

Child Protection Policy



Responsibility for policy: Director of Student Services and Pastoral Care and Director of People and Capability

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: May 2022

Next review: May 2027

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff and students of the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to
 - a. articulate the University of Waikato's commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of the children and young persons it engages with in the course of its activities
 - b. provide guidance to staff and students on the identification of suspected child abuse, and
 - c. set out the processes by which suspected child abuse may be reported.

Related documents

3. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [Children on Campus Policy](#)
 - [Children's Act 2014](#)
 - [Code of Student Conduct](#)
 - [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)
 - [Health Information Privacy Code 2020](#)
 - [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 \(Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989\)](#)
 - [Privacy Act 2020](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)

Definitions

4. The following definitions are consistent with those in the relevant legislation:
 - child** means a person under the age of 14 years
 - child abuse** means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person
 - young person** means a person of or over the age of 14 years but under 18 years; but does not include any person who is or has been married or in a civil union.

Principles

5. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people is a paramount concern of the University of Waikato.
6. The interest and welfare of the child or young person will be the primary consideration when any action is taken about suspected abuse.

Recruitment, employment and enrolment (safety checking)

7. As part of staff recruitment and employment procedures and student enrolment procedures, safety checking may be carried out in accordance with the [Children's Act 2014](#); this may include police vetting, identify verification, the checking of references and/or an interview.

Identifying suspected child abuse

8. Information on the identification of suspected child abuse is available from [Child Matters](#).

Responding to suspected child abuse

9. Information on how to respond to suspected child abuse is available from [Child Matters](#).
10. No staff member or student is expected to act alone in responding to suspected child abuse; staff and students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their line manager or the relevant programme convenor respectively.
11. Line managers and programme convenors have a responsibility to ensure that, where a staff member or student expresses a concern that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, the victim of child abuse, appropriate steps are taken to respond to the concern.
12. Where staff or students are working in an external organisation e.g. a school, the Child Protection Policy or equivalent of that organisation, where applicable, takes precedence and must be followed.
13. Information volunteered by a child or young person should be fully and accurately recorded by its recipient but no child or young person should be interviewed or in any way questioned about the suspected abuse.
14. Under no circumstances should a child or young person who is the subject of an allegation of child abuse be exposed to unnecessary risk; an allegation that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member or student may require consideration of the removal of the staff member or student from the child or young person's environment.
15. Information, advice and support with respect to responding to and reporting suspected child abuse is available from [Oranga Tamariki \(Ministry for Children\)](#); concerns may be discussed confidentially with a registered social worker by calling 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459).

Reporting child abuse

16. Any person who suspects that the immediate safety or wellbeing of a child or young person is in doubt should alert the [Police](#) immediately.
17. Any person who believes that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, the victim of child abuse may report the matter to [Oranga Tamariki \(Ministry for Children\)](#) or the [Police](#).
18. Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a staff member, the matter must be reported promptly to the Director of People and Capability.
19. Where it is suspected that child abuse has been carried out by a student, the matter must be reported promptly to the Director of Student Services and Pastoral Care.
20. The University recognises that reporting suspected child abuse can be stressful, and encourages those who wish to do so to seek access to confidential counselling

services through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) in the case of current staff, or through the [Student Counselling Service](#) in the case of current students.

21. Provided such reports are made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against any person making such a report.

Confidentiality

22. All actions taken must be with appropriate care to maintain confidentiality.

23. The [Privacy Act 2020](#), [Health Information Privacy Code 2020](#) and the [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#) allow information to be shared where there is good reason to do so, such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety.