

## **Rolleston Central Health** Child Protection Policy

### Purpose:

To provide a framework of principles, standards and guidelines to recognise vulnerable children in our care, recognise and respond to abuse, ensure safe recruitment of staff and training in our responsibilities and accountabilities. Under the Vulnerable Children Act Rolleston Central Health has a responsibility to safeguard children from harm and clearly define what is required in relation to the protection of children. This shows that Rolleston Central Health takes its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

### Parties:

This policy applies to all employees of and contractors to Rolleston Central Health.

This policy covers but is not limited to physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect:

#### Rolleston Central Health

- Will ensure that the safety of the child is or prime consideration at all times
- Is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of children and young people and acting in their best interest.
- Is committed to dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.
- Acknowledges that in a case of suspected abuse, support for families is important
- Recognises that the family's primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained, however the child's well-being takes priority.
- Will provide training and support for their staff
- Is committed to complying with all relevant legislation
- Will ensure that disclosure of alleged abuse to appropriate authorities is acknowledged and action is taken to ensure the safety of the child or children who make disclosures.

If a complaint of abuse is made, or there is a suspicion of abuse Rolleston Central Health will:

- Ensure the safety of the child
- Ensure any suspicion of abuse will be reported to the Practice Manager who will investigate the matter.
- Ensure all suspicions and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. Opinions or personal concerns will be recorded as that.
- Consult with Oranga Tamariki to clarify whether notification of concern should take place
- When child abuse is suspected the Practice Manager inform Oranga Tamariki or the Police.
- Ensure staff members may contact Oranga Tamariki if they have concerns regarding the safety and protection of a child.
- Notify the parents or care giver, if appropriate.

If a complaint of alleged abuse is made against an employee of or contractor to Rolleston Central Health they will:

- Respond to suspicions and allegations with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person and ensure the child's safety.
- Will not act alone and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to the Police or Oranga Tamariki.
- Ensure the safety of the child.
- Enable the staff member to seek legal and professional advice and be informed fully of their rights.
- Abide by the employer obligations under the Employment Relations Act.
- Provide separation of the roles, so that the person managing child abuse allegation will not be managing the employment issue.
- Ensure the suspected staff member will be prevented from having unsupervised access to children during the investigation.
- In the case where a criminal investigation is undertaken, the staff member may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence is gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.
- If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is still "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice.

Authorised by: Dr Philip Schroeder

Last reviewed: August 2024

For two yearly review