



First Years Learning Centre

Child Protection Policy

Aim:

To ensure all children are safe and protected from harm at all times.

To ensure all educators are aware of child abuse and what it looks like and how to respond to it.

Te Whāriki:

Well-being – The health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured.

Belonging – Children and their families feel a sense of belonging.

Regulations:

Early Childhood Regulations

HS31 A process for the prevention of child abuse is implemented, and a procedure for responding to suspected child abuse is followed when required.

HS32 All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).

HS33 No person on the premises uses, or is under the influence of, alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour during the service's hours of operation.

Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

To implement and protect children from harm through now linking various organisations together and mandating polices. Vulnerable children are children who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now and into the future, as a consequence often environment in which they are being raised and in some cases, due to their own complex needs

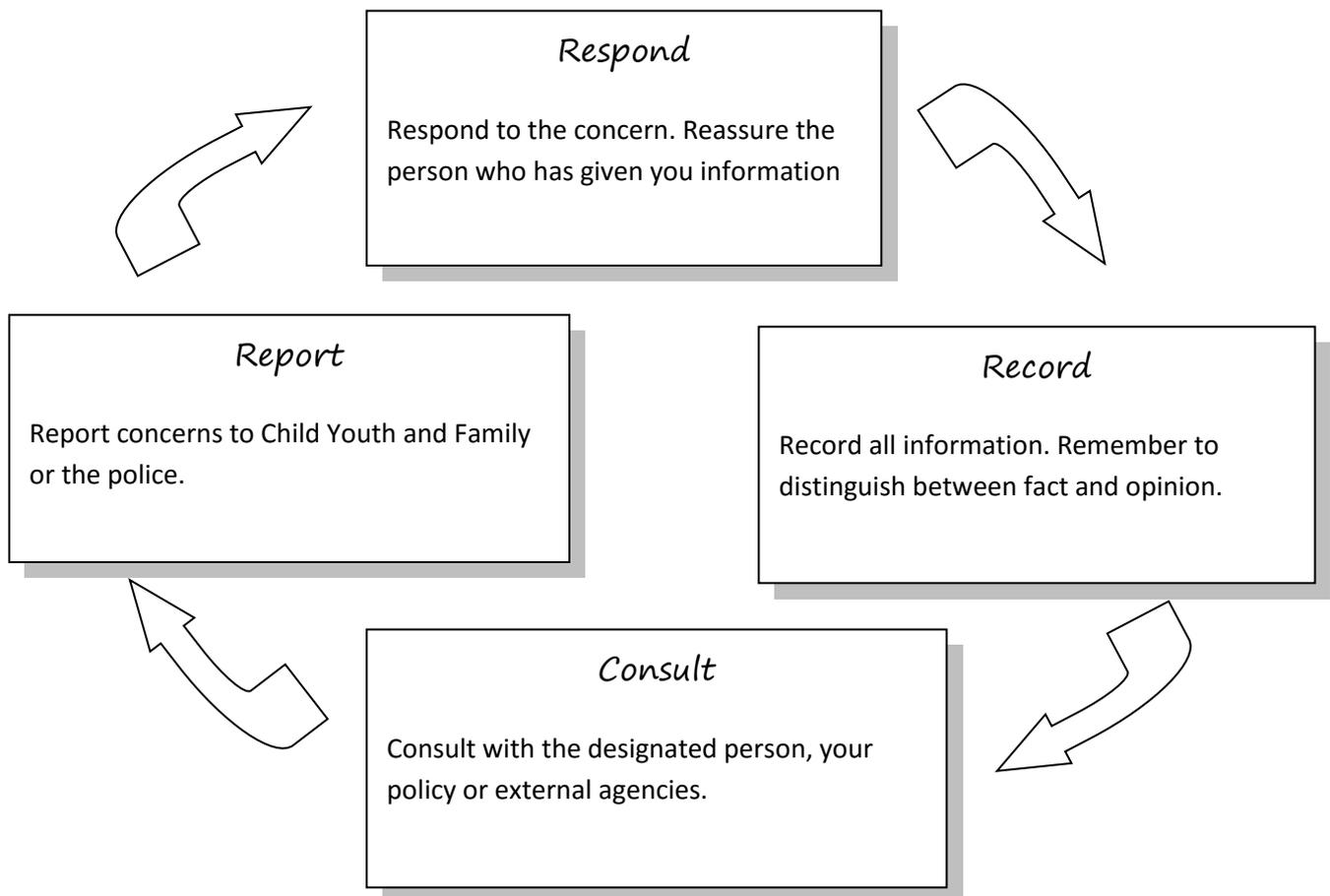
Procedure:

General methods

- Designated person for child protection is Katrina Culhane
- All educators are given a Child Protection Handbook. This book outlines what abuse is, the types of abuse, how abuse may look, how to respond to abuse, First Years care and education requirements of educators and contact numbers for support such as Child Youth and Families and the Police. This handbook is given to educators at the time of employment.
- Educators will be trained by the service provider on child abuse as she holds a Diploma in Child Protection. This will be a one hour session where abuse is discussed and the Child Protection Hand book is gone over.
- First Years Learning Centre endeavours to put all educators on some form of child protection course through Child Matter.
- The procedure for reporting abuse is to first discuss suspected abuse with the centre manager. This is to ensure personal feelings are not jeopardising the thoughts and feeling around abuse. The centre manager is trained in child protection. This discussion is to be taken place immediately and a decision will be made on how to respond immediately following the discussion.
- However if the educator/s does not agree with the decision of the centre manager they have the rights to submit a child abuse claim to Child Youth and Families or the Police as every child deserves the right to be protected and it is mandatory to report child abuse in the education sector.
- Visitors to the centre and students are not permitted to change or put children to sleep. They are not to be left alone with children at any time.
- Children are not to leave the centre without written permission from their parent.
- All safety measure are taken for children when out on an excursion (please refer to Excursions Policy)
- Educators are to uphold professional practice at all times. Their role is that of educator which is to implement the curriculum strands.
- Adult's behaviour is to fit within the law at all times.
- When children enter the centre for care and education their educators are required to separate their personal lives from their professional lives. Children deserve your undivided attention and when the hours of their care are over this is time for you to resume your personal lives.
- This policy is reviewed yearly to ensure it is current and up to date with relevant laws and research. However this can be reviewed more regularly to ensure important changes to the laws surrounding child protection are immediately actioned into policy and practice.
- All parents are given this policy on enrolment. This is to ensure transparency on what this service accepts as child abuse.
- If at any time a parent feels that they are being mistreated they are welcome to follow the complaints procedure (please refer to Complaints Policy).
- Staff will not act alone about suspicions, but will consult with their manger or supervisor who will be committed to taking action as outline in these procedures.
- Staff will not act in a way that is outside their knowledge or capacity.
- The centre manager will consult with Child, Youth and Family to clarify whether a notification of concern should take place.

- When child abuse is suspected the designated person for child protection or senior manager will inform Child, Youth and Family or the police.
- If it is decided that concerns do not require a notification to statutory authorities, the child will continue to be monitored, and records kept.
- All suspicions and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. Anything that is an opinion or a personal concern will be identified as such and not as being fact.
- Staff are to inform the centre manager of any existing relationships with members, students, clients or their families which could constitute a conflict of interest, or place the staff member in a position of compromise.
- Staff are to inform the centre manager of any potential situations or possible compromise or conflict of interest that arise as part of their work.
- No staff member is to enter into any relationship with a child, young person or family, which could mean that any other section of this policy is compromised.

Flow chart – respond, record, consult, report



Confidentiality and information sharing

- When responding to abuse or suspected abuse, it will be done with confidentiality to the families involved, to other families in the home and to the community. People are entitled to their privacy.
- Records will be kept on the procedures taken and implemented to protect children from abuse. Please see attached appendix for documentation of concerns, reporting and dealing with support for children and families who are affected by child abuse.
- Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:
 - ❖ The parents or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator
 - ❖ It is possible that the child may be intimidated into silence
 - ❖ There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
 - ❖ The child does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision.
- First years learning centre recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements of the Privacy Act, Children, Young Persons, Vulnerable Children's Act and the Families Act, Health Information Act and other statutes. There are provisions within each of these acts for sharing information needed to protect children and enable other people to carry out their legitimate functions.
- In general, staff will not share information if they believe that by doing so this will endanger the child
- First Years encourages the sharing of information when appropriate steps have been taken.
- Staff may be asked to provide information to Child, Youth and Family, the Police, Court or Lawyers and Psychologists. This will be done in consultation with the centre manager to ensure other children's privacy is upheld.
- Information sharing will be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children.
- In the case of First Years Learning Centre, staff members must consult their manager to be certain that such an interview will be undertaken legally and in the best interest of the child.
- All staff will follow the detailed process as outlined in Responding to Request for Information which is contained in the staff handbook.
- A child's record will be kept as factual as possible, and nothing will be recorded as fact without evidence to back it up. This means, for example, that no entry will be made on a child's record about guardianship of a child without sighting the appropriate documentation.

Relationships with external agencies

- First Years Learning Centre will maintain a good working relationship with Child, Youth and Family and with the Police, and be familiar with the laws that serve and protect children from abuse. We will consult with Child, Youth and Family, the Police, and with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge to help us to protect children from abuse.

- First Years Learning Centre believes that in order to keep children safe, people who suspect or uncover abuse should not be tempted to deal with cases themselves. When there is a relationship of trust and understanding with the statutory agencies, people are more likely to report and enable professional investigation to ensue.
- First Years Learning Centre recognises that by law, (sec 15 of the Children, Young Persons and Families Act 1989) any person may report a case of suspected abuse to the statutory agencies
- Mechanisms for reporting suspected neglect or abuse with outside agencies is encouraged with first having a conversation with the centre manager. All incidences are recorded in appropriate book.
- At First Years will have a working professional relationship with all agencies involved with protecting and caring for children such as CFYS and Police.
- All staff will respect that we work in partnership with these agencies and will uphold all the laws regarding sharing of information.

Managing allegations against staff

- First Years Learning Centre will respond to suspicions and allegations of child abuse by a member of staff in a manner which best ensures the children's or young person's immediate and long term safety and will treat suspicions or allegations against a staff member with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against another person.
- First Years will not act alone and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to Police or Child Youth and Family. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organisation will conclude/conceal information to protect an adult or the organisation.
- Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of the adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration
- When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against a staff member, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of children
- When abuse is suspected, staff will follow the process for responding to suspected child abuse included in this policy
- When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both staff and children's rights are to be attended to. This means that the safety of the child is of first concern, and that they staff member must have access to legal and professional advice.
- The suspected staff member will be prevented from having further unsupervised access to children during any investigation and will be informed fully of their rights.
- Staff will declare to the centre manager any situations where there could be a conflict of interest, and provision made on a case-by-case basis about who will handle the process.
- If a child discloses abuse, staff will also follow the guidelines for dealing with disclosure of abuse.
- First Years will adhere to the principles of the employment contracts act giving the staff member all information regarding their rights.

- First years recognises the added stress to fellow staff in such a situation, and will ensure support is available
- The centre manager will ensure that the suspected individual does not have any contact with the child or person making the allegation.
- If police decide to undertake a criminal investigation then the member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.
- First Years will liaise with Child Youth and Family and the Police regarding the progress of investigation
- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is “reasonable cause to suspect that abuse may have occurred”. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.

Roles and responsibilities of staff

- To put the safety of the children first.
- To learn about abuse and what it looks like and how it can be carried out. To have knowledge is to have power to protect children.
- In all cases of suspected abuse, the information and concerns will be made available only to those staff who have a need to know. This will be determined by the centre manager.
- All staff members involved will be kept informed as far as possible within the limits of confidentiality and the need to protect the best interest of the child. This will be determined by the centre manager.

Safe working practices

- First Years ensures that all staff working with children, both paid and voluntary, have been appropriately vetted and screened in accordance’s with the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014.
- First Years ensures that all staff working with children are employed in accordance with the safe employment policy.
- To protect children and ensure that they are with a safe and professional educator. All educators will be police vetted before employment begins, checks are done by checking past employment, carefully planned interview and reference checks (please refer to Hiring and Employing Educators Policy)
- At First Years Learning Centre we have a Behaviour Guidance Policy that all staff are to read and follow. This outlines appropriate professional practice and inappropriate practice. This was developed to ensure that all children are treated fairly and respectfully.
- At First Years Learning Centre we have an Induction and employment policy that outlines safe employment practice to ensure children are kept safe from harm.

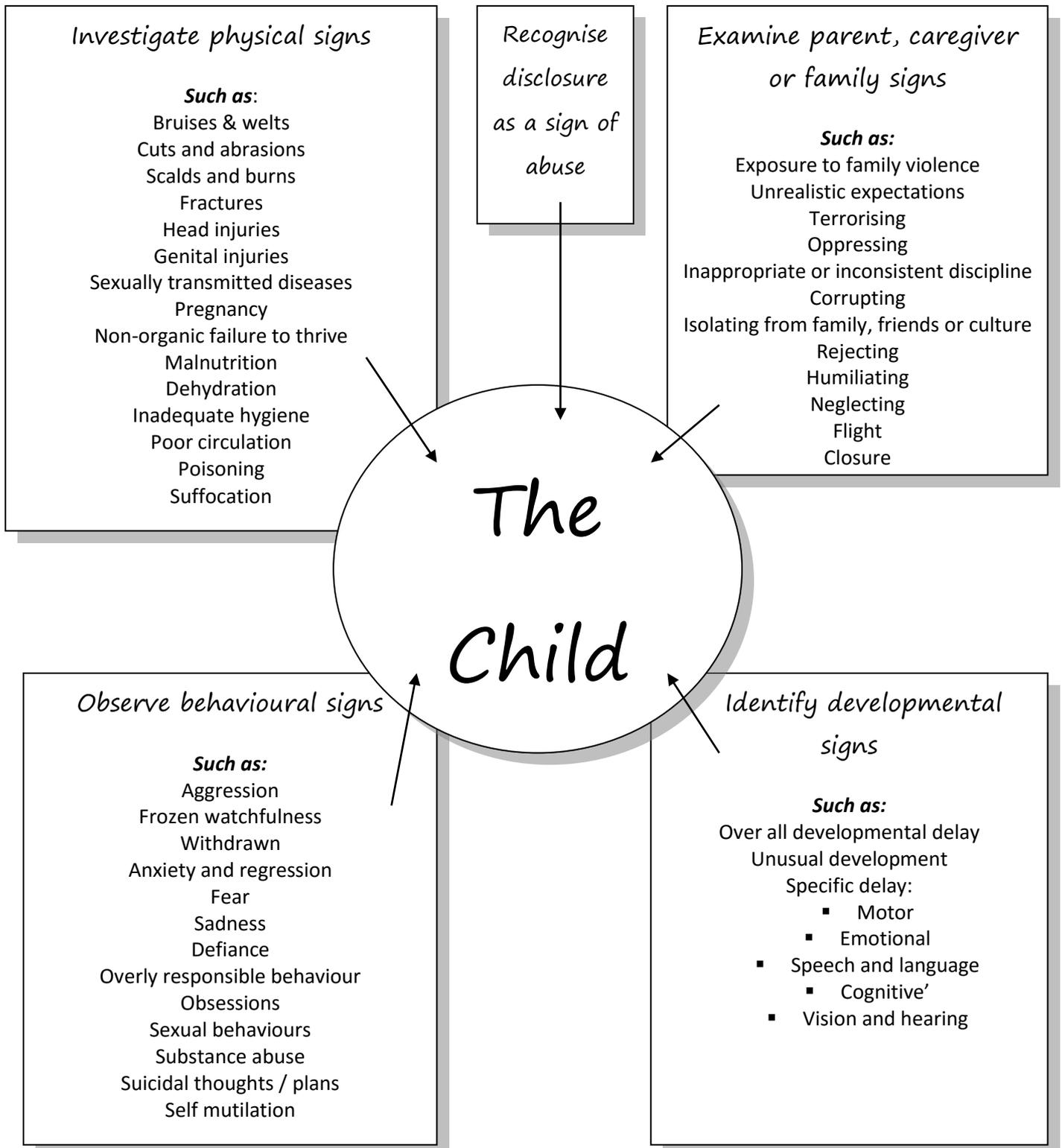
- At First Years Learning centre we have this policy that outlines roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. It demonstrates with flow charts and our Child Protection Handbook what is required of staff if abuse is suspected.
- First Years Learning Centre recognises that induction training for new employees is critical for the safety of children, all staff whether paid or unpaid will attend induction training on child abuse. They will also be required to attend training to understand and carry out the child protection policy, and their further training needs will be identified.
- All new staff will undertake an induction programme that requires them to read and understand specific material and information about child abuse.
- All staff will read and have a copy of the child protection policy. Reference to the child protection policy will be made on a regular basis in staff meetings and training sessions so that staff remain familiar with and up to date with policy statements and procedures.
- First Years Learning Centre believes that trained staff are essential and will provide time, resources and funding to support the training process.
- The training opportunity is also available to volunteers, and will be undertaken in agreement with the manager

Responding to child abuse

- What constitutes immediate reporting action:
 - Witnessing physical and sexual abuse.
 - Physical signs
 - A child disclosing information
- See signs of abuse and neglect chart to determine concern.
- The appropriate method for informing of parents when parents are suspected is a conversation with the centre manager. The next course of action taken will be seeking guidance from, and consultation with CYFS or Police. All incidents are recorded.
- The appropriate method for information sharing with parents when a staff member is suspected will be a conversation with centre manager and guidance's form CYFS or police.
- The appropriate method for information sharing with parents when others are suspected will be a conversation with centre manager and guidance's form CYFS or police.

Responding to child Abuse: - Flow chart attached

Signs of abuse and neglect – flow chart



Responding to child abuse

Abuse Suspected

Child abuse or potential child abuse is suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed.

If the child is in danger or unsafe, act immediately to secure their safety.

Listen, Record and consult

Listen to the child and reassure them, but do not make promises or commitments you can not keep. Do not formally interview the child – obtain only necessary relevant facts if and when clarification is needed.

Carefully record any physical or behavioural observations and anything said by the child (using the child own words as far as possible. Include, date, time, who was present ect).

Consult immediately with the manager or nominated senior person in charge. Discuss and agree on an appropriate course of action, including whether a report of concern is to be made.

Report your concern

The manager or nominated senior person in charge who received the information should contact Child Youth and Family (0508326459) or the police and make a report of concern.

- If the alleged abuse is by a staff member:
- Follow the advice of the CYF/POLICE
- Ensure there is no contact between the child or young person and the staff member who the allegation is against.
- If the alleged abuse is by non-staff member
- Follow the advice of CYF/POLICE
- Ensure the child or young person is in a place of safety – their safety is paramount.

Inform

Consultation will take place between the designated person for child protection and Child, Youth and Family to decide who will inform the parents of the child and provide support for the family.

Dealing with disclosure

- Support for the person reporting is important and this will be done with the service provider, co-ordinator and if needed, recommendation to a counsellor.
- Staff will not extensively question a child who has disclosed abuse, or who is displaying signs of possible abuse. However, it is important that a child is listened to and responded to appropriately.
- Support for the child who is being reported will be done in a professional manner and the best source of action undertaken.
- Children will be believed and supported. The appropriate action needed such as play therapy or simply guidance will be arranged.
- When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the well-being of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardize any legal action that may be taken against the abuser.
- There are a number of basic rules that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosure of abuse from a child:
 - Don't panic
 - Remember that the safety and well-being of the child comes before the interests of any other person
 - Listen to the child and accept what they say
 - ❖ Look at the child directly, do not appear shocked
 - ❖ Don't seek help while the child is still talking to you
 - ❖ Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone
 - ❖ Assure them that it is not their fault and that you will do your best to help
 - ❖ Let them know that you need to tell someone else
 - ❖ Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
 - ❖ Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Important notes:
 - The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the child.
 - Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.
- Things to say when a child discloses
 - Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
 - I believe you
 - I am going to try to help you
 - I will help you
 - I am glad that you told me
 - You are not to blame
- Things not to say when a child discloses
 - You should have told someone before
 - I can't believe it. I am shocked

- Oh that explains a lot
- No not...he's a friend of mine
- I won't tell anyone else
- Why? How? When? Where? Who?
- Things to do
 - Reassure the child that it was right to tell you
 - Let them know what you are going to do next
 - Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated child protector
 - Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period
 - Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.
- Thinks not to do
 - Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself
 - Do not formally interview the child
 - ❖ Never ask leading questions
 - ❖ Never push for information or make assumptions
 - ❖ Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.
 - Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
 - Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
 - Do not take any action that might undermine any further investigation or disciplinary procedures, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or careers.
 - Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.

References

- "How Can I Tell" by CPS
- "Safe not Sorry" by Anthea Simcock
- "Let's Stop Child Abuse Together" by Child Youth and Family.

Policy linking:

- Employment and Induction Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Vulnerable Children's Act Policy

Review process:

Date Implemented: July 2016

Approved: By Management

Reviewed by: Management, Staff and Parents

Next review: January 2017

Record of Issues of Concern

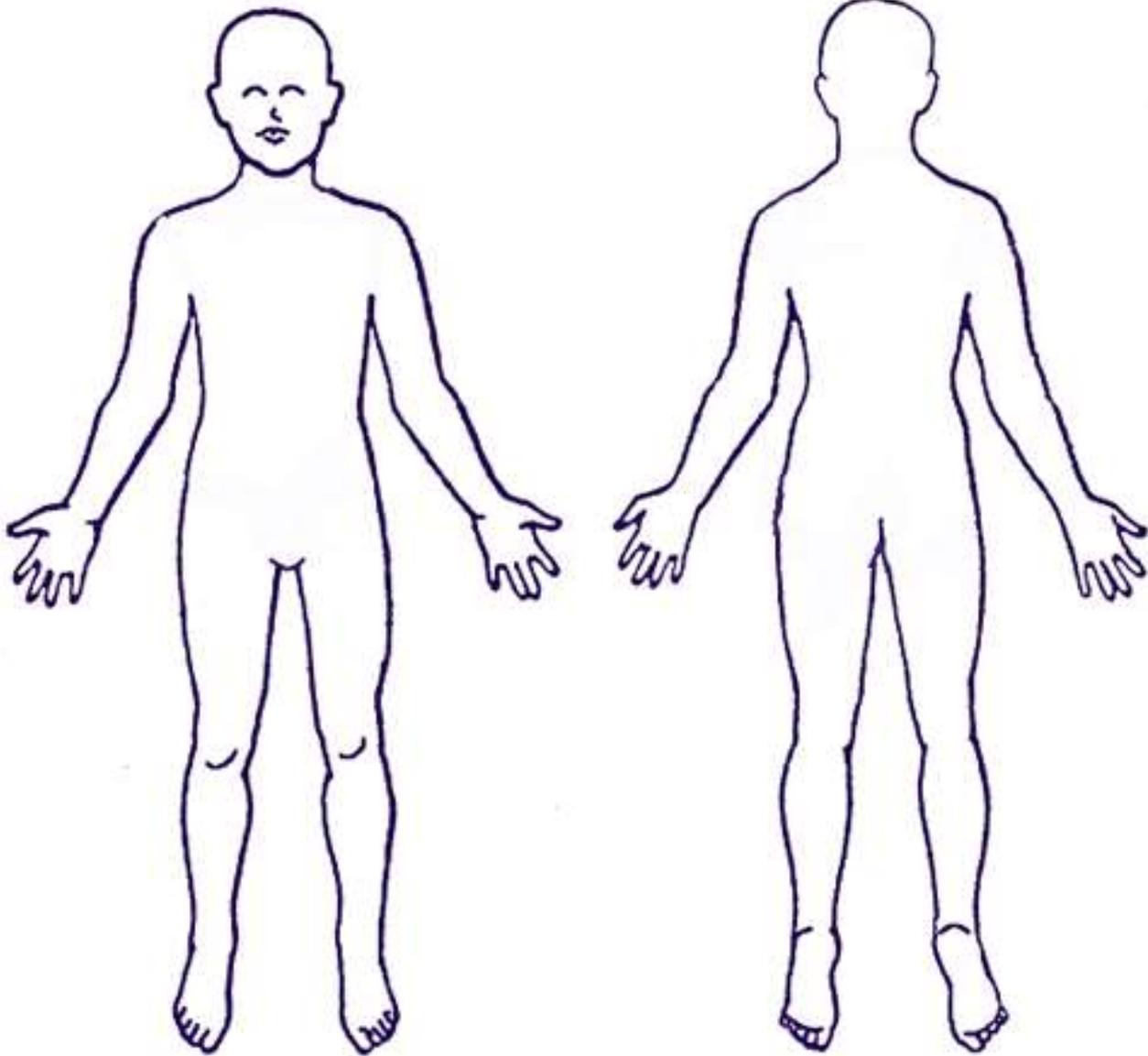
Childs Name:		DOB:	
Date:		Time:	
Notes			
Action:			
Signed:		Date:	
Position:			



Manager's Response

Childs Name:		DOB:	
Date:		Time:	
Managers Notes			
Managers Action:			
Signed:		Date:	
Position:			

Body Description



Childs Name		DOB	
Date:		Time:	
Notes:			



Notification Form

Childs Name:	Notifier:
Date of Birth:	Agency:
Ethnicity:	Phone:
Address:	Other Agencies involved:
Phone:	Phone:
Mother:	Other Significant people:
Address:	
Father:	
Address:	
Early childhood service:	Duty Social Worker:
Phone:	
Reason for Referral:	
Date:	Signature:

