

Child Protection Policy

The well-being and safety of children and young people are a paramount concern of Queenstown Lakes District Council.

Staff and management of Queenstown Lakes District Council, especially staff and/or volunteers who deal with or encounter children in their normal course of work, are committed to responding to concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and recognise that this may have consequences for the status and reputation of the organisation, management, and staff. However, the interest and welfare of the child or young person will be the primary consideration when any action is taken about suspected abuse. The organisation has an obligation, under the *Children's Act 2014*, to seek regular 'safety checks' for staff who are deemed 'children's' workers' under the Act.

Queenstown Lakes District Council will not tolerate abusive behaviour of any kind and will promote a culture of child protection by making these policies visible to parents and the community - including in enrolment information and on the QLDC website.

Queenstown Lakes District Council supports the roles of statutory agencies (the Police; Oranga Tamariki) and will consult with them when necessary.

The *Children's Act, 2014* requires a rigorous process for screening staff who work with children. Queenstown Lakes District Council complies with this Act, to safeguard any programmes and/or other provided services from inappropriate persons. This is further outlined in the Staffing Policy.

Purpose: This policy guides the actions of the organisation whenever there is a concern about the abuse or mistreatment of children. This includes recording concerns, responding if a child discloses abuse, suspected abuse by staff, and suspected abuse between children.

This policy applies to all staff, including part-time or temporary roles, volunteers, and contractors.

Guiding Principles

- This policy is written under the principle that all children and young people coming into contact with Queenstown Lakes District Council have a right to feel safe and comfortable in that contact.
 - The decisions and actions of Queenstown Lakes District Council in response to any child protection concern will be guided by the principle of "the welfare and best interests of the child or young person".
 - Queenstown Lakes District Council is committed to building a culture of child protection and educating staff on how to respond when they have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person.
 - Queenstown Lakes District Council asserts that all children and young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, culture, economic status or criminal background.
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Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

1. Definitions

For clarification within this policy;

'Child' refers to any person under the age of 14 years.

'Young Person' means any person of or over the age of 14 years but under the age of 18 years. The term "young person" can also be extended to include some young adults for certain purposes and as specified in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

'Child abuse' can involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or may arise from a single incident. Child abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- i. Physical Abuse
- ii. Sexual Abuse
- iii. Emotional Abuse
- iv. Neglect

'Child Protection Register' means a secure register containing every record of concern made about a child or young person and reported to Queenstown Lakes District Council's Designated Person for Child Protection.

'Designated Person for Child Protection' is a person within the Queenstown Lakes District Council who is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people. This person is responsible for ensuring that child protection is a key focus within Queenstown Lakes District Council, both at a strategic level and on a day-to-day basis.

As of the date of this policy, the Designated Person for Child Protection for Queenstown Lakes District Council is the Sports and Recreation Manager:

Simon Battrick

'Staff' refers to any person working for, at, or on behalf of, Queenstown Lakes District Council, and includes, but is not limited to, employees, contractors, and volunteers, whether they are working on a full-time, part-time, casual, or temporary basis, as well as any persons invited to provide services to children and young people on behalf of Queenstown Lakes District Council.

'Physical abuse' - is a non-accidental act 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 or young person. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

'Sexual abuse' - is an act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not. Sexual abuse can be committed by a relative, a trusted friend, an associate, or someone unknown to the child or young person. Sexual abuse includes situations where the adult seeks to have the child or young person touch them for a sexual purpose, and where they involve the child or young person in pornographic activities or prostitution.

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

'Emotional abuse' - is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or young person such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or young person's self-esteem and emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child or young person. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child or young person and their social competence undermined or eroded over time. A child or young person can also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment which includes seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others, including but not limited to being exposed to family violence.

'Neglect' - is characterised as the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for and/or protect the child or young person. It may also include neglect of a child or young person's basic or emotional needs.

'Family violence' can take many forms and may include, but is not limited to, actual physical violence (to a person, pet, or property), threats of physical violence (to a person, pet, or property), psychological, economic or sexual abuse. Children and young people are always affected either emotionally or physically when there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.

'Grooming' is predatory conduct and can include, but is not limited to, befriending, or establishing an emotional relationship, or other emotional connection, with a child or young person, (and can extend to members of the child or young person's family or whānau), for the purpose of lowering the child or young person's inhibitions and with the objective of sexual abuse.

'Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children' formally known as Child Youth and Family Services. Oranga Tamariki is a Government Ministry dedicated to supporting children and young people in New Zealand whose wellbeing is at significant risk of harm now, or in the future.

2. **Training**

This organisation is committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise, and respond to abuse through appropriate training. Staff are always expected to act within their level of experience and training, and to consult with the programme supervisor about any concerns.

