

1.1 Child Safety and Protection Policy

The physical, emotional and spiritual safety of each child is paramount. All complaints of abuse will be taken seriously. Cornerstone Christian Preschool is committed to providing appropriate training, development and supervision in child protection.

This policy incorporates three aspects:

- A. Preventative measures to ensure the safety of children;
- B. Recognition to ensure action when child safety is in doubt.
- C. Action to be taken if abuse is suspected.

A Preventative measures to ensure the safety of children:

- a. All adults employed by the Preschool will be safety checked. This involves all aspects required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, and includes primary and secondary identity checks, police vet, interview, job history and referee's reports. A risk assessment will be done by two parties (Chairperson or Management Committee member and Supervisor).
- b. The teachers are to be consciously aware and observant of children's wellbeing at all times.
- c. There will be clear visibility to the children's bathroom/changing area at all times, to ensure safety of both children and adults.
- d. No adults other than the teachers, or those authorised by teachers will change or toilet any children other than their own.
- e. The teachers are to be confident to recognise of signs and symptoms that can cause them to suspect abuse: teachers will receive regular training to ensure this awareness.
- f. In staff meetings the teachers will have regular conversations with each other, and voice any concerns.
- g. The teachers will immediately inform the Supervisor if child safety is in doubt.

B Recognition to ensure action when child safety is in doubt:

- a. Where abuse is suspected or alleged, immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the child and to prevent any problem from escalating.
- b. Not all behavioural symptoms are caused by abuse, but abuse may be identified through:
 - general signs including: moodiness, irritability, excessive crying, loss of appetite, changes in behaviour at Preschool or towards other people, personality changes, withdrawal into themselves, being afraid to go home, running away, inability to concentrate, unexplained fears, nightmares, etc
 - physical signs including: beatings, burns, bites, broken bones, scalds, etc
 - emotional abuse including: threatening, yelling, scaring the child, belittling the child or playing games with the child's emotions
 - sexual abuse
 - neglect including inadequate nourishment, untreated injuries, clothes not warm enough, dirty and at risk of infection, left alone, etc.
 - exposure to pornographic, occultic, blasphemous, unclean material e.g. books, magazines, video, computer games, language, etc.
- c. Child abuse should be seriously suspected when there is:
 - no explanation of injury
 - varying explanations of injury
 - injury not likely to have happened as stated
 - unreasonable delay in seeking medical attention
 - several bruises at the same time, but on several different parts of the body
 - bruises on softer parts of the body, e.g. inside arms and legs
 - pain or irritation in the genital area
 - sexually transmitted disease
 - recurrent genital or urinary injury

- inappropriate sexual play
- a child states that they are being abused.

Clusters of signs can also indicate that something is wrong.

C The following actions will be taken if abuse is suspected

- a. The teachers will immediately inform the Supervisor if child safety is in doubt.
- b. In the event that a teacher has concern about a child, all details will be recorded. Written observations will be taken, and will be dated and signed by the concerned teacher. The observation will then be handed to the Supervisor. Any observations will be kept confidential and secure. The Supervisor, only, will involve outside agencies.
- c. The Supervisor will take the appropriate actions as detailed below.
 - Where a child is not considered safe, the Supervisor will contact a social worker or the Police, as per section 15 of the Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989.
 - In the event that the preschool is unsure about a child, the Supervisor shall contact an experienced person, trained in Child Protection and Safety.
 - If a child discloses details of abuse to a teacher, the teacher's role is to simply listen and be reassuring, as the teachers are not trained to assess the situation. The child should not be questioned about their experience, but the details of anything they do say must be written down immediately.
 - In the event of a third party reporting suspected abuse, that person will be directed to the most appropriate source, e.g. GP or social worker. In such an event, the Supervisor will ensure that action has been taken.
 - In all events, a detailed paper trail will be kept, with all details recorded (observation, who has been informed, timeline, details). This will be kept confidential and secure.
 - In the event of suspected abuse, the Supervisor will notify CCET of the fact that this has occurred, and that another agency needs to become involved.
 - Once an agency has been involved, the Preschool will act on the advice from that agency. The agency is involved in the case will be responsible for informing parents.
 - If a complaint is made against a staff member the Supervisor will immediately inform the Management Committee Chairperson and the CCET Chairperson. The Supervisor and the Chairpersons will then meet with the staff member, who will be advised to seek legal representation. The staff member will be suspended on full pay while the matter is investigated. At this stage the rest of the staff will be informed.
 - Support for staff and the family involved will be sought from the agency involved. Precautions for the physical protection of staff may be necessary.
- d. The Supervisor will bring this to professional supervision, for support.

Supporting documentation:

Breaking the cycle: Interagency Protocols for Child Abuse Management
 Child Youth and Family Services, 1996
 (www.cyf.govt.nz).

Let's Stop Child Abuse Together: An Interagency Guide in Breaking the Cycle
 Child Youth and Family Services, 2001
 (www.cyf.govt.nz).

Vulnerable Children Act 2014