



Wellington Zoo Trust

Working with Children and Young People Policy

Summary

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and young people is of paramount importance to Wellington Zoo Trust (the "Trust"). All children and young people who visit Wellington Zoo have the right to feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm.

We welcome all rangatahi to the Zoo regardless of sex, gender, family status, religious/ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, or sexual orientation. We recognise each young person is unique and recognise and accept these individual differences, both visible and non-visible. We will create a culture where everyone feels valued and respected for their whole selves and are empowered to fully contribute.

Purpose, Scope and Principles

As an organisation that interacts with children and young people, part of our operational activities are committing to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all children and young people.

For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as a child or young person up to the age of 18. The primary responsibility for the welfare of children under 14 engaging with the Trust rests with the supervising adult. All children under the age of 14 are required to be under the care of a supervising adult – this may be a teacher or caregiver; or in the instance of the Trust's School Holiday Programme, a Trust staff member.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we prioritise the safety and well-being of children at all times in the Zoo; we create a safe working environment to minimise the risk of harm to children at the Zoo (including but not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, sexual harm); we listen to and respect children at all times and we maintain professional boundaries between our staff, volunteers and children.

Our Designated Person for this Policy, the Director Communication, Experience and Conservation, will be responsible for the maintenance and regular review of this policy, in addition to carrying out the responsibilities outlined in this policy. Staff will know how to report a concern to the Designated Person and will know what the Designated Person will do once a report has been made.

Staff should always take suspicions, allegations or disclosures seriously. Staff should share any suspicions, allegations or disclosures with the Trust's Designated Person or their SMT member. Staff members will write everything down; share with the Designated Person or other suitable Manager; take everything seriously; and never promise not to tell anyone.

Who does this apply to

This policy and associated SOPs apply to any Trust staff member, contractors and volunteers who could potentially interact with children both on and off site during the course of their duties.

Training

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to the wellbeing of children and young people through appropriate training, including regular Code Yellow (lost child) and Code Purple (difficult person) drills. As part of their inductions, new staff will be made aware of this policy.

Child safe practice guidelines

All Trust staff under-go pre-employment identity verification and abide by the Trust's [Drug and Alcohol policy](#) to ensure the safety of people, property, children and animals. All staff who work in the Community Engagement Team, Visitor Ranger Volunteers and those who supervise Zoo Sleepovers are subject to Police Vetting in accordance with The Children's Act 2014, while all other Trust staff and volunteers undergo a Ministry of Justice Criminal Conviction check prior to starting work.

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations where staff may be alone with children. Wherever possible an open-door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets). Staff should be aware of where children are at all times.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, eg, if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible, involve the parents/caregivers to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures, ie avoiding being alone with children when giving assistance.

Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from the Trust's premises, or from any programmes we provide, without written parental consent. Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it.

Child abuse and neglect

Identifying abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it is important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either a colleague, manager/supervisor or the Designated Person for Child Protection – we should not act alone.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.

Consultation and staff support

Every situation is different, and staff will consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. However, they will take any observation, allegation or disclosure seriously.

The Trust will act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children and the Police. Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect are entitled to have support through EAP, or other suitable agencies.

Confidentiality and information sharing

We will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service manager or designated person.

The Trust will inform the child's supervising adult of any concerns. Any decision not to inform the supervising adult will be recorded in writing and placed in the incident file. Reasons for not initially informing the supervising adult may include:

- The supervising adult is the alleged perpetrator;
- It is possible the child may be intimidated into silence; and/or
- There is a strong likelihood evidence may be destroyed.

Trust Related Policies/Documents

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Policy](#)
- Child Protection SOP

Version Control		
Version	Date	Actions
Issue 3	25.03.22	Change of Policy name from "Child Protection Policy" to "Working with Children & Young People Policy"; Significant rework of document to remove all SOPs with superfluous information deleted; updated job titles, Acts and Government Agencies; included para under "Summary" to encapsulate WZT's ethos to welcome all; clarified Consultation and staff support with regard to caregivers; included Diversity & Inclusion Policy in list of Related documents
Issue 2 (Aug 17)	21/08/17	Board approved; updated to reflect requirements for Police Vetting of children's workers and the change from Child, Youth and Family to Ministry for Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki
Issue 1 (Aug 16)	05/08/16	Board approved.