



# PROTECTION POLICY

Vulnerable Person's

**Owner: The Orchard Church**

This policy was authored by Jodi Wichers on 10/11/16. A digital copy can be found on our website at [theorchardchurch.co.nz](http://theorchardchurch.co.nz)

This policy was updated 16/02/23

The policy is due to be updated on 16/02/24.

It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.



## CONTENTS/QUICK REFERENCE

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1.	<b>Policy Purpose</b>	Pg. 4
2.	<b>Policy</b>	Pg. 4/5
3.	<b>Police Check/Recruitment</b>	Pg. 5
3.1	Police Checks	Pg. 5
3.2	Recruitment/Selection of Workers	Pg. 5
4.	<b>Supervision of Children</b>	Pg. 6
4.1	Sign in/out	Pg. 6
4.2	General Supervision	Pg. 6
4.3	Expectation of Staff/Volunteers	Pg. 6/7
5.	<b>Children's Toileting</b>	Pg. 7
5.1	Infants in Nappies	Pg. 7
5.2	Preschoolers	Pg. 7
5.3	School aged children	Pg. 7
5.4	Further Guidelines	Pg. 7
6.	<b>Suspicion or disclosure of abuse of Children</b>	Pg. 8/9
6.1	Consultation & Reporting	Pg. 8
6.2	Recording of Information	Pg. 9

<b>7.</b>	<b>Threats to safety of Child/Young Person</b>	<b>Pg. 9/10</b>
7.1	Known/Potential Offenders	Pg. 9
7.2	Responding to children who pose a potential threat to other children	Pg. 9/10
7.3	Safety Concerns	Pg. 10
<b>8.</b>	<b>Designated Person for Protection Policy</b>	<b>Pg. 10</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Pg. 11</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendixes</b>	<b>Pg 12</b>
1	The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014	
2	The Children, Young Person's and their Families Act 1989	
3	Guidance on identifying possible abuse	
4	Contact List	
5	Risk Assessment form (Awesome Volunteers application)	
6	Police Check Form	
7	Report of concern Form	

# The Orchard Protection Policy

## Vulnerable Persons

### 1. POLICY PURPOSE

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The Vulnerable Person's Protection Policy ensures that The Orchard's Children's and Youth Ministries meets legislative, ethical and professional standards in the process of working with children and young people.

The wellbeing and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse and maltreatment is a paramount goal of The Orchard Children's Ministries and this policy confirms our commitment to this purpose.

#### SCOPE:

This policy also ensures that staff and volunteers of The Orchard are not placed in a vulnerable position and are protected as much as reasonably possible from unfounded complaints. They will also be given clear guidelines on acceptable and appropriate behaviour.

This policy applies to all The Orchard including Staff, Elders, Children and Youth Ministry Leaders, Volunteers and Workers.

This policy is also for the purposes of ensuring safe practices for all people who engage with The Orchard Church.

### 2. POLICY

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#### 2.1 Children and Young People

. It is the policy for all staff and volunteers of The Orchard to ensure that, to the best of their ability, children and young people are safe from physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect.

. It is also the policy of The Orchard staff and volunteers to work within the Principles and Objectives of the Children and Young Person's Well-being Act 1989 and the Principles and Objectives of The Children's Act 2014.

- a) The welfare and interests of any child or young person must be the first and paramount consideration. This policy provides a framework and expectations to protect children, including staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect.
- b) That clear guidelines are managed and reviewed regarding the identification and reporting of any child abuse or neglect. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their training and experience. We will commit to having access to the right information and training as needed.

- c) A person is designated for child protection – and is responsible for providing advice and support to staff/volunteers where they have a concern about an individual child/youth or who want advice about child protection policy. (**See 7.5**)

### 3. POLICE CHECKS AND RECRUITMENT

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3.1 Any adult volunteer, leader or staff member who interacts with people who may be vulnerable must be known to The Orchard and have completed a **Police Check\*** before being permitted to act with children or young people in a role on behalf of The Orchard.

. Where volunteers (Capernwray/YWAM, WOL Holiday Programme, Visiting Guests etc.) only attend for a short time, but would be considered for service due to the nature of their situation, a **Risk Assessment\*\*** needs to be completed including a verbal reference from a supervisor.

. Any volunteer, leader, staff member or intern who is under 18 years of age, and is therefore ineligible for a police check, must be clearly supervised by a Ministry Leader or their delegated person in any interaction with children.

**\*Police checks** may have a delay before results - during this time risk must be assessed and managed by Ministry Leaders (Staff or Volunteer) in consultation with the Children's Pastor before allowing work with Children/Young People. See **Appendix 9.4**

**\*\* Risk Assessment** See **Appendix 9.3**

3.2 Diligence in selection of workers will be used by expecting the following standards:

A committed member of the church and faithful in attending regular church services (ideally from The Orchard but exceptions are allowed for volunteers from other churches – dependent on them meeting the same criteria as The Orchard volunteers).

Be loyal and respectful to the leaders of the Church and Ministry Leaders

Be in agreement with The Orchard's Protection Policy and Police Screening process

Live a consistent Christian life.

