

Counties Manukau Hockey

Safe Sport Policy



Rationale and Approach

CMHA is committed to safe sport and recreation for children¹.

Children can be harmed through their experiences of sport and recreation. This harm can take many form including physical and sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, put-downs, inappropriate cultural practices, and other harmful practices. Regardless of their nature, harmful practices have no place in children and young people's sport.

CMHA believes that:

- Children have a right to participate in sport and recreation that is safe and where they are protected from harm
- Children should be able to participate in a sport and recreation environment that is free from risk or danger
- They should also feel respected, valued and encouraged to enjoy their participation and to reach their full potential
- In relation to children, sport and recreation organisations have a duty of care and must take steps to ensure that individuals can participate safely in the activities provided.

In order to ensure safe sport for children CMHA proposes a four-pronged approach that involves:

- Preventing known or potential abusers from having contact with children
- Removing and/or minimising any risks of, and opportunities for, harm to children
- Identifying and stopping inappropriate behavior if it occurs
- Providing support to the children and their families should a child be

harmed? This document outlines this approach in more detail.

Appendix 1 provides a model Child Protection Policy

Appendix 2 provides a sample flow chart for responding to suspected or disclosed abuse

Appendix 3 provides a self-audit tool for organisations to use to check their current approach to keeping children safe

Appendix 4 lists legislation that is relevant in some way to keeping children safe

Appendix 5 identifies types of harm that should be managed

¹ For the repurposes of this policy, a 'child' is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Approach 2: Remove/minimise any risks of, and opportunities for, harm to children

® Risk assessment/organisation health check

Identifying and managing risk is good business practice. Standards New Zealand's Guidelines for Risk Management in Sport and Recreation, SNZ HB 8669:2004, is available on CMHA's website. It provides a framework and outlines a process for managing risk. Child Matters

www.childmatters.org.nz provides a brief questionnaire that allows you to evaluate the types of processes and systems your organisation already has and identify any gaps.

® Policy development

Through developing a child protection policy you will identify, assess and set out steps to minimise the risk of harm to children. There are several child protection policy templates available and some sports have examples of policies that are already being implemented. In general, a child protection policy would include:

- the scope and objectives of the policy and the rationale for having a policy
- the procedures to be followed in order to implement the policy
- an outline of the roles and responsibilities of different parties
- the policy review date.

A sample child protection policy is attached as **Appendix 1**.

® Promoting good practice

Sport and recreation organisations should promote the importance of keeping children safe. Apart from being good practice, there may be some benefits in doing so. For example, parents may feel more comfortable about their children enrolling in an organisation that promotes child safety.

® Training

Sport and recreation organisations should promote the importance of keeping children safe. Apart from being good practice, there may be some benefits in doing so. For example, parents may feel more comfortable about their children enrolling in an organisation that promotes child safety.

® ***Children's access to advice and support***

The best way to support children and their families is to ensure that there is a plan in place for keeping children safe and that clearly identified good practice procedures are communicated and followed to prevent harm. Providing children with essential information on where to go (or who to go to) for help and advice is part of this. The best interests of the child should remain at the centre of any support provided.

Approach 4: Support the child and the family should a child be harmed

® ***Organisations that can help***

When a child has been harmed in some way, there is a myriad of people and places that can provide support and it may help the child and the family if the sports club can provide some guidance and support on this.

Where the abuse of a child constitutes a criminal offence, Child, Youth and Family Services and the Police will be key agencies to contact. Other agencies/organisations that can provide support include:

- ACC by providing ACC-approved counsellors for children who have been sexually abused.
- Citizen's Advice Bureau by providing details of local crisis counselling services.
- Child Matters is a registered charitable trust that provides training programmes, seminars and workshops on child abuse, as well as advice and resources.
- Jigsaw Family Services is a national organisation focused on the wellbeing of New Zealand children and their families.
- Kidsline is New Zealand's only 24-hour helpline for children and provides trained counsellors.
- Youthline is a free telephone counselling service for young people (12-18 years).

Appendix 1: {continued}

® ***Procedures covered by the policy***

1. Screening

As part of our duty of care, we must ensure that suitable and appropriate employees and volunteers (including parents) are engaged to work with children. When recruiting people to engage with children we will ensure that there is robust recruitment process that includes:

- creating a role description
- following up on referees
- interviewing
- screening (e.g. police vetting).

2. Appointing a Child Protection Officer

A Child Protection Officer (CPO) shall be appointed to manage child protection issues by:

- ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members
- organising promotional activities, training and raising awareness within the organisation
- establishing and maintaining the complaints procedure
- regularly reporting to the Board/Executive Committee/Management
- acting as the main contact for child protection matters
- keeping up-to-date with developments in child protection legislation
- liaising with local child protection agencies
- maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

3. Education and training of staff and volunteers

Education and training of staff and volunteers will help our organisation:

- recognise when children are at risk
- respond to identified risks and children who are suspected of being abused in the most appropriate ways
- understand their responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe both in terms of prevention and management of cases that may arise.

Appendix 1: (continued)

- o Avoid entering changing rooms. If you must enter, knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you.
- o Avoid driving a child unaccompanied.
- o Do not invite or encourage children to your home
- o Always have another adult present when staying overnight anywhere with children.
- o Do not share a room with a child, other than your own.

5. Codes of behaviour

A code of behavior sets out an organisation's expectation of its employees, volunteers and supporters. These codes can be developed to cover a variety of roles, including coaches, players, officials, parents and supporters and administrators. They will also reinforce the good practice protocols.

An effective code of behavior:

- addresses risk factors
- is developed collectively with those who are expected to follow the code
- is clear and unambiguous
- is widely promoted and used within your organisation.

Complaint and internal discipline procedures for breaches of the code procedures should be developed in conjunction with the code of behavior and also be widely distributed and promoted.

6. Dealing with allegations, responding to concerns

In accordance with members' responsibility to act on any serious concerns, the following should be brought to the attention of the CPO.

- Any instance where this policy is breached or good practice guidelines are not followed
- Any disclosure by a child that abuse or harm is occurring
- Any suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to abuse

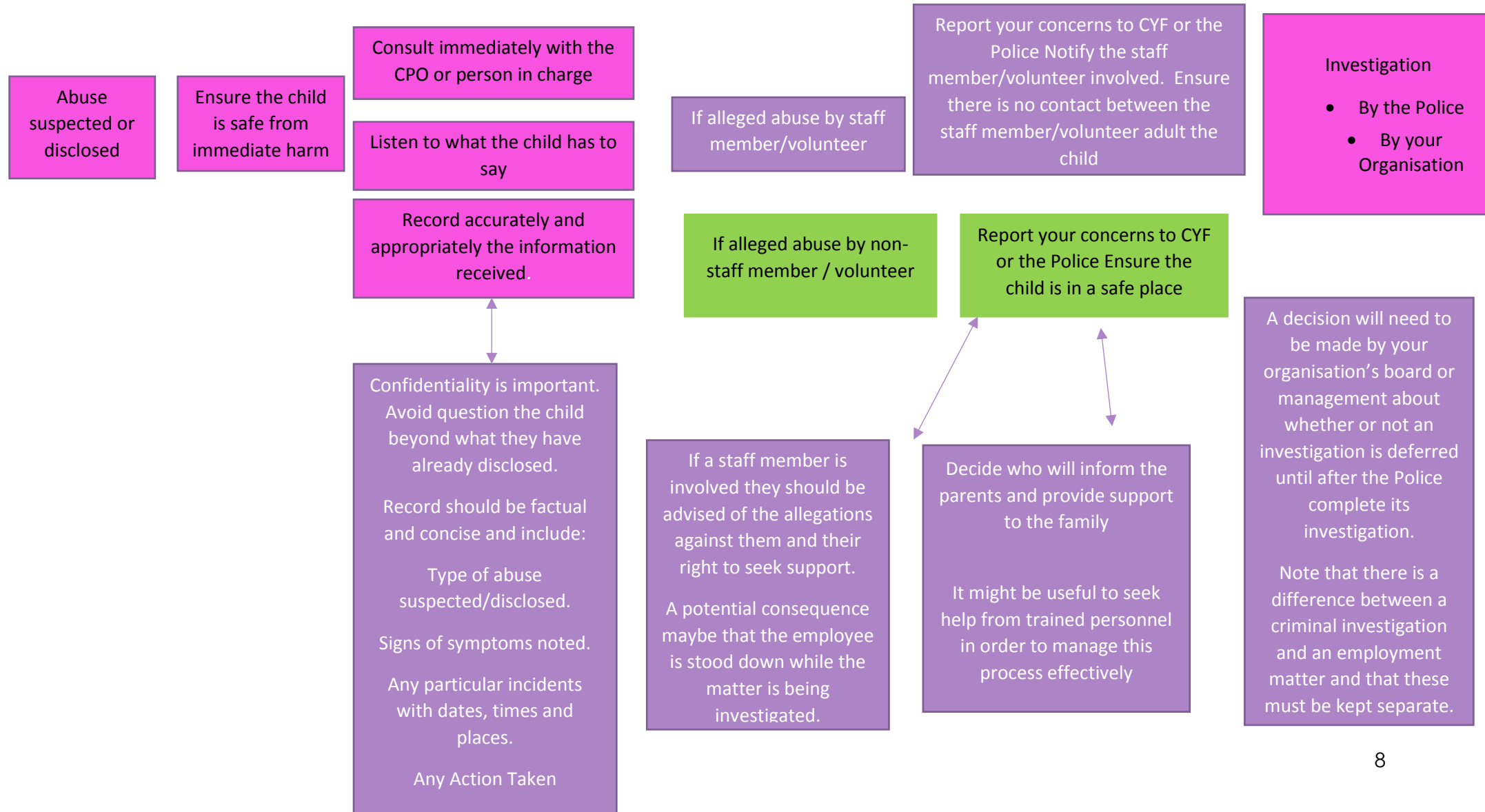
Where concerns about poor practice are reported