An online Child Safety Course will be completed by all new staff members whose role includes supervising children and they will be required to sign a *Safe Working Practices Agreement* which Queenstown Lakes District Council will keep on file throughout their employment. An [example](#) of this agreement is **attached** at the end of this document.

As part of their induction, new staff are explained:

- *the Council's policy and commitment to child protection and the importance of this*
- *why Police Vetting is important prior to the role being taken*
- *procedures for supervising children and minimising the risk of an allegation of inappropriate behaviour*
- *for those in direct contact with children (e.g. Programmes and PlayTime) an online Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport is completed*

- *what to do if abusive behaviour is observed, including how to record a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention and who to report this to and why this is necessary.*
 - *the process for reporting any concerns and how to seek advice and support from their manager and/or Designated person for Child Protection who will then contact external agencies, if appropriate.*
 - *how to respond to a disclosure of abuse*
 - *how to work in cooperation with the parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety of the child*
 - *where access to the Child Protection Policy lies and the role that People and Capability have in this process*
 - *given an induction pack with the review policies and procedures included (volunteers are provided with this too)*
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3. Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff will be made aware of the signs of potential abuse or neglect (see below) and will always consider all available information before taking any action e.g. behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc. It is their primary responsibility to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential, or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported. Staff members are not expected to reach any conclusions about whether abuse or neglect is occurring, or what form it may be taking. They are expected to recognise and consult when something is wrong if a pattern is noticed or several signs together cause concern. This is adhered to through agreed protocols regarding child protection as well as the regular undertaking of awareness-raising training.

The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Oranga Tamariki and the Police.

Some signs of potential abuse/neglect:

- Physical signs of abuse: unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases. Neglect: looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight or malnourished, prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea,
- Medical neglect (e.g. persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).
- Developmental delays (e.g. small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g. sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness, and evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g. age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression).
- The child talks about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).
- Neglectful supervision (e.g. out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

Child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- *Direct or indirect disclosure by the child or young person;*
- *Direct or indirect disclosure from someone known to the child or young person;*
- *Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child or young person;*
- *Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child or young person's physical or emotional behaviour;*
- *Direct witnessing of abuse.*

The signs and indicators of abuse to a child or young person may not be immediately obvious or identifiable. If a member of staff is unsure about what might constitute child abuse, they should ask for advice and guidance from the Designated Person for Child Protection. If the Designated Person for Child Protection is unavailable for advice and guidance, or if the concern involves the Designated Person for Child Protection, then staff should consult with the Director of People and Capability. At any time, staff may seek advice directly from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) regarding any child protection concern.

Annexed to this policy is a non-exhaustive list of signs and indicators to help Queenstown Lakes District Council staff identify abuse.

4. **Responding to Child Abuse**

- Queenstown Lakes District Council will respond to allegations of child abuse in a manner which ensures the child or young person's safety is the first and paramount consideration.
- When child abuse is suspected, disclosed or witnessed, everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child or young person concerned, along with the ongoing safety of any other child or young person who is in close connection to the alleged offender. In all cases, the child or young person is the primary concern and all other concerns (including the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender) must be secondary. This does not mean that the alleged offender is to be considered guilty without due investigation, but that the child or young person's safety comes first.
- In a situation where any staff member believes that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the staff member, in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection, will inform Oranga Tamariki and the Police of their concerns. Staff will not collude to protect an adult or an organisation. Records of these Reports of Concern made to Oranga Tamariki and the Police will be kept securely and confidentially in the Child Protection Register.
- Staff will not act alone about concerns of abuse but will consult with either the Designated Person for Child Protection or the Director of People and Capability who will be committed to taking action as outlined in the procedures.

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

- All concerns and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. All documentation and information relating to child protection concerns will be held in the Child Protection Register.
- Child protection procedures must be followed regardless of whether the alleged offender is a member of the public or a member of Queenstown Lakes District Council staff.

If a staff member has concerns for the safety of other people they come into contact with at the Council e.g. parents, siblings of children etc., they can raise these concerns with a manager and People and Capability management. Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. Any incidents, concerns, or suspicions must be reported following the procedures outlined in the rest of this document.

5. Keeping the child's family informed and involved

Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed, there may be times when those parental responsibilities may not be initially informed. This may happen when:

- The parent/caregiver is the alleged perpetrator
- The child may be intimidated into silence
- There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
- The child does not want their parent/caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision
- Any decision not to inform the child's family/whānau based solely on the child's wish should be made with careful consideration and in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection and the Director of People and Capability.

