February 2026	**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**
Contact Authority	Manager: Otago Polytechnic Childcare Centre (OPCC)
National Guidelines	**OPCC is committed to the education, care and well-being of all children and their families and to acting at all times in the best interests of children.** **The interest, safety and well-being of children are paramount.** Staff are made aware of this Policy and operate within the Education Council Of New Zealand - Our code Our standards - Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession, and Te Whāriki. **This Child Protection Policy also adheres to the following acts:** Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 (as at 30th June 2024) Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (27th November 2025) Privacy Act 2020 (27th November 2025) Human Rights Act 1993 (27th November 2025) Education and Training Act 2020 (19th November 2025) Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand- Our Code Our Standards-Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession (June 2017) Family Violence Act 2018 (30th June 2024) Care of Children Act 2004 (6th October 2023) Employment Relations Act 2000 (13th November 2025) Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. Reg (1996) Children's Act 2014 (1st August 2025) Licensing Criteria for ECE and Care Services 2008: Child Protection HS31; HS32; HS33 The Child Protection Policy is to be used in conjunction with all other OPCC Policies and Procedures **Any person who suspects that a child is suffering abuse at the hands of any other person can report this directly to Oranga Tamariki free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the Police (111).** **ANY PERSON – ANY TIME**
	Te Whāriki Well-Being - Goal 3: Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

Designated person for Child Protection	**Myone Raynbird is the OPCC Designated Person for Child Protection: Contact Details: mraynbird@op.ac.nz**
Basic Principles **Basic Principles continued**	• **This Policy applies to all children who are attending OPCC, all staff, management, contractors and volunteers and all persons onsite from services providing support to OPCC staff and children.** • Abuse within the context of this policy shall cover physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. (See definitions at end of Policy) • This commitment means that the interest and the welfare of the child are the prime consideration when any decision is made about suspected abuse. • OPCC supports the role of the Police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected abuse and will report suspected abuse to these agencies. • We maintain knowledge of, and relationships with, agencies and individuals in the community available to support and counsel families. • All practical steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material such as over the internet. Any publications or media brought into the Centre for use by the children are vetted by staff. • Children will not have access to the internet without an adult present. • While using Otago Polytechnic desk top computers, teachers are required to log on using their Otago Polytechnic username and password. • OPCC emphasizes the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between personal and professional working relationships with regards to children and their families. Discouraging close personal relationships or caregiving activities outside of the work environment, such as babysitting for parents. • In relation to social media, OPCC encourages teachers to adhere to The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand's "Our Code, Our Standards" — the code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession (2017). All shared correspondence should be a professional nature and not bring OPCC or its community into disrepute. • At all times social media is a strictly personal form of correspondence and should at no time involve any discussion related **to OPCC, children or families.**

Training	• We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent and respond to abuse. • At a minimum all registered teachers will complete the Ministry of Education online training (1.5-2 hr) annually. https://training.education.govt.nz/ • As part of their induction, new staff will familiarise themselves with the centres policy about Child Protection and will be encouraged to read any resource material. • OPCC ensures that all attend at least one workshop or training session on child abuse if such a session is available. **Myone Raynbird is the OPCC Designated Person for Child Protection: Contact Details: mraynbird@op.ac.nz**
Keeping in touch with professional Agencies	• OPCC maintains a working relationship with the Care and Protection division of Oranga Tamariki Service and is familiar with the laws and regulations which serve to protect children from abuse. • We consult with appropriate agencies which have specialist knowledge to help us protect children from abuse. • OPCC believes that in order to protect the process and keep children safe, people who suspect or uncover abuse should not attempt to deal with cases themselves without support and advice. When there is a relationship of trust and understanding with statutory agencies, people are more likely to report and enable professional investigation to ensue. • If an appropriate agency is notified and asked for advice or intervention, a record of their response is kept via the confirmation letter/email that is sent from the agency. • OPCC encourages the networking of agencies, and staff will maintain the relationships between agencies when working together with them. • We do not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise. • Our prime considerations in choosing staff are ensuring that they have the skills and attributes which contribute to the children's safety and to healthy physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development. • At all times OPCC meet the regulated requirements set by the Ministry of Education for teacher to child ratios

Supervision	• **Anyone working with children are safety checked in accordance with the Children's Act 2014 - this includes volunteers. This includes Police Vetting as part of the staff safety check procedure.**

	• **OPCC has a Staff Safety Check Procedure that is carried out for all new employees.** • **All OPCC staff and adults working with children are to be police vetted every three years.** • OPCC ensures that its staff and other adults visiting or working in the Centre are well supervised and visible in their interactions and activities with children this includes toilet and "changing" spaces where intimate care giving for children is required. • Opportunities for staff and other adults to be alone with children are kept to a minimum. Teachers try and ensure that they are visible to other staff at all times. • Students on placements for the purposes of training are not allowed to change or toilet any child unsupervised and are not to be left alone with any group of children. Parental consent with regard to nappy changing by students on placement is always sought. • Students are police vetted by their institution. As confirmation the statement of vetting and two forms of identification are kept by the centre. • Casual staff employed by the Otago Polytechnic as relieving teachers will be allowed to toilet or change children. They have been Police vetted and are familiar to the children. As with all staff, they do not put themselves in a position where they cannot be seen by others. • Any relievers contracted from an external relieving agency are not permitted to change or toilet children. These contractors have been police vetted by the agency providing the reliever. • Children will not be taken from the Centre for excursions without parental approval in writing (blanket approval on enrolment form or individual forms for planned outings). • Even in a Civil Defence/ Emergency Evacuation, only adults named on the child's enrolment form, or specified in writing by the parent, are able to collect the child from the centre. • When children are taken on approved outings our excursion procedure will be followed. This requires the person responsible for the excursion to complete a risk analysis prior to any excursion taking place, including detailing the names of the children, the teachers who accompany them, the method of travel/transport and destination of the journey. These records are kept in the "Excursions folder" located at reception • A cell phone and first aid kit will be taken on every journey outside the Centre. • There will always be at least two teachers accompanying children on an excursion. Ratios will be maintained at the centre for the duration of the excursion. • Private staff cars will not used for the transportation of children at any time. • 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 behavior at any point during the service's hours of operation.

