

To make an official report of abuse you can contact the local Police or the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki.

Many people have well founded concerns and fail to act. It is better for the child that the Police and the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki know about your concerns. They can then piece information together and conduct a thorough assessment of the child's safety. Section 16 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989) protects people who notify concerns of abuse in good faith from civil and criminal proceedings.

Board members, volunteers, and contracted and employed staff of the Featherston Community Centre will not act alone/do not have to act alone about concerns and will/can consult with their supervisor or a Board member. We will not act in a way that is outside of our knowledge or capacity. If it is an emergency however and the child is at serious risk dial 111 and ask for the police.



## **Our Responsibility**

The child protection policy and all its sub policies and related policies, will be reviewed annually.

The Board reserves the right to conduct police vetting on the engagement of new board members, volunteers, and contracted and employed staff of the Featherston Community Centre.

## **Managing Allegations**

Any allegation that an attendee or a person with a hire agreement, board member, volunteer, or contracted or employed staff member has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way will be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

We will not act alone, and we will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to the Police or the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person will collude to protect an adult or an organisation.

If we are aware that the person also works with children for another organisation, either as an employee or a volunteer, or has contact with children in other ways we will inform the Police and the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki.

The suspected person will be prevented from having further unsupervised access to children at the Featherston Community Centre during any police or the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki investigation. They will be informed fully of their rights.

If the police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, then the suspected person may be suspended from the Featherston Community Centre.

If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a Featherston Community Centre investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice which needs to be considered under internal procedures. We will seek legal advice and work in consultation with the Police and the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki.