

<b>Participant Protection Policy</b>	
<b>Date approved by General manager and Board of Trustees</b>	<b>June 2024</b>
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<b>Compliance lead</b>	<b>General Manager</b>

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**OSCAR standard – Service has appropriate procedures about the way their organisation operates**

**OSCAR standard – Services are committed to the recognition and prevention of abuse of children and young people.**

**OSCAR Standard – The service has a sufficient body of trained and competent staff to deliver and support service. Services are managed competently (including competent financial management).**

### **1. Participant Protection Policy**

In addition to the general safety policies outlined, the programme will ensure that the staff and other adults visiting or working at the programme are well supervised and

visible in activities performed with participants. A minimum of two staff will always supervise the programme.

Programme staff will be provided with a Code of Behaviour, staff will sign this, and a copy will be kept on their staff file. This code outlines appropriate behaviour, supervision, discipline, and the prevention, detection and reporting child abuse.

The programme staff will act on all suspicions of child abuse in the following way:

- All incidents and observations will be recorded.
- Any suspicion that abuse is occurring will be reported to General Manager.
- The General Manager will inform the Board of Trustees.
- The General Manager will consult with Child, Youth and Family to ascertain what steps will be taken.

## **2. Principles**

LifeKidz Trust is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of all participants. The well-being and safety of all participants is the primary goal of LifeKidz Trust.

This commitment means that the interest and welfare of all participants will be the primary consideration when any decision is made about suspected abuse. LifeKidz Trust supports the roles of statutory agencies (the Police and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services) in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspected abuse to these agencies according to the process outlined below.

LifeKidz Trust will maintain a good working relationship with the statutory agencies and be familiar with the laws which serve to protect all participants. We will consult with these and other agencies that have specialist knowledge to help protect participants from abuse. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their position, experience, and training.

## **3. Training**

At induction and orientation, the staff are clear about the protocol in suspecting child abuse; staff or the organization do not need parents' permission to report abuse. LifeKidz Trust is committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff must familiarise themselves with programme policy on participant and child abuse and be encouraged to read any resource material.

Staff are expected to follow the company's policy on reporting abuse however any person, including staff have the right to report abuse directly if they feel the participants immediate safety is of concern.

#### **4. Definition of Child Abuse**

“Any act by which an individual, institution or society as a whole that interferes with the well-being of a child or young person and deprives that child or young person of his or her rights”.

The definitions used here may also relate to other participants regardless of their age. People with special needs are a vulnerable group and vigilance is required for all participants attending programmes provided by LifeKidz Trust.

#### **There are four types of child abuse:**

- *Sexual abuse* occurs when someone uses his or her power over the child, or takes advantage of the child's trust and respect, to involve the child in sexual activity.
- *Physical abuse* is non-accidental injury by somebody and also includes abusive administration of drugs or alcohol to a child.
- *Emotional abuse* is when a child's self-esteem is attacked by somebody to coerce the child into doing what the abuser wants them to do.
- *Neglect* is a denial of the basic needs/ rights of nurturing, food and shelter, so that the child fails to thrive. It must be seen as a form of child abuse.
- *Family violence* may be witnessed or experienced by and can involve physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

#### **5. Responding to Child Abuse**

LifeKidz Trust will act on recommendations made by statutory agencies concerning the official reporting of suspected abuse and on consulting with families.

All reports of child abuse must be reported to the General Manager. The report will include.

- Incidents
- Observations
- Verbal conversations/cues

Information volunteered by a participant should be fully and accurately recorded. No participant should be interviewed or in any way questioned about the suspected abuse, particularly sexual abuse.

No staff member will act alone about suspected child abuse but will consult with the