	• All visitors to OPCC must identify themselves and are required to sign the visitors' book or tablet.

Measures to be taken by all staff regarding suspected abuse:	**ANYONE AT ANYTIME CAN AND SHOULD REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE BY RINGING ORANGA TAMARIKI free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the police (111)** • All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. • Any staff member can report suspected abuse and may ring Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the Police (111) • Staff will not act in a way that is outside their knowledge or capacity. • Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern staff may note about a child. Full, relevant, factual information will be recorded and held confidentially. • If it is decided that concerns do not require a notification to statutory authorities, the child will continue to be monitored, and records kept. • When we suspect that child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe, we are committed to reporting this to the Police or external Agencies. All staff/parents are able to do this, and we also ask that they notify the Manager of the Centre or person in charge. • No teacher or staff member should feel they must act alone regarding suspected child abuse. In consultation- The centre manager and teachers will assess information for the best possible outcome for the child. • Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by the law as outlined in section 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. OPCC recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements of the Privacy Act, Oranga Tamariki 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. However, staff will not share information if they feel that this would endanger the child. • Staff may be asked to provide information to Oranga Tamariki, the Police, Court or Lawyers and Psychologists. Information sharing will be restricted to those who need to know in order to protect children. • When any of the above agencies contacts a staff member for information, that staff member must refer to the manager and person dealing with the allegation for clearance before providing information. • Information will only be provided when that staff member has identified the person making the request, the actual purpose of the request, what use the information will be put to, and who will see the information.

	• Any requests to interview a child while on OPCC premises by Counsel for the Child or a social worker must be considered in the best interests of the child and with legal advice.

Managing Allegations Against Staff	• If there is an allegation that the abuse has been perpetuated by a staff member or another person at the Centre we will report the matter promptly to the relevant authorities, agencies, Otago Polytechnic's People and Culture and the Executive Leadership Team • Staff will follow the guidelines for dealing with allegations of abuse. • Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration. • OPCC will adhere to the principles of the Employment Contracts Act and give the staff member all information regarding their rights. • When abuse is alleged, staff will follow the process for responding to suspected abuse. • The staff member under investigation will be prevented from having further access to children during the investigation and will be fully informed of their rights. • The person managing the child abuse concern will not be the same person who is managing the employment issue. • If police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, then a staff member may be suspended while the matter is investigated and they will be fully informed of their rights. Otago Polytechnic will offer support to staff involved in such a procedure. • OPCC will liaise with Oranga Tamariki and the Police regarding the process of the investigation. • OPCC recognises the added stress to fellow staff in such a situation and will ensure that support is available. • 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 poor practice or inappropriate behavior by a staff member which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures. • We believe that children, families, staff, and others involved in the investigation of suspected child abuse should have support and we will maintain knowledge of individuals, agencies, and organisations in our community that we can refer them to for support.

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE	**ABUSE SUSPECTED** Child abuse or potential child 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 cannot keep. DO NOT formally interview the child- obtain only the necessary FACTS if and when clarification is needed. **Carefully record** any physical or behavioral observations and anything said by the child, (using the child's words as far as possible. Include date, time, who was present etc.) **Consult** immediately with the manager or 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 person who received the information in conjunction with the manager or senior person, should contact Oranga Tamariki, (0508 326 459) or the Police (111) and make a report of concern. **If the alleged abuse is by a staff member** Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki /Police Ensure there is no contact between the child and the staff member who the allegation is against. **If the alleged abuse is by a non-staff member** Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki /Police. Ensure the child is in a place of safety- their safety is PARAMOUNT. **INFORM** Consultation will take place between the person to whom the allegation has been made, the manager and CYF to decide who will inform the parents of the child and support the family. **ANYONE AT ANYTIME CAN AND SHOULD REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE BY RINGING ORANGA TAMARIKI free on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the police (111)**

Glossary	***Child Abuse:*** "The harming," (whether physical, sexual, emotional or by neglect. Abuse is generally seen as an act of omission or failure to do something. The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, section2 (1) defines child abuse as "the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. ***Child Protection:*** An activity or initiative or project designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect. ***Emotional Abuse*** The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child adversely affects their development, it may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed on them. In addition, it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted. ***Family Violence*** Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present. ***Neglect*** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical/psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate shelter, food and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Notification, referral, reporting Notification, referral, and reporting are all terms used to describe making a report of concern to Child, Youth and Family or the Police. ***Personnel/Staff*** Personnel either employed by an organisation, or engaged by an organisation in a contract basis, or engaged by an organisation on a voluntary or unpaid basis. ***Physical Abuse*** May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including fabricating symptoms of, or deliberately causing symptoms of, ill health to a child. ***Sexual Abuse*** Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts and non-physical contact.

	Sexual abuse may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. ***Using force*** Using Force for the purpose of disciplining a child is a criminal offence Section 5, Crimes (Substituted section 59) Amendment Act 2007 (2007 No 18).
Review Date **February 2027**	

This Policy has had full consultation with parents and OPCC Staff