Poor practice involves actions that are contrary to the good practice guidelines provided by our sport and increase the risk of harm to children.

- Initial concerns should be discussed with your CPO (in the absence of a CPO, the Board or Executive of your organisation should be notified)
- Consider the allegation and where there is a legitimate concern provide a written notice to the individual(s) involved

Appendix 2: Flow chart sample- responding to suspected or disclosed abuse

Using flow charts is a good way to show the processes your sport will apply in given situations. This example covers the process for dealing with suspected or disclosed abuse. Flow charts should be included in your policy.



Part 2: Policy into practice

Preventing known or potentially unsafe people from having contact with children in our organisation		
This is about your organisation ensuring that the right people are working with children.		
Topic	Current Situation	Changes/further action we will take
We have an agreed process for recruiting and selecting staff and /or volunteers working with children	Yes	
We conduct Police vetting and other screening of staff and volunteers	Yes	
We have clear guidelines about managing the information we receive through the vetting/screening process	Yes	
We have clear guidelines about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to contact with children	Yes	

Identifying and stopping inappropriate behaviour

This relates to managing any complaints, accusations and/or disclosures about unsafe practices and harm to children

Topic	Current Situation	Changes/further action we will take
We have a named child protection persons(s) with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	Yes	
We have a clear set of procedures in place to manage accusations or disclosures of harmful activity and unsafe practices	Yes	
Staff and volunteers who may be suspected/accused of harmful behaviour have access to specialist advice, support and information.	Yes	
All Incidents, allegations and complaints are recorded and monitored.	Yes	

Supporting the child and the family		
This relates to how an organisation can support a child and his/her family should the child be harmed in some way		
Topic	Current Situation	Changes/further action we will take
We have a list of contacts for relevant local agencies who can help	Yes	
We can access other types of support such as counselling	Yes	

Appendix 4: Relevant legislation

There are numerous pieces of legislation relating to the protection of children under 18 years that may impact on sport and recreation providers.

® **Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992**

- This Act deals with the health and safety obligations of an employer to its employees. If a child is an employee of the sports club, the general health and safety obligations of employers under the Act will apply.
- There is also an obligation to ensure the safety of volunteers (some of whom may be children) while they undertake the work activity.
- Employers will be held vicariously liable to a third party for acts of its employees. For example, if an employee coach breached a sports club's duty of care to a child member, the club can be liable.

® **Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989**

- This Act deals with the responsibility for reporting likely or actual child abuse.
- Section 15 of the Act provides that:
*Any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually),
ii/- treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to a social worker or a constable.*

® **Crimes Act 1961 - Protection of Children**

- The key purpose of this part of the Act is to ensure that children are adequately protected from assault, neglect and ill-treatment.
- It places greater responsibility on adults (parent or persons in place of a parent) who have actual care or charge of a child to take reasonable steps to protect that child from injury. While 'a person in place of a parent' is not defined in the Act, it appears possible that sports club personnel could at times be considered to be 'a person in place of a parent'. For example, when taking children away to an event or tournament.
- The Act also compels people who live with a child and those who are in frequent contact with children and know, or ought to know, that the child is at risk of death, grievous bodily harm or sexual assault to take reasonable steps to protect the child from that risk.

Other relevant legislation includes:

- Privacy Act 1993
- Income Tax Act 2007
- Minimum Wage Act 1983
- Sale of Liquor Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Smoke Free Environments Act 1990
- New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Equal Pay Act 1972