

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Approved by:	Executive Leadership Team		
Owner:	Head of People & Capability		
Department responsible:	People & Capability		
Date approved:	2018	Reviewed:	June 2024
Next review date:	1 July 2027	DOC ID:	

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and young people who engage with our services in line with the Children's Act 2014 (the Act). We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and wellbeing as well as to protect children from harm. Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the DCC meets its obligations and provides guidance to DCC employees to ensure they are aware of the organisations responsibilities under the Children's Act 2014 and should be read in conjunction with the DCC's Child Protection Guidelines. All employees are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the policy.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- 2.1. All employees of the DCC, including temporary employees, and
- 2.2. Contractors of the DCC whose work involves access to children.

3. OUT OF SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy does not apply to elected members, Committees, Subcommittees or Community Boards (including appointed members).
- 3.2. This Policy does not apply to Volunteers. Volunteers are covered under the Dunedin City Councils Volunteer Policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 4.1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

"The DCC (the Organisation), "we" or "us" refers to the Dunedin City Council.

Child/Children: Any child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse: includes actual, potential, and suspected abuse, and refers to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as neglect. Neglect is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult, and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to a child.

Child Protection Officer (CPO): Person/s at Dunedin City Council responsible for acting as the main contact for any child protection matters.

Children's Worker:

- A person who works in, or provides, a [regulated](#) service. In the context of the DCC, this can include community, educational, social and support, and recreational services; and
- The work involves regular, or overnight contact, with a child or children (other than with children who are co-workers); and
- the person's work takes place without a parent or guardian of the child being present.

A list of current DCC Children's Worker roles is held by People & Capability (P&C) and attached as an Appendix to this policy.

"Contract Manager": A DCC employee who manages, negotiates, and administers contracts with a supplier or a contractor and is responsible for associated record-keeping.

"Contractor": Non-employees who are engaged by DCC to perform services under a contract for services.

"Core worker" means a children's worker whose work in or providing the regulated services requires or allows that, when the person is present with the child or children in the course of that work, the person –

- a) is the only children's worker present; or
- b) is the children's worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present.

"Non-core worker" is a children's worker who is not a core worker.

"Digital Communication": Any form of electronic communication including social media, text message, email, writing, photograph, picture, recording, or other matter that is communicated electronically.

"Employee" in relation to the DCC, includes:

- c) All current employees of the DCC;
- d) A person seconded to work for the DCC;

Safety check: Formal process of gathering information about a person to determine whether they pose any risk in being employed working with children, (e.g., identity confirmation, police vetting, criminal history checks).

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.1. Our approach to promoting good practice, ensuring a safe environment, and meeting legal requirements is guided by the following principles:

- Respect and promote the rights, welfare and safety of children.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.

- Support employees to undertake their roles in accordance with this policy
- Educate employees to identify the signs and symptoms of potential or actual abuse and neglect, including through digital communications, and to take appropriate action.
- Comply with relevant legislative responsibilities and work with statutory agencies when required, including the storing and sharing of information.
- The DCC will not act alone and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to the Police or Oranga Tamariki.

6. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

- 6.1. CPOs are responsible for ensuring that the process for reporting suspected child abuse (outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines) is effective and timely. This role is to be held by both the General Manager Arts, Culture & Recreation and General Manager Corporate Services.
- 6.2. CPOs will complete child protection training and ensure the child protection procedures are understood and adhered to.
- 6.3. CPOs can be contacted using the childprotection@dcc.govt.nz email.

7. EMPLOYEE SAFETY CHECKS AND TRAINING

- 7.1. All employees in Children's Worker roles will be Safety Checked in line with the Act before commencing employment and every three years thereafter.
- 7.2. All employees in identified Children's Worker roles are required to undertake child protection training organised by the DCC at commencement of their employment and every three years thereafter. Completion certificates will be stored under training records in Damstra Vault.
- 7.3. Monthly reports will be sent from People & Capability to managers with a list of employees whose training and/or Safety Checks are due to expire in the next three months.
- 7.4. Safety checks will be carried out in accordance with the Act and the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015.
- 7.5. Employees in Children's Worker roles are responsible for engaging with the requirements of the Safety Check and providing the requested information e.g., completed form and I.D. when their Safety Check is due for renewal.
- 7.6. Managers are responsible for ensuring the information for Safety Checks are provided in a timely manner to People & Capability, taking into account the timeframes for processing (up to 20 working days).
- 7.7. If a Safety Check is not completed in the timeframe allowed (maximum of 3 years from last check), the employee may be redeployed to alternative duties or suspended from a Children's Worker role until the Safety Check is complete.
- 7.8. Where the results of the Safety Check conclude that the employee poses a risk to children and/or is not permitted to work with children, the DCC may commence formal employment processes which may result in the termination of the employee's employment. When a core

worker is convicted of a specified offence, the suspension and termination will be in accordance with section 28 of the Children's Act.

8. REPORTING CONCERNS

- 8.1. Concerns about the safety of a child may be reported by an employee or to an employee by someone else e.g., a member of the public. All concerns raised will be acted on in a timely and confidential manner by the DCC employee in line with the Child Protection Guidelines.
- 8.2. All Children's Workers must report to a CPO if they are under investigation for, charged with or convicted of any crime or offence.

9. ACCUSATIONS AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE

- 9.1. Accusations, or complaints made against an employee regarding abuse of a child must be taken seriously, reported to a CPO and investigated in line with the DCC's Child Protection Guidelines.
- 9.2. Employees who do not comply with this policy, the Child Protection Guidelines and named associated policies and procedures (outlined below) may be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedures. Potential breaches include by are not limited to:
 - 9.2.1. Failing to report concerns of abuse or neglect;
 - 9.2.2. Refusing to comply with the Safety Check processes and instructions;
 - 9.2.3. Failing to complete the allocated training as instructed;
 - 9.2.4. Failing to self-report if they are under investigation for, charged with or convicted of any crime or offence.

10.CONTRACTORS

- 10.1. Contract Managers will eliminate risk by ensuring that contractors working in council facilities or providing services do not have unsupervised access to children. The Contract Manager will achieve this by working with the Manager of the area of work by either closing the area, having work take place after hours, or ensuring that the work is supervised by a Safety Checked employee.
- 10.2. If it not possible to eliminate the risk of having contractors having unsupervised access to children the Contract Manager should liaise with the Manager of the area of work to discuss options for mitigating the risk. Should no mitigation be found this should be escalated up to General Manager level if required.
- 10.3. If an accusation is made against a contractor, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of the child and the contractor will be directed to stop the work immediately and removed from site. The contract manager must notify the contractor's employer in order for them to investigate the accusation thoroughly, and to report the findings to a CPO in line with the DCC's Child Protection Guidelines.

11.INFORMATION SHARING

- 11.1. Keeping children safe requires the appropriate sharing of information subject to legal restrictions. The DCC requires employees to act within the legal requirements set out in the Privacy Act 2020 and Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (also known as the Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989), and in line with the DCCs Child Protection Guidelines.

Relevant Legislation:	Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (also known as the Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989). Privacy Act 2020 Children's Act 2014 Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
Associated Documents:	Standards for Staff Code of Conduct Child Protection Guidelines Volunteer Policy
Appendix	Children's Worker roles