Be prepared to attend training, development and meetings regarding their ministry area as required including Protection policy training.

We are committed to maintaining and increasing workers' awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff/volunteers will be made aware of the policy on child protection.

## 4. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN – SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

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### 4.1 Sign In/Out

- . Whenever primary school age children or preschoolers are left in the care of volunteers or staff they are to be checked in and their safety becomes the paramount responsibility of The Orchard.
- . The Orchard volunteer staff will check in all children who come to them during the Sunday school slot. Parents will collect children at the completion of the programme and The Orchard volunteer staff will sign the children out.
- . Once children have been released they are no longer the responsibility of The Orchard volunteers/staff even if they remain on The Orchard property. Parents must be informed and reminded of this periodically throughout the year. Although not directly responsible, staff still have a duty to promote safety and act in accordance with the policies of The Orchard. (see General Supervision 4.2)
- . For those events at The Orchard that do not have a check in/out, full responsibility remains with the parents.

### 4.2 General Supervision

While children are under the responsibility of the parent/caregiver (ie not checked in), if an Orchard staff member or children's ministry volunteer sees a child who is unsafe they have a duty of care to intervene in an appropriate manner. If there is ongoing concern regarding a child who is regularly unsupervised then please inform the Ministry Leader or Orchard staff member.

Staff/Volunteers should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it.

Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from our organisation's premises, or from the programme we provide, without written parental consent.

### 4.3 Expectations of Staff and Volunteers

- . Treat all children/young people with kindness, whilst modelling a high standard of personal respect.
- . No personal communication with children on devices is expected ie private messaging.
- . Physical interaction with children/young people should be minimal and appropriate and always in public view so as to not appear secretive.
- . Discourage children/young people from engaging in overly physical play with each other and with church workers. ie playfighting, piggy backing etc. Actively intervene to prevent any verbal emotional, physical, spiritual, or sexual abuse between children/young people and/or adults.
- . Protect fellow leaders from overly physical children/youth by intervening.

- . Ensure appropriate levels of supervision are maintained and seek assistance when required in a timely manner.
- . Staff or volunteers can feel confident that they can raise issues of concern about other church workers or children, to their leader or the Designated Person for Child Protection, without fear of reprisal.

## 5. CHILDREN'S TOILETING

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### 5.1 Infants in Nappies

- . When an infant in the care of The Orchard Volunteer requires a nappy change then all efforts will be made to call upon the parents to undertake this task.
- . If all reasonable attempts have failed to find the parents, in order to minimize harm to the child a staff member/volunteer will change the nappy with another volunteer present.

### 5.2 Preschoolers

- . Some children may need accompanying to the bathroom if they are still learning to toilet themselves in which case the staff/volunteer is to make sure that they are not left in a position where they are left unsupervised with a child.
- . Older preschoolers can be escorted to the toilet room entrance but not accompanied into the toilet.

### 5.3 School aged children

- . The Orchard volunteer staff will be aware of where the school aged child is when they have left the room and monitor their return.
- . Children will be encouraged to use the toilet one-at-a-time.

**On Sundays one of the disability toilets will be temporarily labelled as a "child only" toilet. Children are to be asked to "only use this toilet" for the duration of the Sunday morning. The entrance to the bathrooms in the hallway is now monitored through surveillance cameras.**

### Further guidelines

- . When working with Children and Preschoolers (under 10's) there must be a two-worker minimum supervising the children.
- . Use only rooms that have adequate visibility i.e. rooms with windows or keep the doors open.
- . Make sure the checked in/out children are all delivered and collected at the start and end of the programme.
- . Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible, involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.



## 6. SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN

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### 6.1 Consultation and Reporting

. If a child or young person discloses information regarding abuse\* of a child/young person to a staff member or a volunteer, or if they have reason to believe that a child/young person may have been abused, is being abused or is at serious risk they are to consult with the Children's Pastor or Staff Pastor as soon as possible.

**\*Indicators of potential abuse are physical signs, behavioral concerns, neglect – medical or supervisory, emotional abuse, developmental delays, or if the child is talking about things that indicate abuse. See Appendix 9.6 for greater detail.**

. Staff and Volunteers should not:

- Question the child further than what has been disclosed.
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Enquire into the details of the alleged abusee
- Promise to keep secrets

If a child disclosed the church worker needs to:

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what they want
- Reassure them they were right to tell
- Tell the child that they are being taken seriously and not to blame
- Explain that they have to pass on what the child has told them as soon as they are aware the the child is making a disclosure).
- Give an age appropriate explanation of what they can expect to happen next.

. If after the consultation with the Pastor, it is identified that a child/young person is abused or is at risk of abuse, a written **Report of Concern\*** should be made to Oranga Tamariki. This report must be made with the full knowledge and consent of the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Elders.

. If the abuse is recent, acute, current then the child /young person is at immediate risk. A report needs to be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki immediately. An emergency requires the Police to be contacted.