6. Sharing information and Confidentiality

The safety of a child is paramount. At times, a child is unable to speak for or protect themselves. Therefore, Queenstown Lakes District Council has a greater responsibility to know when and how to share appropriate information with external agencies to protect the safety and well-being of children.

Under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Act 2017, *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 Oranga Tamariki or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them. A failure to report a significant concern about a child is a breach of that child's human rights.*

Giving information to protect children better is not a breach of confidentiality. Wherever possible, the family/whanau should be kept informed of what information has been shared and to which agency, and for what purpose. The *Privacy Act 2020*, states “*disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat.*”

Should Queenstown Lakes District Council be contacted with a request for information or access to interview a child, then the following procedure will be followed:

- Confirm the identity and credentials of the person requesting the information
- Notify People and Capability management and the Designated Person for Child Protection
- Identify specific information required and the purpose
- Check the information held - does Queenstown Lakes District Council have the information requested?
- Director, People and Capability to identify way forward and provide permission
- Depending on the reason for the request, and risk to children as judged case-by-case, inform the family that information has been requested, by whom and seek permission. If this is a child protection issue, permission from the family is not required.

Document all steps in this process, ensuring that all documentation is placed on the child’s Child Protection file.

7. Actions to be taken by the Designated Person for Child Protection

Concerns regarding alleged or suspected abuse will first be raised to the Designated Person for Child Protection, being Sports and Recreation Manager. A decision will be made on whether this information needs to be escalated to Oranga Tamariki.

All decisions taken, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in a Child Protection file with the reasons identified and explained.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Person for Child Protection:

The Designated Person for Child Protection must:

- *Be trained in child protection and undergo regular refresher training*
- *Adopt, implement, comply with, and enforce the Queenstown Lakes District Council Child Protection Policy*
- *Ensure that child protection is a key focus within Queenstown Lakes District Council and that appropriate protocols, procedures and training are in place*

- *Ensure that the needs and rights of children and young people come first - the safety and well-being of each child and young person is the paramount consideration in all circumstances*
- *Promote and model appropriate behaviour at all times*
- *Ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately*
- *Ensure, and safeguard, clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection concerns*
- *Ensure that all members of staff are aware of, have access to, and understand the Child Protection Policy*
- *Ensure that all Queenstown Lakes District Council staff are recruited and delegated responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines identified in this policy*
- *Ensure that when child protection concerns arise, no internal investigation occurs without appropriate consultation and a decision on whether a response from Oranga Tamariki and/or the New Zealand Police is required*
- *Consult with the Director of People and Capability regarding all child protection concerns.*

In addition to the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Person for Child Protection, below is a list of roles and responsibilities of QLDC staff – child protection is everyone’s responsibility.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff:

- *Queenstown Lakes District Council recognises that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting children and young people from harm. It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect and abuse, whether actual or potential and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations immediately. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that any concern, suspicion or allegation raised is taken seriously.*
- *Queenstown Lakes District Council is responsible for ensuring that all staff understand, and adhere to, this policy and have undertaken the appropriate child protection training.*
- *Each member of Queenstown Lakes District Council staff must:*
 - *be aware of, and alert to, potential indicators of abuse or neglect.*
 - *record a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention.*
 - *appropriately seek advice and support from the Designated Person for Child Protection who will then contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police if appropriate.*
 - *work in co-operation with the child or young person’s parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.*
- *The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police. No member of staff, including the Designated Person for Child Protection, is permitted or mandated to investigate allegations of abuse.*

8. Responding to a Disclosure/Concern about abuse

If there is information disclosed regarding actual or suspected child abuse staff must:

- stay calm
- listen and hear
- give time to the child or young person to say what they want
- reassure them that they were right to tell
- tell the child or young person that they are being taken seriously and that they are not to blame
- explain that they have to pass on what the child or young person has told them as soon as they are aware that the child or young person is making a disclosure
- give an age-appropriate explanation to the child or young person of what they can expect to happen next
- record in writing what was said as soon as possible, using the child or young person's own words where possible.
- report the concern to Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police, in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection

Staff **must not:**

- make the child or young person repeat the story unnecessarily
- promise to keep secrets
- enquire into the details of the alleged abuse
- ask leading questions

Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns of abuse themselves.

When reporting an incident staff should:

- Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection as soon as possible (and/or the Director of People and Capability and/or Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ police)
- Record in writing all conversations and actions taken and keep these records securely in a specified Child Protection File.

Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must include:

- A record of facts, including observations, with times and dates
- What was said and by whom, using the person's words
- What action has been taken, by whom and when

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

All decisions, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki or the Police, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in a Child Protection File with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

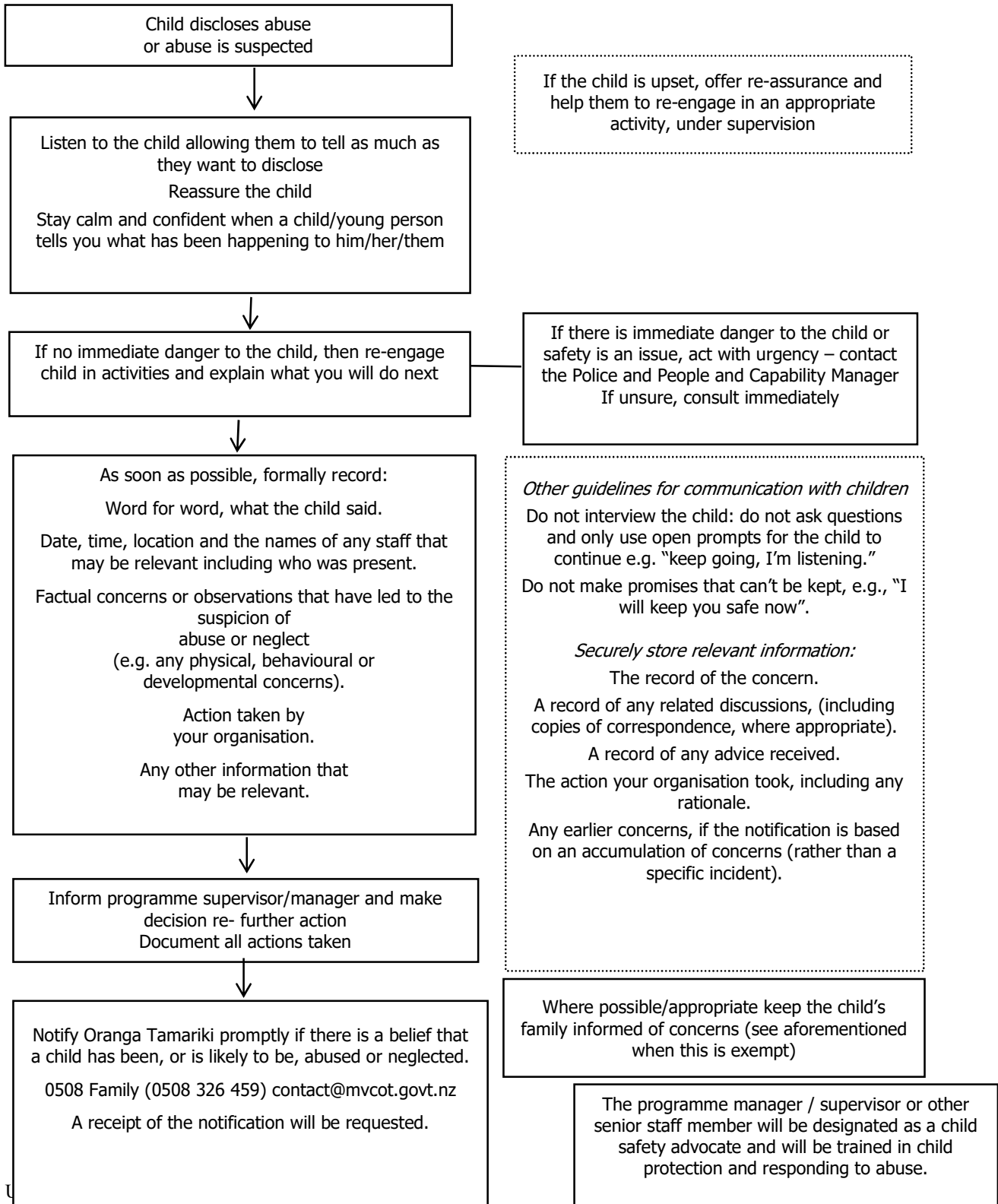
9. When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member

Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member (paid/ unpaid in any capacity at Council), allegations will be discussed with the Sports and Recreation Manager and the Director of People and Capability who will decide in conjunction with the Chief Executive as to whether notification to Oranga Tamariki is appropriate. A confidential written record will be kept. Any children involved will be protected from possible risk or trauma. Queenstown Lakes District Council may remove or suspend the staff member as a precautionary measure in line with Queenstown Lakes District Council's Discipline and Dismissal Policy. All actions will be undertaken with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality (See below for the process).

