

Health, Safety, and Child Protection Policy

Canterbury Tamil Society Incorporated

1. Purpose and Commitment

The paramount goal of this organisation is to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all participants, particularly children. We commit to identifying and responding to concerns regarding abuse or neglect and maintaining a safe physical environment for our language school and sporting activities.

Review Period: This policy shall be reviewed by the Committee every two years to ensure it remains consistent with current New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki guidelines.

2. Child Protection Framework

The Society adopts the following principles for the protection of children (any person under 17 years old who is not married/in a civil union):

- **** Paramount Interests:**** The interests of the child will be the paramount consideration in all actions.
- **Staff Responsibility:** Staff and volunteers will not assume responsibility beyond their level of experience and training.
- **Designated Person:** The Committee shall appoint a **Designated Person for Child Protection** responsible for policy maintenance and providing advice to staff.

3. Safe Practice Guidelines

To minimize risk, the following behavioural expectations apply to all staff and volunteers:

- **Visibility:** An "open door" policy must be used for all spaces (excluding toilets).
- **Avoidance of Isolation:** Staff should avoid situations where they are alone with a child. If an unavoidable one-on-one situation occurs, a colleague must be notified within one hour.
- **Transportation:** Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child under 13 unless it is an emergency. For older youth, trips should be planned to drop off at least two young people at the last stop when possible.

- **Physical Contact:** Parents/caregivers must be advised if activities require one-to-one physical contact (e.g., sports coaching or dance).

4. Identifying and Responding to Abuse

We recognize that abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or neglectful:

- **Observation:** Staff shall watch for signs such as unexplained injuries, developmental delays, or behavioural changes like aggression or disengagement.
- **Action on Disclosure:** If a child discloses abuse, staff must listen, reassure them, and ask open-ended prompts (e.g., "What happened next?").
- **Immediate Danger:** If a child is in immediate danger, call **111** immediately.
- **Reporting:** Suspected abuse must be reported to the **Designated Person** and subsequently to **Oranga Tamariki** (0508-326-459) or the **Police**.

5. Physical Health and Safety (HSWA 2015)

The Society identifies and manages physical risks for its school and sports programs:

- **Risk Assessment:** Before activities, the coordinator will check venues for hazards (trips, electrical, weather).
- **Incident Register:** All accidents, near misses, or disclosures must be formally recorded in a confidential register kept separate from general records.
- **First Aid:** A first aid kit and a person with basic first aid knowledge must be present at all events.

6. Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers

- **Immediate Action:** Any staff member or volunteer facing an allegation of child abuse will be removed from contact with children immediately.
- **Reinstatement:** They shall not be reinstated unless cleared by the Committee or Board Chairperson.
- **No Settlement Agreements:** We commit not to use "settlement agreements" to allow a staff member to resign to avoid disciplinary action regarding child safety.

7. Confidentiality and Vetting

- **Police Vetting:** In accordance with the Children's Act 2014, all teachers and regular volunteers must undergo NZ Police vetting every three years.
- **Information Sharing:** Personal information will be collected and held privately, though it may be disclosed to the Police or Oranga Tamariki if there is a serious risk to individual safety.