

## Introduction

This policy ensures that Youthtown programmes meet the 'Child Protection' standard as required by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and that programmes comply with sections 25-27 of the Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004 and Part 2 of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

## Purpose of policy

To ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of all children that participate in a Youthtown programme is the primary concern of all staff of Youthtown.

## Scope of policy

This policy applies to all participants (aged between 5-18 years) attending Youthtown programmes across New Zealand.

## Policy

### 1. Child Protection

Youthtown is committed to ensuring that all children's health, safety and wellbeing is the primary consideration where there is any suspicion or allegation of any kind of abuse towards a participant on a Youthtown programme. .

Youthtown is also committed to ensuring that staff members are sufficiently equipped to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse in an appropriate manner.

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

### Staff training

All Youthtown staff will be inducted and trained in the following areas in line with current relevant Health and Safety, Programmes and HR Policies:

- Youthtown's Youth Development Philosophy
- Youthtown's Policies and Procedures, including
  - Safe OSCAR (OSCN)

- Recognising, responding and reporting child abuse
- Staff Code of Conduct, Duty of Care and Consequences of any breaches
- Youthtown's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
- Programme site specific Health and Safety, and Hazard Management

Additionally, intensive child protection training will also be provided throughout the year either by accredited training providers or utilising in-house experts.

## **Prevention**

Youthtown's guidelines will be adhered to, to minimise the risk of potential abuse within the programme.

## **Early Intervention and Reporting Concerns**

All Youthtown staff must be aware of and understand the warning signs for abuse.

The attached procedure (OPS 011.1 Child Protection Procedure) must be adhered to when a child discloses abuse.

## **Responding to suspicions and allegations against a staff member**

If child abuse is suspected or disclosed it is essential that the child or young person in question is protected from harm immediately.

Procedures are in place for Programme Management to follow when handling any suspicions or allegations against a Youthtown staff member. The two procedures that are followed simultaneously are:

- Reporting in respect of the child/young person
- The process for employee investigation

## **Staff behaviour**

All Youthtown staff are required to sign Youthtown's Code of Conduct – Behaviour Expectations. This is to be read in conjunction with the employment agreement.

Refer to the Youthtown Code of Conduct and the Youthtown Policies and Procedures for current staff behaviour requirements.

## **Duty of care**

All Youthtown staff have a duty of care to respect all children and ensure their wellbeing and safety. Duty of care continues until a child is out of Youthtown's physical care.