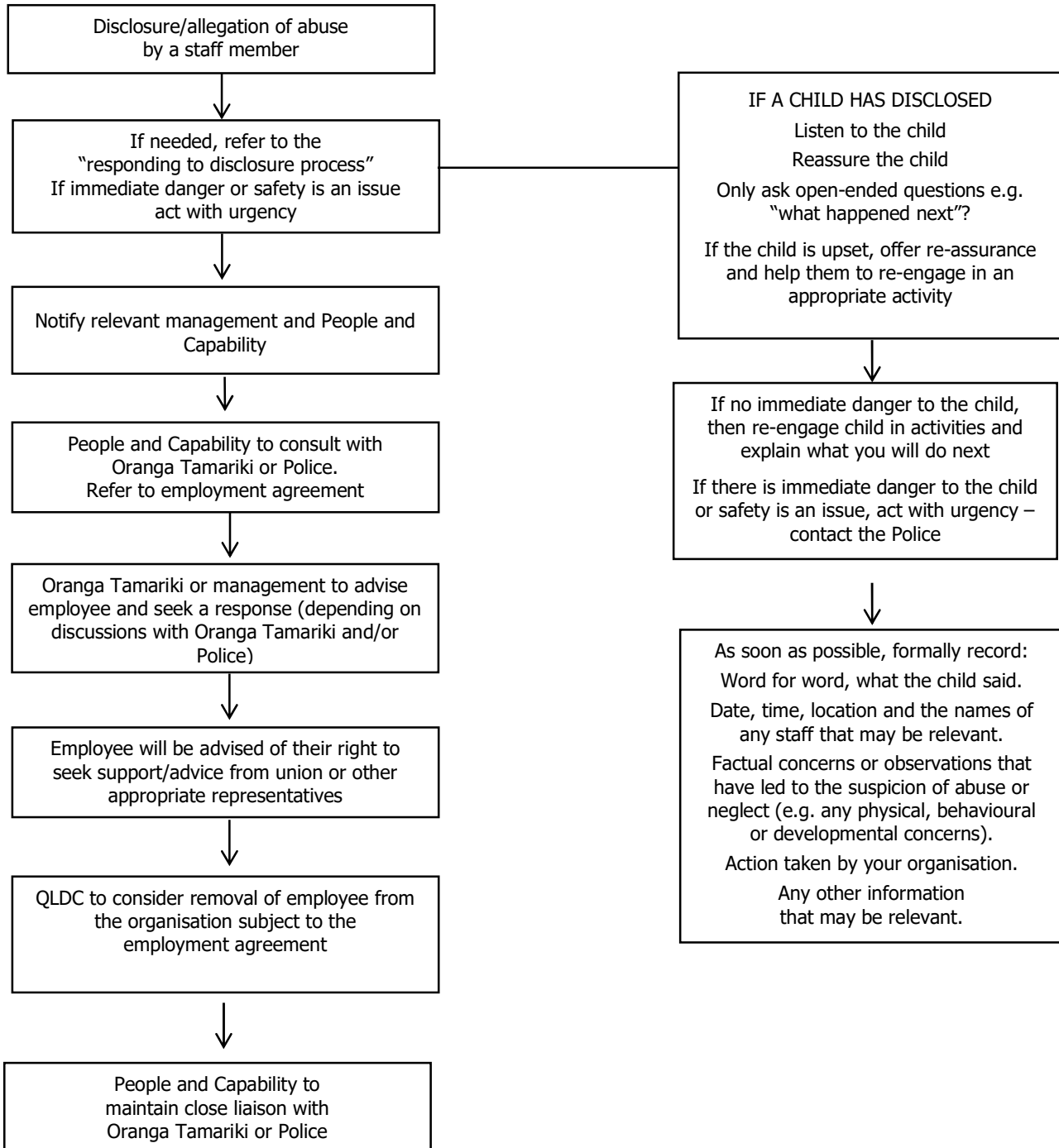
It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation. If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken per the Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or inappropriate behaviour may have occurred. The allegation may represent poor practice by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.

All staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour with children and young people. All staff also have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others. Any concerns or reasonable suspicions should be reported to the People and Capability department.

Reporting a Concern of Abuse



Reporting an Allegation of Abuse against a Staff Member



10. Peer Abuse

Queenstown Lakes District Council will ensure that the safety of the child or young person is paramount and no form of physical, sexual, or verbal harassment or violence from peers will be accepted or tolerated.

While the situation is being evaluated, the children/young people concerned will be kept separate.

In some cases, where the abuse has occurred on-site, immediate suspension of a child may be appropriate, as outlined in the behaviour guidance policy.

