

Applicable Date:	April 2024
Owner:	King Country Rugby Football Union (KCRU)
Review Date:	April 2026

Introduction

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and young people, including prevention of abuse or maltreatment, is a paramount goal of KCRU. This Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is part of NZRs 'Safe clubs Safe Kids' programme. This policy provides guidance about how to prevent harm from happening to children and young people in Rugby's care and identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing of a child or young person, including possible abuse or neglect.

This policy was authorised by KCRU and Josh Standen Rugby Manager KCRU, in April 2024. Josh Standen is responsible for the maintenance and three yearly review of this policy. A digital copy can be found on our website at

<https://www.sporty.co.nz/kcrfu/community/club-health/safe-clubs-safe-kids>

The policy is due to be updated on April 2025. It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.

Purpose and Scope

Our Safeguarding children policy supports KCRU employees (permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, fixed-term and casual), independent contractors, agency employees or work experience personnel) to prevent harm from occurring in the first place in our environments and to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect.

This policy will at least be known to all staff and will provide specific information for those who will have direct contact with children. It is our organisation's commitment to protect children from abuse and to recognise the important roles some of our staff have in protecting children.

In addition, KCRU commits to exploring opportunities to work with other providers, including from other sectors, to develop a network of child or young person protection practice in our community.

Key Principles

This policy provides a framework and expectations to protect children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect.

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies this policy will also help our staff identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern.

We will adopt Prevention Guidelines that act to prevent harm or abuse from occurring while children are in Rugby's care. A list of these can be found in Annexure 2 of this policy.

We will act early on warning signs with individuals, teams, or clubs where we believe practices may be putting children at risk.

We also commit to exploring opportunities to work with other providers, including from other sectors, to develop a network of child protection practice in our community.

Definitions

- **Child or young person** - Anyone under 18 years of age.
- **Groups with vulnerabilities** -this refers to children or groups who may be exposed to discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, sex, language religion, political opinion, disability, or other status.
- **Harm** - Refers to the negative psychological, social, or physical consequences for a child.
- **Duty of care:** those who are working with children in rugby must show care, attention, caution, and prudence including following this policy and the procedures contained in it.
- **Safeguarding** - the actions we take to ensure all children are safe from harm when involved in our clubs and activities.
- **Designated person for child or young person protection** - the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to employees where they have a concern about an individual child or young person or who want advice about child or young person protection policy.
- **Disclosure** - information given to an employee by a child or young person, parent, or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Oranga Tamariki** - Ministry for Children- the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children or young people found to be in need.
- **New Zealand Police** - the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children in child or young person protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Child or Young Person Abuse

The Oranga Tamariki / Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989 defines abuse as:

'...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually) ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person'.

- **Physical abuse** is any act that may result in physical harm of a child or young person. It can be but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning, and fabricated or induced illness.

- ***Emotional abuse*** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child or young person's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting, or terrorising. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others.
- ***Sexual abuse*** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities as well as non-contact acts such as involving children and young people in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities, and sexual behaviours.
- ***Neglect*** is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child or young person's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child or young person's basic or emotional needs.

Responsibility of Employees

KCRU is committed to adopting safe practices that act to prevent harm or abuse from occurring while children or young people are in Rugby's care. Employees will not be expected to assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training, however, KCRU does commit to ensuring that employees have access to the information and training they need at the appropriate level for their role.

In view of the above, it is the responsibility of KCRU employees to:

- be vigilant,
- to follow prevention guidelines listed in this policy which set up safe environments for children and limit the chances of harm occurring. (Annexure A)
- have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse,
- and to report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

Child or Young Person Protection Advisors (CPA)

KCRU will have an appointed Child or Young Person Protection Advisors (CPA). This function will be held by:

- CPA - Josh Standen
- Phone 0274178101
- Email rugbymanager@kingcountryrugby.co.nz

The KCRU CPA will be responsible for carrying out the responsibilities outlined in this policy and per the below:

- To know the decision-making process for concerns of abuse.
- To share NZR resources and NZR contact details when lower end issues have been identified. These are issues that may be below the threshold of reporting to Oranga Tamariki or Police but pose a potential risk to children. (See traffic light tool Annexure C)

- To know the contact details of local Police and Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children.
- Record the details of the incident for submitting to Oranga Tamariki- Ministry for Children and to store this information securely.
- Consult with appropriate people in management (CEO, Board Chair) if required.

Responding to Child or Young Person Safeguarding Issues

The interests of the child or young person will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect. KCRU commits to support the statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children) and the New Zealand Police (the Police) to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy.

Guidelines for responding to issues:

- All concerns of potential, suspected, or alleged abuse must be brought to the attention of a CPA at KCRU.
- Good decision making is not done in isolation, the CPA will confidentially inform their manager or designated person of the concern, the process, and the outcome.
- CPAs will use the traffic light tool (Annexure C) to determine course of action. All concerns of abuse must be reported to Oranga Tamariki or the police in an emergency. All lower end concerns (for example bullying coaching styles) must be addressed but may be able to be addressed at club level, the CPA can provide advice on this.
- If a child or young person makes a verbal disclosure to an employee, it is important that the employee takes what the individual says seriously.
- Listen carefully to what the individual is saying and are not to interview them or ask too many questions, ask the very basics i.e. Who/When/Where?
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing but make no promises, e.g. 'I will keep you safe'.
- Once the basics have been ascertained, no further questions are to be asked. What the individual has said is to be documented, this should include time, date and who was present. This information will be passed onto authorities as soon as possible.
- Advise Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or Police promptly by the CPA, ideally within 48 hours, when a disclosure is made. In case of an emergency, employees are to contact 111 immediately.
- Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver will be determined by Ministry of Vulnerable Children (Oranga Tamariki) and Police in consultation with the CPA.

Allegations made against employees, volunteers, or representatives of other agencies

- Allegations, suspicions, or complaints of abuse against employees, volunteers or representatives of other agencies must be taken seriously and reported to the CPA who will deal with them immediately, sensitively, and expediently within the procedures outlined in this policy.

- It is not the responsibility of the employee to investigate allegations of child or young person abuse.
- If the Police decide to undertake any criminal investigation, then the employee, volunteer or representative of other agencies may be suspended from working with children or young people, 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.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

KCRU will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service manager or designated person. Employees should be aware that under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki / Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989 any person who believes that a child or young person has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

There are additional provisions made under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code that where there is good reason to do so, such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11), information may be passed onto the correct statutory bodies.

NZR will adhere to its own privacy guidelines on keeping documentation confidential and secure.

Related Legislation

Oranga Tamariki / Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989
Privacy Act
Health Information Privacy Code

Approver - Executive Team

Contact Person - General Manager of Community Rugby may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy.

ANNEXURE A Prevention Guidelines

1. Follow the 'Rule of Two'. Adults should avoid situations where they are alone with a child. While acknowledging that occasionally there may be no alternative, for

example, where a child falls ill and has to be taken home. However, one-to-one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis.

2. Any online/text communication should never be one on one, always include the child's parents/caregivers in messages.
3. Follow NZR's police vetting policy which includes identity checking and vetting for all coaches, refs and team managers for teams that include U18s.
4. Communicate with children and adults about Child Protection when running events that involve children, to ensure they know who they can talk to about any concerns.
5. Follow NZR's travel guidelines for travel and trips away.
6. Adults and leaders at New Zealand Rugby should model healthy, respectful behaviour to both adults and children. Utilise codes of conduct to reinforce this. Examples can be found on Coaching Toolbox website.
7. If any form of physical contact is required ask the person's permission, explain what you are doing and why to both the child and their parents/caregivers.
8. Where possible ask parents/caregivers to be responsible for children or young people in changing rooms. Always ensure that whoever supervises does so in pairs.
9. Where there are mixed teams away overnight, teams should always be accompanied by an adult male and female coach or helper.
10. If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for a child, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent/caregiver and if possible, the child. Let them know what you are doing and why.
11. If you need to transport a child alone have them sitting in the back seat of the car and take them directly home rather than detour to other places on the way.
12. Don't allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.
13. Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child are taken seriously and that the guide to report suspected or actual abuse included as an appendix is followed.
14. Ensure that the nature and intensity of training and competition does not exceed the capacity of a child's immature growing body and ability.
15. Ensure that use of photographic images and video are aligned to relevant privacy policies.
16. That all people responsible for children and young people at any given time should always remain in an alcohol-free state, so that they can react appropriately to any situation that might arise.
17. Those over 18 should always maintain appropriate social, sexual, and physical boundaries with those under 18, this includes not forming or pursuing sexual relationships with under 18s.

You can find all listed resources on the NZR website under 'Safe Clubs Safe Kids'.

ANNEXURE B

Steps for reporting suspected or actual child or young person abuse

ABUSE IS EITHER SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED

- Ensure the child or young person is safe from immediate harm.



LISTEN

- **Listen carefully** to what the child or young person is saying **DO NOT** interview the child or young person or ask too many questions, ask the very basics i.e. Who/Where/When? Reassure the child or young person they have done the right thing.
- Once you have ascertained the basics **DO NOT** question them further. Document what the child or young person said word for word, include time, date and who was present, so you can pass this information to authorities as soon as possible. Report your concern to the NZR CPA



HOW TO REPORT YOUR CONCERN

- If you ever think a person is in immediate danger, call the Police (**111**).
- Advise **Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children** on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or **Police** promptly when a disclosure is made.



POLICE

- The Police have a dedicated team of investigators who focus on child or young person.
- Deciding when and who will inform the parent(s) and/or caregiver will be determined by Oranga Tamariki and Police in consultation with the NZR CPA. Report early so there is time to consider what's best for the child.
- Police and Oranga Tamariki will arrange interviews of the children or young people.
- **DO NOT** conduct an investigation of your own before making a report of concern.

