

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy was adopted Monday 14 June 2021

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1. AIMS Games School Sporting Championships (**AIMS**) is an inter-school sporting competition for Year 7 and 8 school children across New Zealand and the wider South Pacific. At the AIMS Games, children's safety and security is paramount. The AIMS Games Trust is committed to child protection and its responsibilities under the Children's Act 2014. This Child Protection Policy (**Policy**) is to ensure high-quality practices and procedures are adopted to keep children safe while they attend the AIMS Games.
2. During the AIMS Games, AIMS personnel, contractors and volunteers (**Staff**) may observe and identify suspected child abuse and/or neglect. AIMS Staff therefore have an important role in identifying and responding to potential abuse or neglect. Clear processes are required to make sure that children are protected and that any child protection concerns are appropriately responded to and reported.

Application of Policy

3. This Policy applies to all AIMS Staff and provides guidance on how to identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child, including potential abuse and neglect.
4. While the participating schools and their principals have primary responsibility for students and their welfare while at the AIMS Games, this Policy is intended to help ensure the protection of children who Staff may encounter at the AIMS Games. The interests of the child will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect. For the purposes of this Policy, a child is recognised as someone under 18 years old.

Child protection officer

5. The AIMS Games Trust has appointed Vicki Semple, Tournament Director as the Child Protection Officer (**CPO**). The CPO will be responsible for assisting staff in matters relating to child protection. All child protection related concerns should be reported to Vicki. She can be contacted at: vickis@nzaimsgames.co.nz and 027 576 0066. A Deputy Child Protection Officer may be appointed should the CPO be unavailable.

PROCEDURES

Identifying child abuse and neglect

6. Child protection concerns may arise by disclosure or by recognising possible indicators, signs or symptoms in a child at the AIMS Games.
7. AIMS Staff should refer to the 'Indicators of Potential Abuse and Neglect' at **Appendix 1** to this Policy.

Responding to child abuse and neglect

8. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, Staff will follow the procedures of 'Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect' at **Appendix 2** of this Policy.
9. As a general rule, Staff should report any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect to the CPO, Vicki Semple. The matter may need to be reported to Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
10. The CPO, Vicki Semple will determine whether it is appropriate or necessary for the matter to be raised with the Code Coordinator or child's school. As the schools and principals have primary responsibility for their students at the AIMS Games, in most cases it will be appropriate to report concerns to the child's school. The CPO retains full discretion as to whether reporting to the school is appropriate.

11. Every situation is different. Staff will consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. The overall wellbeing of the child and risk of harm should be considered.
12. Managers/supervisors or the CPO will ensure the appropriate authority is notified when a Staff member considers that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. This extends to ensuring that all known information about the child and their family/whanau is shared with the appropriate authority, to determine the most appropriate response.
13. AIMS will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies including Oranga Tamariki and the Police.
14. AIMS will provide support to Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Allegations or concerns about AIMS Staff

15. All allegations against Staff will be escalated to the CPO or the Staff member's manager or Code Coordinator, where applicable. To ensure the child is kept safe, the CPO, Code Coordinator and/or the Staff member's manager may take steps to remove or suspend the Staff member against whom an allegation is made, subject to any legal or employment laws. Any steps taken would be in consultation with Vicki Semple and the Tournament Chairperson.
16. AIMS may consult with Oranga Tamariki, the Police or any other legal or professional advisor before taking any steps in respect of a Staff member.

Information recording

17. AIMS will record any incidents or concerns as soon as possible after they have been raised. These records should be factual and not opinion or hearsay. A copy of all records will be stored by the CPO with access restricted.

Incident Reporting

18. Staff are to report and complete an incident report for any related issues, for example, if threats of harm are made because an Oranga Tamariki referral is being made.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

19. When AIMS responds to suspected child abuse or neglect of any concerning behaviour, Staff will write down observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. All notes or records will be kept separate from other records and access will be controlled.
20. AIMS will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before sharing identifying information with anyone, other than the AIMS designated person.
21. There are specific information sharing requirements under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (**OT Act**) and in the Privacy Act 2020. More information can be found on the Oranga Tamariki website: [Information sharing | Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)
22. Staff should be aware that:
 - they can report any concerns to the Police or Oranga Tamariki if they are concerned about potential child abuse or neglect.
 - they can proactively and voluntarily share information with other appropriate professionals who are most able to help tamariki and whanau.
 - they can decide whether to share information when asked under section 66C of the OT Act by other professionals, but they **must** respond if Oranga Tamariki or the Police require information under section 66 of the OT Act.

- they **must**:
 - only share information relevant to the wellbeing and safety of the child.
 - talk with the child about sharing their information unless it is not appropriate or possible to do so.
 - follow the requirements in the Privacy Act 2020 for handling personal information.
- they are generally protected for any civil, criminal and disciplinary action if information is shared in good faith.

AIMS GAMES STAFF

Staff Responsibilities

23. In addition to the Procedures outlined above, to ensure child safety and security, AIMS Staff will:

- avoid any situations where staff may be left alone with children.
- adopt an open-door policy for all spaces.
- unless required by the child's parents or guardians, not assist children with toileting. If the situation arises, another staff member should be informed.
- avoid physical contact with children or young persons.
- avoid having adult conversations in front of children or young persons.
- ensure appropriate clothing is worn for participating in activities.
- act as a role model for children.