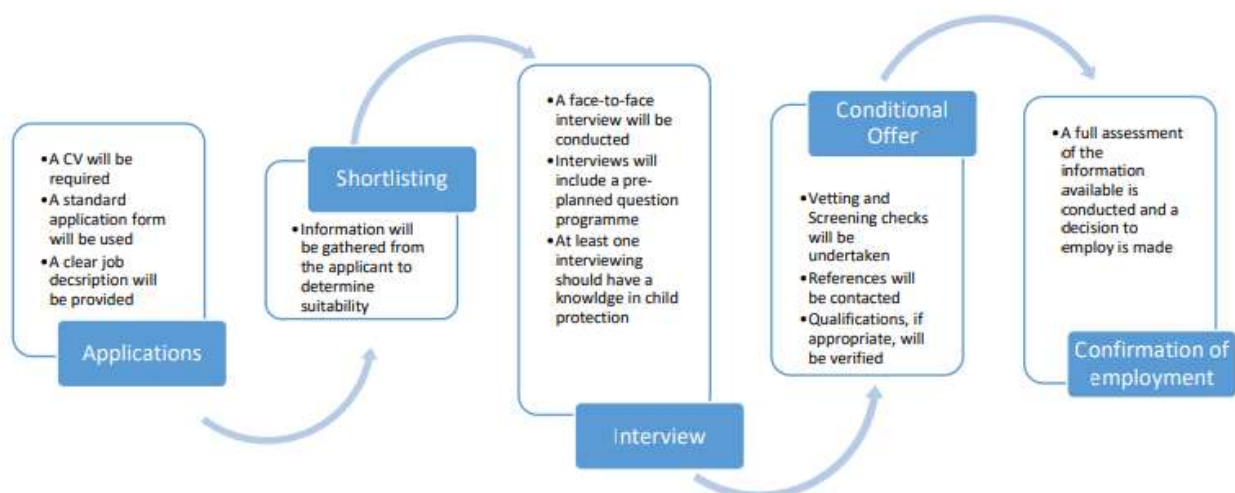
This organisation will keep personal information as private as possible. Parents will also be asked to keep all information confidential to allow proper investigation and resolution.

All parents/caregivers will be kept informed about how the organisation is responding to concerns, including meeting with staff to discuss these concerns. It is a policy of the Council to discourage interaction between the different parents involved and between parents and other children in the organisation, while the concern is being investigated.

11. Recruitment of Staff by Queenstown Lakes District Council

Queenstown Lakes District Council must undertake a comprehensive recruitment process. (This includes volunteers, casual, part-time and full-time members of staff). This is outlined below:

Safe Recruitment of Staff



12. Child and Staff Safety – Supervision and Conduct Guidelines

These specific guidelines are concerned with minimising the risk of allegations of inappropriate conduct. They should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct, which outlines a wider range of staff behaviour guidelines.

All staff should be aware of situations where they could be alone with children. These situations will be avoided as much as possible.

An open-door policy for all spaces should be used as much as possible (i.e. not for toilets). Staff will be aware of where all children are at all times and check to ensure what they are doing is appropriate.

Staff will watch for situations where children are out of sight together (play huts, storage areas, toilets, etc.) and intervene to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour.

Staff will avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person unless an emergency requires it.

Except in an emergency (or as specified in the late collection policy), children and young people will not be taken from the site by staff without parental consent.

Visitors to the centre will be monitored at all times by programme staff/staff.

All volunteers and outside instructors will be monitored by the paid programme staff/staff.

As outlined in the Code of Conduct: *“Staff will provide physical comfort or reassurance when needed by children, but exercise caution and restraint when initiating physical contact or displaying signs of affection.”* Staff will not allow children to climb on them or sit on their laps.

If activities require a higher degree of physical contact (i.e. classes in swimming, gymnastics, dance etc.) parents and caregivers will be informed.

Unless requested by children or parents, there is usually no need to assist school-aged children with toileting. If the situation arises, staff will ensure that another staff member knows who is assisting the child. Parents will be informed.

In some situations, a child or young person may require more regular physical and or personal care assistance. Advice and assistance will be requested from parents/caregivers and specialist personnel. Management will negotiate with all involved regarding appropriate procedures for giving this assistance.

➤ Physical Contact

It is imperative that in all dealings with children and young people, a balance is struck between the rights of the child or young person and the need for intervention. When physical contact is made with a child or young person this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Staff should always use their professional judgement, observe and take note of the child or young person's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child or young person for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

➤ **Communication**

Communication between children, young people, and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phone, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking and blogs.

➤ **Private Spaces**

Staff are not permitted to enter a private space, such as a toilet, bathroom or changing facility while it is being used by children or young people. In the event that an adult is required to enter a private space that is being used by a child/ren or young person/people, they must ensure that they have at least one other adult with them and that they knock, announce themselves, and wait for permission from the child/ren or young person/people, prior to entering

➤ **Photographs and Recordings**

Written consent must be obtained for all photographs to be taken, and/or displayed, of children and young people, whether they are intended for internal or external use. This includes, but is not limited to, the posting of images on social media.

➤ **Transportation**

All precautions must be taken to ensure that when transporting children and young people their safety and wellbeing is paramount. Only approved, fully licensed, and Police vetted adults will be responsible for transporting children and young people. All adults must be free from alcohol and non-prescription drugs. All vehicles transporting children and young people must be roadworthy, with a current Warrant of Fitness and registration, and the maximum passenger number must not be exceeded. Safety belts must be used. Drivers must not deviate from the agreed route and must carry a mobile phone with them at all times in case of emergencies. Children and young people should not be transported alone, except in an emergency situation.

13. Legislation

This policy has been written with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in mind and in accordance with the following legislation:

- *Care of Children Act, 2004*
- *Children's Act, 2014*
- *Crimes Act, 1961*
- *Family Violence Act, 1995*
- *Education Act 1989*
- *Education and Training Act 2020*
- *Employment Relations Act, 2000*
- *Health and Safety Act 1956*
- *Health and Safety at Work Act 2015*
- *Health and Disability Sector Standards Regulations, 2001*
- *Health Information Privacy Code, 1994*
- *Human Rights Act, 1993*

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, and updated regularly, to ensure it is kept up to date with changes that may have been made to legislation, related policies and procedures, and in light of operational experience.

The overall responsibility for the review of this policy rests with the Queenstown Lakes District Council Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection and the Director of People and Capability.

The next review date is scheduled for **1 August 2023**

Safe Working Practices Agreement

As a member of Queenstown Lakes District Council staff, I **WILL**:

- Ensure that I am fully aware of, and adhere to, the Queenstown Lakes District Council Child Protection Policy.
- Treat all children and young people with respect at all times, regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- Promote an environment where children and young people feel safe and comfortable in my care and contact.
- Act professionally and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.
- Avoid circumstances where my behaviour (both verbal and physical) may be misinterpreted as hostile, suggestive, inappropriate, offensive, suggestive or neglectful.
- Act swiftly to ensure that any perceived risk to a child or young person is immediately reported in consultation with the Designated Person for Child Protection.
- Inform the Designated Person for Child Protection of breaches in safe working practices, regardless of whether this has resulted in the harm of a child or young person.
- Not engage in any unwarranted or inappropriate touching of a child or young person.
- Ensure that all communications with children and young people, by whatever methods, are transparent and open to scrutiny.

I certify that I have read, understood and will comply with the Queenstown Lakes District Council Child Protection Policy:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

The indicators for child abuse and neglect fall into three general categories:

Physical indicators: Injuries to a child that occur in a pattern or occur frequently. These injuries range from bruises to broken bones to burns or unusual lacerations and are often unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given

Behavioural indicators: The child's actions, attitudes, and emotions can indicate the possibility of abuse or neglect. Behavioural indicators alone are much less reliable than physical indicators, as a child's behaviour may be the result of a variety of other problems or conditions. When observing changes in behaviour, look for the frequency and pattern of the new behaviour, as well as a child's age and stage of development. For example, it is normal for younger children to be wary of adults, as they may have been taught not to talk to strangers. Look for a combination of physical and behavioural indicators.

Caregiver indicators: Caregivers who abuse, neglect or exploit children are either unable or unwilling to provide care and protection in an appropriate way. Those who are unable to provide care and protection may be physically unable due to their own medical or health condition. They may be overly stressed, tired, or working under the influence of drugs or alcohol which limits their abilities. Caregivers who are unwilling to provide children with the appropriate level of care and protection are more aware that what they are doing is wrong but continue to act in that way. These caregivers may not view the child as someone who has feelings and emotions and often have the need to control others or have displaced aggression towards weaker persons.

The indicators alone do not prove child abuse or neglect. Likewise, the absence of indicators does not exclude the possibility that abuse is occurring. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child or young persons, seek advice from the Designated Person for Child Protection, Director of People and Capability, or Oranga Tamariki.

➤ Emotional Abuse Indicators

○ Physical Indicators:

- Bed wetting or bed soiling with no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Non-organic failure to thrive

- Pale, emaciated
- Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Malnutrition
- Dressed differently to other children in the family

- o Behavioural Indicators:
 - Severe developmental lags with obvious physical cause
 - Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
 - Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
 - Overly compliant
 - Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
 - Running away from home, avoiding attending at school
 - Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
 - Anti-social behaviours
 - Lack of self esteem
 - Obsessive behaviours
 - Eating disorders