ANNEXURE C: Traffic Light For Responding

RESPONSE TRAFFIC LIGHT

ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Anything that indicates abuse of a child or young person may be taking place.

OBSERVATION

Any disclosures or indicators of abuse, whether physical, sexual, neglect or emotional, should be escalated.

NON-ACCIDENTAL BRUISES, WELTS, CUTS, ABRASIONS ROPE BURNS, BROKEN BONES

- These are more likely on the on the buttocks, trunk, genitals, ears, neck, top of shoulders and back of hands.
- Bruising caused by a weapon is more likely to be an unusual shape and the bruise will have hard edges.
- Non-accidental burns - particularly on soles of feet, hands, buttocks. Burns that are a particular shape e.g. cigarette burns or from an element.
- Immersion burns where parts of a child's body has been placed in hot water.

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Witnessing sexual touching between an adult and child/young person and child.
- Adults / young people engaging in non-touching sexual behaviour with children or younger people, including online or verbal sexual behaviours.

INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact is inappropriate if it:

- includes touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
- frightens, distresses or embarrasses a child
- destroys their trust
- occurs in a private place.

SIDE LINE ABUSE DIRECTED AT A SINGLE CHILD

- This may include threats or humiliation.

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Untreated medical issues and injuries, signs of malnourishment.

ACTION

For emergencies or where there is imminent risk, act immediately by calling Police on 111 or Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children on 0508 326 459.

For all other cases act as soon as possible by reporting to your CPA, completing the brief reporting template, and lodging your concern within 48 hours to the Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children.

Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children contact details
Phone: 0508 326 459 (24/7)
Email: contact@mvcot.govt.nz

UNSAFE BEHAVIOUR

Concerning behaviour within rugby that puts children and young people at risk and must not be ignored.

OBSERVATION

- Side-line behaviour that is persistently aggressive but not directed at a single player.
- Training that harms a child physically-inappropriate to age and ability of the child, encouraging crash diets or dehydration to lose weight.
- Lack of appropriate boundaries in teams. For example, children weighing in naked, being in showers with adults.
- Insisting on hugging, touching, tickling, kissing, wrestling or holding a child/young person, especially when this attention is not wanted.
- Creating opportunities to get alone time with a child/young person.
- Buying children or young people gifts or food or giving them money for no apparent reason.
- Asking questions about the sexuality of a child/young person and talking about their developing body. This might include inappropriate sexual behaviour in front of children or using sexual names for a child like 'sexy' even in a joking way.
- Not respecting a child/young person's privacy when changing, using bathrooms etc.
- Accidental injuries that need to be reported and reviewed as part of health and safety.
- Isolation of a child/young person socially or physically.

The more of these signs an adult or older child is displaying the more assertive you need to be in addressing them.

ACTION

For Orange signals, act within one week. Orange signals can usually be dealt with at Club/Union Level without reporting externally, though if in doubt contact Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children. This may include addressing the individual and/or taking a 'club wide' approach.

ADDRESSING THE INDIVIDUAL

For example:

To keep everyone safe we avoid one on one time with kids. I'll come with you to hurry them up in the changing room next time.

CLUB WIDE/ BLANKET STRATEGIES

Use your newsletters to remind people of rules. For example:

Part of our Safe Clubs Safe Kids programme is having adults supervise children in pairs, parents please put your hand up for trips and if your child's coach needs an extra adult during games or training.

Use your JAB or coach briefings to clear up any confusion about rules for people. For example:
For any overnight tournaments planned please make sure you and your team have a copy of the travel and overnight stay protocols. These protocols keep everyone safe and help relieve some of the stress for those running events.

Hang signs in changing rooms etc that remind people of the rules. For example:
Adult supervision of children should be done in pairs.

Hang signs that target children in your clubs encouraging children to talk with an adult if they feel unsafe.

If you require further clarification, you can contact Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children to discuss the situation.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour that is not cause for concern.

OBSERVATION

Discipline of children that does not cross into abusive behaviour and does not endanger the child in anyway.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact is appropriate if it:

- is used to assist in skill development.
- is required for the child's safety.
- occurs with the player's understanding and permission.
- is for the child's benefit, not adult gratification.
- occurs in an open environment.

For example, high-fiving children on their hand as long as the child is comfortable with it.

Physical contact between children and young people is not a cause for concern where it reflects:

- Normal curiosity about their own and other children's bodies that are age and stage appropriate.
- Young people flirting or developing mutual relationships with others of a similar age and stage.

Normal curiosity is usually characterised by being spontaneous, mutual, doesn't involve force, secrecy or pressure being used and is not compulsive or at the exclusion of other activities.

ACTION

No action needed.

If you require further clarification, you can contact Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children to discuss the situation.