Recruitment and Vetting

24. AIMS is not required to ensure existing or new staff undergo identity checking or police vetting under the Children's Act 2014. However, AIMS reserves the right to require any existing or new staff member to undergo a police vetting and/or identity check as and when it requires.

Training

25. AIMS are committed to maintaining and increasing Staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. All new Staff are made aware of this Policy upon joining AIMS.

APPENDIX 1: INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Indicators of potential abuse:

- Physical signs (e.g. unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, and sexually transmitted disease).
- 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/or 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 talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).

Indicators of potential neglect:

- Physical signs (e.g. looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight).
- 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/ or evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g. disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).
- Neglectful supervision (e.g. out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).
- Medical neglect (e.g. persistent nappy rash, or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).

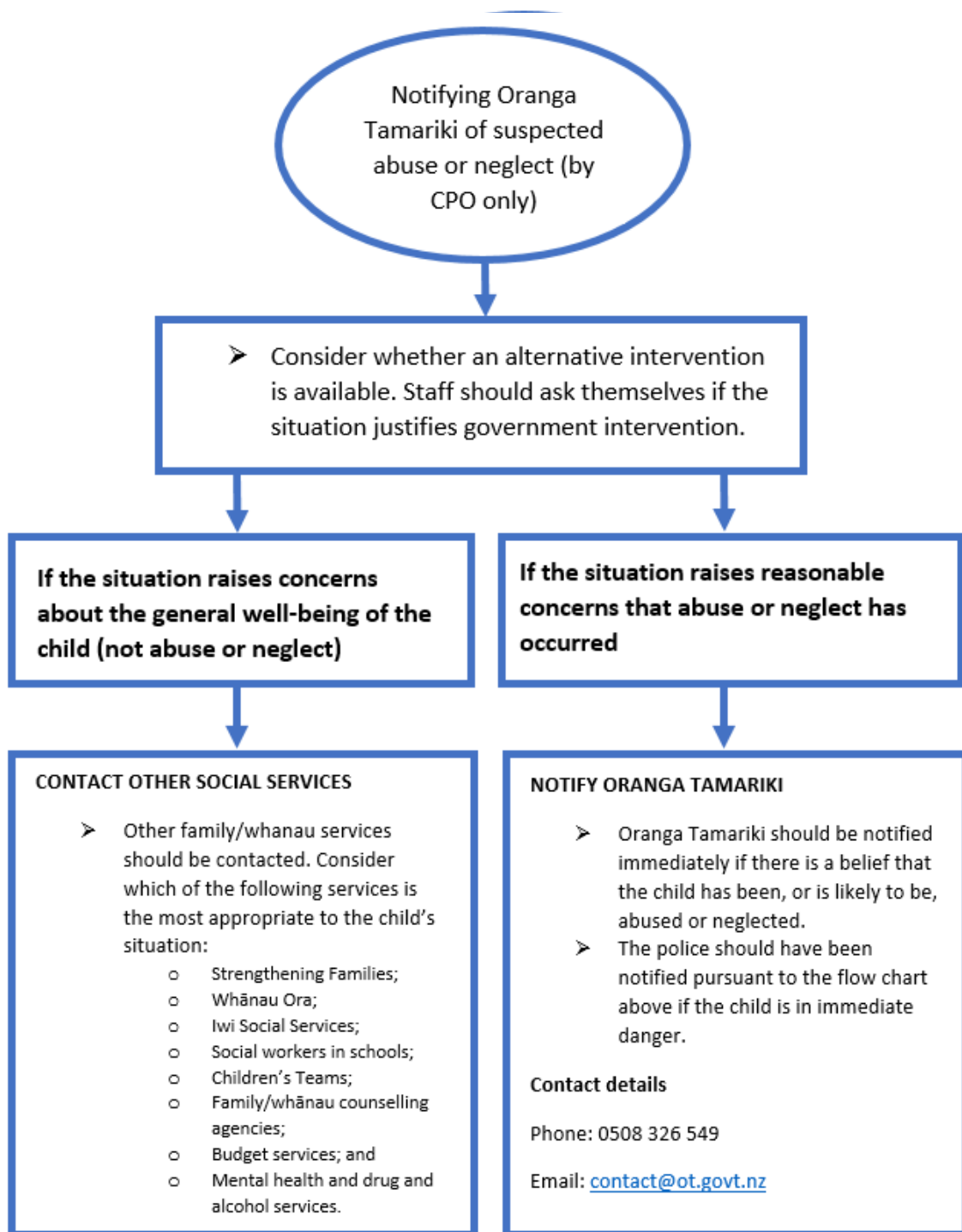
Indicators of potential well-being concerns:

- Parents seeming stressed or not coping on the money they have.
- Drug or alcohol problems.
- Parents not having friends or family to help.
- Mental health problems.
- Children routinely not going to school.

Staff should consider asking themselves the following questions:

- Is the child's behaviour a sign of abuse or neglect, or are there other things going on in the family that could affect them?
- How is the child's behaviour?
- How is the child's development?
- Has the child or family hinted at, or said that something is wrong?
- Are there signs of family violence?
- Do I sense the family is struggling, or the child is at risk in some way?

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED MISTREATMENT



RELEVANT LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- The Children’s Act 2014: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>
- Privacy Act 2020: [Privacy Act 2020 No 31 \(as at 01 April 2021\), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#)
- Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children: [Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)
- Oranga Tamariki – Identifying abuse: [Identify abuse | Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)
- Children’s Action Plan and Child Protection Policy: [Children's Action Plan & Vulnerable Children Act 2014 | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#)