

# FANTASTIC GYMNASTICS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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## 1. Summary

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, including prevention of child abuse or maltreatment is a foremost goal of Fantastic Gymnastics. The staff and committee understand their responsibility to safeguard the well-being of all children in our programmes. Fantastic Gymnastics aims at all times to meet its obligation to ensure we provide a safe programme and positive experiences and opportunities for all individuals, under the highest possible standard of care.

## 2. Purpose, scope and policy statement

This Child Protection Policy:

- Details Fantastic Gymnastics' commitment to protecting children and young people in their care
- Provides staff and volunteers with clear guidance on how to recognise and respond to suspected or confirmed cases of child maltreatment or abuse
- Ensures reported concerns are referred to appropriate child protection agencies or authorities and required. This Child Protection Policy applies to:
  - All Staff (paid or volunteers), including visitors and contractors
  - Committee members
  - All children Fantastic Gymnastics provides a service to and their families or caregivers
  - Visitors
  - Anyone working on behalf of Fantastic Gymnastics.

Fantastic Gymnastics is a gymnastics club providing gymnastics coaching and services to children and adults of all ages and abilities.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Helping to protect individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
  - Maintaining focus on a child's best interest when responding to suspected or confirmed abuse.
  - Recognising the importance of family and their right to participate in decisions made about their child(ren), unless this would result in an increased risk to the child(ren).
  - Encouraging anyone to report suspected or confirmed child abuse to NZ Police or Oranga Tamariki as guided by Fantastic Gymnastics' Child Protection Policy.

The Fantastic Gymnastics Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is guided by the Children's Act 2014. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy relates to and is supported by Fantastic Gymnastics Code of Ethics, and Complaints/ Concerns process as well as the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and Childrens Act 2014 and Gymnastics New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **3. Responsibility Statement**

Fantastic Gymnastics is responsible for maintaining a workable and robust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with information, tools and support to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children is considered in all aspects of our organisation.
- Provide a Safeguarding Culture for both children and staff, volunteers, contractors, and all families involved.
- Ensure staff can effectively respond and report concerns.
- Promote a culture where all individuals involved feel confident to challenge poor practice and raise issues of concern.
- Educate staff and committee members in Child Protection upon induction and every two years ongoing
- Create opportunities for staff to be trusted points of contact and positive role models for children and young people in our care.
- Comply with applicable, current legislation and always implement best practice.
- Assign a designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer (CPO)
- Adopt Safeguarding Culture through procedures and a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are completed before starting work with children and young people.
- Share information about child protection with children, parents and staff.
- Share information about concerns for children and young people with appropriate agencies and involve caregivers and children appropriately.
- Provide effective management for staff through induction, supervision, support and training.

### **4. Definitions**

Child – any child or young person aged under 18 years and who is not married or in a civil union.

Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect

Child Protection Officer (CPO) – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection.

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

Oranga Tamariki (OT) – the New Zealand agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.

New Zealand Police – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and coordinating with Oranga Tamariki to investigate cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Physical Abuse – any acts 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.

Sexual Abuse – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be both contact and noncontact abuse.

Emotional Abuse – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional functioning or development. This can include patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism, or negative comparison to others.

Neglect – is the most common form of abuse and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse it is just as serious. Neglect can be: physical (not providing necessities of life- ie. food and clothing), emotional (not providing comfort and attention), neglectful supervision (leaving children without a necessary caregiver), medical neglect (not taking care of health needs), and educational neglect

## **5. Training**

We are 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 are made aware of the policy of child protection.

## **6. Identifying child abuse and neglect**

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it is important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to another staff member and we shouldn't act alone.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.

We recognise the signs of potential abuse:

- Physical signs
- Behavioural concerns
- Developmental delays
- Emotional abuse/neglect
- Neglectful supervision
- Medical neglect
- The child talking about things that indicate abuse (allegations or disclosures)

This organisation will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki and the Police. When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour, we write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential complaints register which is reviewed by our Child Safety Protection Officer monthly. This is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled. Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. We will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

## **7. Confidentiality and information sharing**

We will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the Child Safety Protection Officer. Staff should be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 any person who believes that a child 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 or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceeding may be brought against them.

- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles – i.e. the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collected the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.

- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is serious risk to individual health and safety. Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may be made to the Police or Tamariki Oranga under sections 15 and 16 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989.

## **8. Child Safe Practice Guidelines**

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations where staff could be alone with children. Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets). Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times. Visitors should be monitored at all times and should be restricted to public areas. Volunteers and outside contractors should be monitored by staff. If activities require one to one physical contact (e.g. gymnastics spotting), parents and caregivers should be advised. Where a child or young person requires assistance e.g. if they are intellectually or physically disabled, staff should be made aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance. Staff 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.