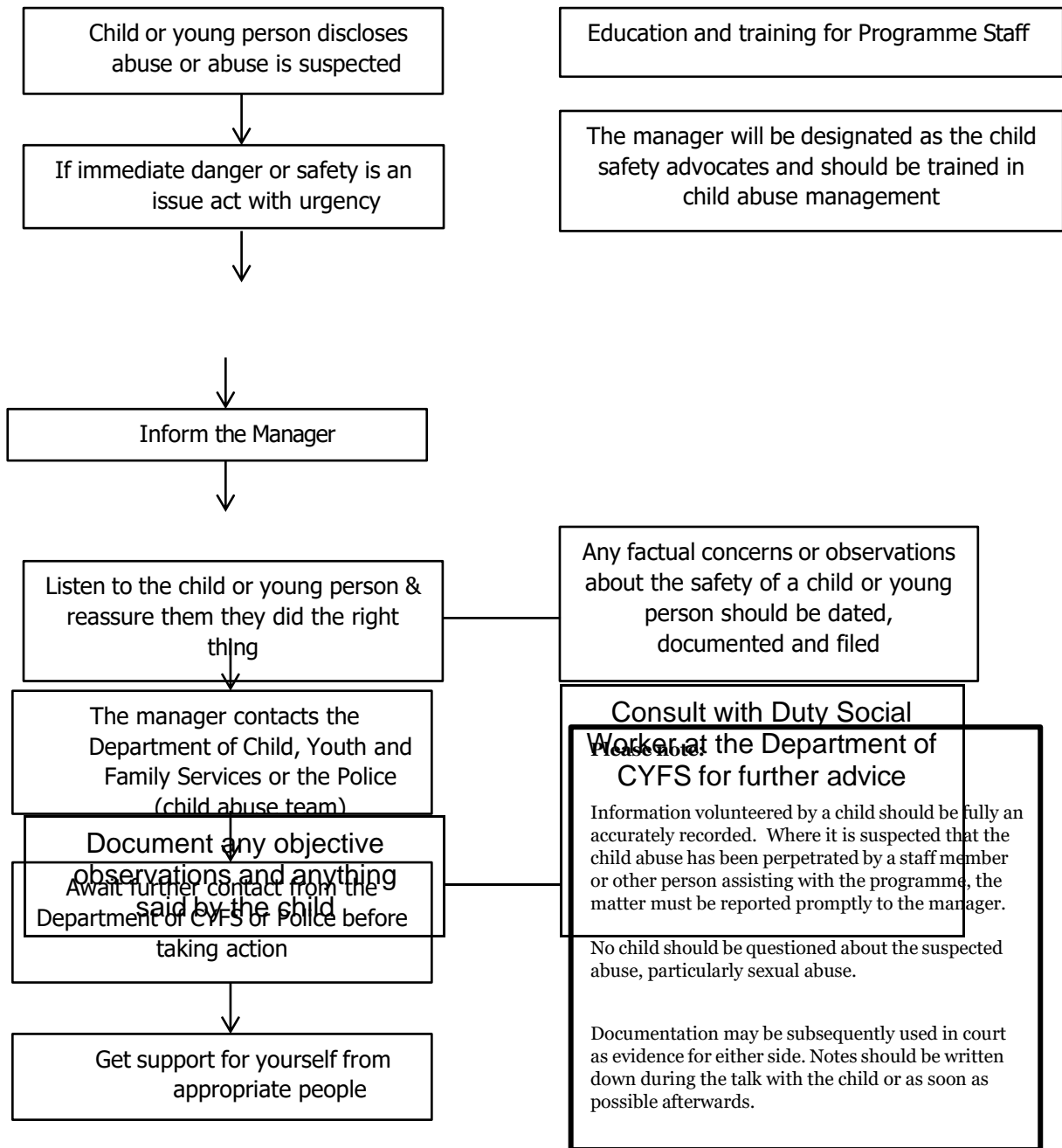
General Manager. Where staff and programme management suspect child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe, the General Manager will promptly report the matter to the Police or the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. The programme will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

When responding to a suspicion or disclosure of abuse LifeKidz Trust will follow this process:

### 6. When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member

The General Manager must ensure the following procedure take place.



Where it is suspected that the child abuse has been perpetrated by a staff member or other person assisting with the programme, the matter must be reported promptly to the General Manager.

Under no circumstances should the child making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require the General Manager to contemplate removal of the employee from the programme environment subject to the requirements within the employment contract.

## **7. Supervision Guidelines**

To minimise the risk of actual or alleged abuse in the programme please follow these guidelines.

- All staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations there are for staff to be alone with children. This should be avoided wherever possible. If you are alone use extremely careful judgment.
- All volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff.
- Wherever possible an open-door policy for all spaces should be used (i.e. not possible for toilets) and therefore, the policy is to have two adults in the toilet area with any participant. Staff should be aware of where all participants are at all times and check to ensure what they are doing is appropriate.
- Be aware of situations where participants are out of sight together (dens, play huts etc.) and supervise accordingly.
- If the situation arises ensure that other staff know you are toileting a participant.
- Staff should avoid transporting a participant on their own at all times.
- Except in an emergency, participants are not to be taken away from the program without written parental consent.

## **8. Code of Behaviour for LifeKidz Trust staff and the Prevention of Child Abuse**

Although this section relates to children it may also apply to all participants attending programmes provided by LifeKidz Trust. For the purpose of law in New Zealand a person shall attain full age on attaining the age of 20 years. This identifies a chronological age and does not account for those people with special needs who may be unable to function as a person with no special needs or disability.

The term participant is used to cover all those attending LifeKidz Trust programmes.

The programme is committed to the prevention of participant abuse and to the protection of participants, with the well-being and safety of the participant being LifeKidz Trust primary goal. The following policy and code of behaviour are a means of achieving this.

The interests and welfare of the participant will be the prime consideration when any decision is made about a participant suspected of being abused. LifeKidz Trust supports the roles of statutory agencies i.e., the Police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspicion of abuse to these agencies.

LifeKidz Trust will maintain a good working relationship with Oranga Tamariki and will be familiar with the law that serves to protect children from abuse. LifeKidz Trust will consult with the Department and with other appropriate agencies that have specialist knowledge. We will not assume responsibility beyond the level of our own expertise.

LifeKidz Trust will respond to suspicions of abuse by recording all observations, impressions and communications about participant suspected of being abused.

No staff member will act alone about suspicions but will consult with senior staff who will be committed to taking action and arranging for consultation with appropriate agencies. Any person (including staff) who believes that any participant has been or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to a social worker or police.

LifeKidz Trust will act on recommendations made by relevant agencies and Oranga Tamariki concerning the official reporting of the suspected abuse and on the consulting of families. At no time will LifeKidz Trust regard itself as having the participants parent's permission to consult or report.

If LifeKidz Trust individually or collectively suspect that a staff member or other person within our organisation has perpetuated abuse, we will not collude with or protect that person or the organisation but promptly report the matter to the General Manager and/or Board of Trustees and other statutory authorities. The

suspected member of staff will be prevented from having further access to participants during any investigation and will be informed of their rights.

Participants, families and staff involved in the investigation of allegations of abuse will have support and we will refer them to appropriate support agencies in the community for support.

The programme employment procedures include a thorough examination and checking each applicant's previous work history and we make contact personally with both referees and some past employers. This will be done with the applicant's consent. Our prime consideration in choosing staff will be ensuring that they have skills and attributes, which contribute to the participants safety and health, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development and will not put participants at risk of abuse.

LifeKidz Trust will ensure that its staff is well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with participants. Opportunities for staff to be alone with participants will be kept to a minimum. Participants will not be taken on outings without parental approvals in writing or by phone and will be accompanied by more than one adult. In the case of an emergency every attempt will be made for a participant to be accompanied by two adults.

LifeKidz Trust has established a set of rules about acceptable touching of participants. All adults working in our organisation will be made aware of these rules. Apart from toilets and bathrooms the programme will have an open-door policy and staff should know where participants are, at all times.

LifeKidz Trust encourages staff to keep their personal and professional lives separate and we do not encourage the fostering of close personal relationship and/or care taking activities with participants and families outside the work environment. We will, on a regular basis, collectively review our abuse policies and evaluate our performance in meeting the standards outlined by them.

LifeKidz Trust encourages parents to be involved in our activities and management. Parents and family are welcome to visit the programme at any time. Our abuse prevention policies will be made available to all parents. If parents have any concerns about the treatment of a participant by any of our staff, they are encouraged to make these known. We will ensure that the matter is fully investigated and acted on if necessary. We will use an advisor and mediator from outside the organisation if independent investigation or arbitration is indicated.

All staff will sign a declaration of criminal records. Police vetting will be completed through the Police Licensing and Vetting Service, copies of outcome will be kept on staff file.

## **9. Associated Community Members**

LifeKidz Trust is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the protection of participants and recognises that keeping participants safe is everyone's



responsibility.

Our child protection policy provides a framework for our organisation and staff to create a safe environment for participants and ensures that the welfare and best interests of the participant are the prime considerations when any decision is made about suspected abuse or neglect. Any situation deemed to be involving the risk of a participant or community member will be reported to any and all appropriate authorities.

These same policies will be followed in all processes that may be required in dealing with a concern that is seen or has been raised in regard to the safety of an associated community member. (e.g.: Sibling, family member, friend).