- o Caregiver Indicators:
 - Labels the child as inferior or publicly humiliates the child (e.g. name calling)
 - Treats the child differently from siblings or peers in ways that suggest dislike for the child
 - Actively refuses to help the child
 - Constantly threatens the child with physical harm or death
 - Locks the child in a closet or room for extended periods of time
 - Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
 - Withholds physical and verbal affection
 - Keeps the child at home in role of servant or surrogate parent
 - Has unrealistic expectations of child
 - Involves child in adult issues such as separation or disputes over child's care
 - Exposes child to situations of arguing and violence in the home
 -

➤ **Neglect Indicators**

- o Physical Indicators:
 - Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
 - Often extremely dirty and unwashed

- Regularly attends school without lunch
- Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
- Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods
- May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult
- Does not receive adequate medical or dental care
- Malnourished - this can be both underweight and overweight
- Lacks adequate shelter
- Non-organic failure to thrive

- o Behavioural Indicators:
 - Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
 - Lack of attachment to parents/caregivers
 - Indiscriminate attachment to other adults
 - Poor school attendance and performance
 - Demanding of affection and attention
 - Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
 - May steal food
 - Poor social skills
 - No understanding of basic hygiene

- o Caregiver Indicators:
 - Puts own need ahead of child's
 - Fails to provide child's basic needs
 - Demonstrates little or no interest in child's life - does not attend school activities, social events
 - Leaves the child alone or inappropriately supervised
 - Drug and alcohol use
 - Depression
 -

➤ **Physical Abuse Indicators**

- o Physical Indicators:
 - Bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions
 - Burns - small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns etc
 - Fractures and dislocations - skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
 - Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
 - Fractures in very young children

- Behavioural Indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- Wary of adults or a particular person
- Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- Cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly
- May be extremely compliant and eager to please
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
- May regress (e.g. bedwetting)
- May indicate general sadness
- Could have vision or hearing delay
- Is violent to other children or animals

- Caregiver Indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- May appear unconcerned about child's wellbeing
- May state the child is prone to injuries or lies about how they occur
- Delays in seeking medical attention
- May take the child to multiple medical appointments and seek medical treatment without an obvious need

➤ **Sexual Abuse Indicators**

- Physical Indicators:

- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or stools
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably

- Behavioural Indicators:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Refuses to go home, or to a specific person's home, for no apparent reason
- Fear of a certain person

Updated 21 July 2023

Revision scheduled for 1 August 2024

- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
- Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviours
- Caregiver Indicators:
 - May be unusually over-protective of the child
 - Accuses the child of being sexually provocative
 - Misuses alcohol or drugs
 - Invades the child's privacy (e.g. during dressing, in the bathroom)
 - May favour the victim over other children

➤ **Family Violence Indicators**

- Indicators in the Child:
 - Physical injuries consistent with the indicators of Physical Abuse
 - Absenteeism from school
 - Bullying or aggressive behaviour
 - Complaints of headaches or stomach aches with no apparent medical reason
 - Talking or describing violent behaviours
- Indicators in the Victim:
 - Physical Injuries including: bruising to chest and abdomen, injuries during pregnancy
 - Depression and/or anxiety
 - Inconsistent explanations for injuries
 - Fearful
 - Submissive
- Indicators in the Offender:
 - Isolates and controls partner and children
 - Threatens, criticises, intimidates, uses aggressive and physical abuse towards partner and children
 - Minimises and denies own behaviour, or blames victim for the perpetrators own behaviour

Child Protection Overview - Responding to Abuse:

Abuse is "... the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person" - Section 2, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

Child abuse can involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or it may arise from a single incident. Child Abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

Child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or indirect disclosure by the child or someone known to the child;
- Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child;
- Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child's physical or emotional behaviour;
- Direct witnessing of abuse.

When disclosures of abuse come directly from a child, it is important that you take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or your own opinion on what is being said. When a child tells you what has been happening to them, or when you witness or suspect child abuse, it is important that you, as the adult, remain **calm** and **confident**.

RESPOND: Respond to the person (adult or child) – Believe what they tell you and/or what you see.

SAFETY: Ensure the safety of the child. Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child. This will mean contacting Oranga Tamariki (**0508 326 459**) and the Police (**111**) if you think there is an immediate risk to the child.

RECORD: Record immediately all initial statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date.

CONSULT: Do not make decisions alone. Consult with your Designated Person for Child Protection. Oranga Tamariki is always available to give advice.

REPORT: Decide to act on your concerns. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.

SUPPORT: Seek support for yourself. Responding to a child protection issue can be stressful.

Think "what if I'm right?" ...Not "what if I'm wrong?"

Contact List:

Designated Person for Child Protection

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Contact Number: (+6434410476)

Director of People and Capability

(Name: Katie Church)

Contact Number: (+6434500520)

Chief Executive Officer

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Ministry for Children - Oranga Tamariki

0508 326 0459

New Zealand Police

111

Child Matters

(07) 838 3370