Policy signed by Fantastic Gymnastics Committee: November 2, 2022

Policy adopted: November 2022

Next review: November 2024

## **Appendix A – Procedure when disclosure of abuse or neglect is made**

In a case of disclosure of abuse or neglect, take immediate action. Children can disclose directly or indirectly through pictures, verbally, 3rd party, story or play.

- Find a place of privacy, keep calm and reassure, don't judge. Don't promise confidentiality. Respond briefly, slowly and gently and do not ask leading questions or over question. Find support if necessary. Do not assume there is only one child involved. Inform the child what will happen next.
- Ask yourself if the child is in immediate danger (if unsure, call Oranga Tamariki 0508 326459). If yes, call police immediately on 111 and follow police advice.
- Record actions taken on the Report of Concern Form (see appendix C) as soon as possible. Record what you have heard/observed on a Child Concern Form with date, time, place, who was present. Use the child's words wherever possible and include what you have said to the child. Keep information factual and include what led up to the disclosure. The Child Protection Officer will retain all completed Child Concern Forms.
- Consult immediately with the Child Protection Officer whether a report of concern to Oranga Tamariki is required. If so, The Child Protection Officer will contact the agency and also retain all necessary documentation and reporting.
- The Child Protection Officer and relevant staff members will review and monitor all active child protection concerns on a weekly basis and take necessary action, follow-ups or community support referrals. New or additional reports of concern to Oranga Tamariki may be made at any time

## **Appendix B – Procedure when allegation is made against a member of staff**

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be escalated to the committee. To ensure the child is kept safe, the committee may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law.

In the event of a disclosure or allegation of child abuse by a staff member follow the following process:

- Follow the process of disclosure outlined in Appendix A and notify the committee immediately. The committee will consult with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police and refer to the relevant employment contract.
- Oranga Tamariki and committee will advise employee and seek a response (depending on the outcome of discussions with statutory agencies.) Employee will be advised of their right to seek support/advice from appropriate representatives. Committee will review removal of employee from the programme environment, subject to employment contract. Committee will maintain close liaison with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.
- We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

## Process for Responding to a disclosure/concern about abuse

### Disclosure:

- Child discloses abuse
- You are concerned there signs of a buse or neglect

### Listen to the child Reassure the child

- Respond briefly, slowly, and gently
- Don't make any assumptions
- Do not make leading questions
- Only ask open-ended questions e.g. "what happened next"?
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Inform child what will happen next if applicable

### There is immediate danger to the child or safety is an issue:

- If unsure, call Oranga Tamariki (0508 326459)
- If YES act with urgency to ensure child's safety
- Call Police on 111 and follow advice.
- RECORD actions taken on Child Concern Form
- Contact your CSR and Gymnastics New Zealand

### If no immediate danger to the child:

- re-engage child with an activity if appropriate
- If the child is upset, offer re-assurance and help them to re-engage

### formally record:

Using the child concern form:

- Complete as soon as practically possible but before your shift ends
- Record Word for word what the child said.
- Note: date, time, place and who was present
- Keep information factual
- Include what led up to the disclosure

Inform your CSR pass on child concern form and any other relevant information

### Report of Concern required

CSR and staff member will complete Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern and send by email to: [contact@ot.govt.nz](mailto:contact@ot.govt.nz) or call: 0508 Family (0508 326 459)

- CSR will ensure that full details are provided as per Child Concern Fo
- A receipt of the notification will be requested.
- CSR will retain a copy and maintain own records that are securely stored.
- CSR will call Oranga Tamariki if no response has been received from them within 3 working days.
- CSR will re-report if concerns are still held.

### Is Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki is required?

Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected.

### Securely store relevant information:

- The record of the concern.
- A record of any related discussions, (including copies of correspondence, where appropriate).
- A record of any advice received.
- The action your organisation took, including any rationale.
- Any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident).

CSR will retain all completed Child Concern Forms

Staff are expected to follow this procedure. However, any staff member may contact Oranga Tamariki or Police for advice or to make a Report of Concern at any time if they feel this process is not effective and there still remains concerns for a child. Staff must always seek support for themselves.

**Appendix C– Report of Concern Form (disclosure or allegation form)**

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Parents/Caregivers \_\_\_\_\_  
Names and details of Adult of Concern \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Details of concern (provide as much detail as possible)  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Details of questions asked of child and the child’s response  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Safeguarding steps already taken  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you contacted the family? If not why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person reporting (your name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Your job title \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_  
Your organisation \_\_\_\_\_  
Your contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Please include any and all information you think may be relevant to this disclosure or allegation. If you would like to remain anonymous please indicate on this form.