



## **Capital Gymnastics - Child Protection Policy**

The staff and management understand their responsibility to safeguard the well-being of all children in our programmes, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, ethnicity, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect and bullying.

The Management aims at all times to meet its obligation to ensure we provide a safe programme and positive experiences and opportunities for children, to the highest possible standard of care.

### **A child is defined as a person under the age of 18.**

#### **Key Principles**

The key principles underpinning this Child Protection Policy are:

- 1.1 Every child's well being and safety is to be our paramount consideration.
- 1.2 All children have a right to be protected from abuse, regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity. The needs of special needs children and any other children who may be particularly vulnerable, must be taken into account. The Management and staff will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our programme activities, through adherence to these Child Protection guidelines.
- 1.3 All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 1.4 All staff (paid/voluntary) working in programmes have a responsibility to report concerns to the Programme Manager or appropriate management person. Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- 1.5 The Management acknowledges that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Employment processes will always include the following:

- All staff/ volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will clearly ask for all information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Police Licensing and Vetting Agency. Vetting of all staff, management and volunteers will be completed every 2 years.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Department of Courts regards any criminal records.
- Two references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity - passport or driving licence with photo
- All employees and volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations.
- All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction.

## 2.0 Disclosure Procedures

2.1 If a child says something or acts in such a way that abuse is suspected, the person receiving the information should:

- React in a calm but concerned way.  
Tell the child that s/he is right to share what has happened; and that s/he is not responsible for what has happened.  
Take what the child says seriously.  
Keep questions to a minimum and never to interrogate.  
Not interrupt the child when they are recalling significant events.  
Reassure the child that the problem can be dealt with.  
Not give assurances of confidentiality which cannot be kept but should reassure the child that the information will only be passed on to those people who need to know.  
Make a full record of what is said and done, BUT do not delay in reporting the problem.

2.2 The record should include:

- The child's account of what has occurred and ideally a word for word record of the child's disclosure. This may be used later in a criminal trial and it is vital that what the child discloses is recorded as accurately as possible.  
The nature of the allegation or concern.  
A complete description of any visible physical injury (clothing should not be removed to inspect the child).  
Any dates, times or places and any other potentially useful information.

2.3 This is to be reported **IMMEDIATELY** to the Centre Manager who will take the appropriate action. If the concern arises out of normal office hours and it is clear that abuse has occurred, contact should be made with Oranga Tamariki and advice can also be sought from the NZ Police.

2.4 It is recognised that staff may need support after receiving a disclosure from a child and will be offered appropriate counselling.

### **3.0 Procedure for dealing with allegations or suspicion of abuse against a member of the staff at work**

3.1 This can be an extremely difficult issue to deal with. It can be difficult to accept that a colleague may deliberately harm a child. It may also be that the behaviour that causes concern is bad practice rather than abuse. When a concern arises, there are three processes that may need to take place. These are:

- A child protection investigation.
- A criminal investigation.
- Action by the Centre Manager to discipline or remove the person concerned.

3.2 It is important that these are properly co-ordinated and that events are managed in the right order. For this reason, the Centre Manager will take no direct action against a member of the staff/volunteer without the advice and agreement of the investigating agencies (e.g. the NZ Police, Oranga Tamariki), except where such action is necessary to protect a child.

3.3 If, following consideration and any consultation, the concern clearly is about bad practice rather than abuse, the Centre Manager will take the necessary action to advise, manage or instigate disciplinary action against the member of staff about whom the allegation has been made.

3.4 Irrespective of the outcome of the NZ Police & Oranga Tamariki investigations, the Centre Manager may consider suspension and/or other action as per usual disciplinary procedure.

### **4.0 Procedure for dealing with concerns of possible abuse outside the programmes.**

As a result of their contact with a child, members of the staff may become concerned about the welfare of the child and may be concerned that the child is being abused by someone unconnected with the programme staff team. In these circumstances the individual should report their concerns to the Programme Manager or Sports Director and/ or Oranga Tamariki.

### **5.0 Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

5.1 If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Centre Manager:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If you are concerned that a relationship is developing that could represent an abuse of trust.
- If you are concerned that the child is becoming attracted to you.
- If you are concerned that a colleague is becoming attracted to someone in his/her care.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If you have had to use reasonable physical restraint to prevent a child harming themselves, or another, or from causing significant damage to property.
- If a child reports an allegation of abuse regarding a member of an external organisation e.g. tutor or sports coach staff.

## **6.0 Minimising the risk**

6.1 All members of staff should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour when working with children in order to protect children from abuse and themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Best practices include -

- Work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication. Avoid spending any time alone with children away from others.
- All Staff are provided with a code of behaviour prior to commencing employment.
- There will be a minimum of 2 staff supervising children at all times.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of the child first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children. It is not appropriate for staff, students or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child.
- Ensure that if any form of /physical touching is required, it should be provided openly and kept to a minimum. Be an excellent role model.
- Where required give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Attend relevant training courses that are provided.

## **7.0 Monitoring**

7.1 The Centre Manager will record any incidents relating to care and protection. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Any concerns or patterns that emerge will be dealt with appropriately.

## **8.0 Information Protection**

- 8.1 Any information regarding child protection issues will be stored in a secure place and there will be limited access to this by the Management parties such as Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police.
- 8.2 Information relating to any disclosures will be passed to Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police or other relevant agency only. Concerns relating to child protection which have not been referred to an external body will be retained in a secure location by the Management whilst the child is attending the service or kept for a 2-year period.