***Whilst the notification of the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Elders first is preferable to informing an outside agency, the safety of the child is paramount and must be considered ahead of any other procedure.***

### 6.2 Recording of Information

. It is important that documentation of concerns about children and young people be undertaken in writing, so that they are not distorted when passed from staff member to Pastor or from The Orchard to the outside agency.

**Reports of Concern** are to be objective; include details of the conversation, as well as notes about any physical signs of abuse. **See Appendix 9.7 \*Report of Concern**

## 6.2 Informing the Child's family

Wherever possible a child's family should participate in the decisions affecting that child so the family relationship can be maintained and strengthened.

Although the parent or caregiver will usually be informed there may be times when they may not be. This may be when:

- The parent or caregiver is the alleged offender
- It is possible the child may be intimidated into silence
- There is strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed.

## 6.3 Confidentiality and information sharing

- Under the privacy act 2020 the giving of information to protect children is not a breach of confidentiality. The sharing of personal information is allowed if "disclosure of the information to prevent or lessen a serious threat". (principle 11 of the Privacy Act 2020)
- If a church worker raises a concern in good faith which proves to be unfounded, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against the church worker. (Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989)
- Before any information is shared advice should be sought from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.

# 7 THREATS TO SAFETY FOR A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

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## 7.1 Known/Potential offenders

. If any Orchard staff member or volunteer is aware of a person who may pose a threat to a child or young person, they are to inform the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Elders as soon as practicable, in a way that respects the privacy of the person concerned, they will then determine the action to be taken.

. If a concern or allegation needs to be made that involves a member of The Orchard, then it is to be reported to their Direct Supervisor who will then determine the action to be taken (if that is not possibly then report to their Direct Supervisor and so on).

## 7.2 Responding to children who pose a potential threat to other children.

. If a staff/volunteer is aware of behavior from a child/young person that poses threat to other persons, they are to report that to their Leader.

. The Leader may discuss this concern with the Caregivers or relevant Pastors as required.

Guidelines for managing this are as follows:

No violent behavior is to be tolerated and must be acted on immediately

Consider pairing the child with a volunteer.

Discuss the concern with the child's caregiver/parent

As a final resort a child may be excluded from our program, in consultation with the Pastor.

### 7.3 Safety Concerns

. If any staff or volunteer is aware of any potential threats whether environmental, procedural, or otherwise they have a duty of concern to inform a Ministry Leader or Pastor in a timely manner.

. The Pastor in consultation with the Lead Pastor will then investigate the concerns and determine what action will be taken. If applicable they will refer the matter to the Health and Safety team.

## 8 DESIGNATED PERSON FOR PROTECTION POLICY

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This person will be responsible for the maintenance and annual review of this policy. This role is required to undergo regular child protection training and is responsible for ensuring child protection is a key focus with the Orchard Church both at a strategic level and on a day-to-day basis. The secondary person for this role will be the current Children's Pastor. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training. Our organisation commits to ensure staff have access to the training they need.

At the date of this policy the Designated Person for Child Protection for the Orchard Church is:

Jodi Wichers

At the date of this policy the secondary Designated Person for Child Protection for the Orchard Church is:

Makayla Crawford.

## 9 DEFINITIONS

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**The Orchard** - our church community.

**The Orchard Children and Youth Ministry** consists of:

**Crèche** under 3 years; **Juniors** ages 3-6 years inclusive;

**Middles** 6-11; **Seniors** 11-13

**Te Puke Junior Rally** age 7 – final year of primary;

**Te Puke Senior Rally** school year 7 – 9

**Youth** - high-school age

**Children's Pastor** - the Staff overseer and advocate for The Orchard Children's ministries at The Orchard.

**Youth Pastor** – the staff overseer and advocate for The Orchard Youth Ministries at The Orchard.

**Ministry Director/Leader** - The Orchard leader (paid or unpaid) who oversees one of the listed above Ministries.

**Lead Pastor** - the primary leader (aside from the Elders) of The Orchard.

**Staff Pastor** - a leader at The Orchard who is on staff.

**Staff member** - a paid worker at The Orchard.

**Volunteer** - an unpaid worker in ministry with one of the Children's Ministries as listed above.

**Chairman of the Elders** – the volunteer leader of the Elders.

**Health and Safety team** – a group of people responsible for administering and monitoring the OSH standards at The Orchard.

**Child/Young Person** is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

**Workers** - anyone (paid or unpaid) who is involved in a capacity of authority (regardless of amount of authority) as either a volunteer or leader and contributes their time to the ministry.

**Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

**New Zealand Police (Dial 111)** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Child, Youth and Family in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred. (**Dial 111**)

**Oranga Tamariki** – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need. (Phone: 0508 FAMILY or 0508 326 459 Email: [contact@ot.govt.nz](mailto:contact@ot.govt.nz))

## 10 APPENDIXES

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### 1 The Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html>

### 2 Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM147088.html>

### 3 Guidance on identifying possible child abuse

### 4 Contact List

The below documents are available from the Children's Ministry Director or The Orchard Office Staff

### 5 Risk Assessment form

### 6 Police check form - Vetting Service Request and Consent Form

### 7 Report of concern form.