Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding is a preventative approach to child protection by minimising or eliminating harm to a child.

Child protection is a reactive approach to address suspected or known cases of abuse and neglect.

Policy

We are committed to protecting children and young people from harm and abuse. We understand our responsibilities under:

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017
- Privacy Act 2020
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

We take concerns about children's safety seriously:

- There is a clear process for reporting suspected abuse
- New staff are trained to recognise and respond to suspected abuse as part of their induction and orientation.
- We ensure all new staff are safety checked before employment is confirmed. Existing children's workers are safety checked every three years.

Our designated child protection staff are Dr Lisa Borgman and Amanda Bradley. If abuse or neglect is suspected, detected, or disclosed, practice staff have a professional obligation to report any concerns about child wellbeing and safety to a senior general practitioner (unless there is a conflict of interest).

Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and Family Violence Act 2018, health professionals may proactively disclose patient information to another agency, e.g. Police or Oranga Tamariki, if someone's safety is at risk.

Responding to disclosures or suspected child abuse

It is **not** the practice's role to interview the child and family if abuse is suspected. This should be done by Oranga Tamariki and/or Police.

1.	**Respond to the child or young person**	• Listen to the child/young person and accept what they say. • Reassure them they did the right thing by telling someone. • Let them know you will do your best to help. • Let them know you need to tell someone else – tell them what you will need to do next.
2.	**Document your observations**	• Write down what they say in their words. • Record what you have seen and heard as well – make it clear that it is your inference. **Do not**: • attempt to deal with the situation yourself • formally interview the child or young person • ask leading questions or push for information • promise confidentiality • inform the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers/whānau • make your own judgement that it doesn't need to be reported to the designated child protection person.
3.	**Advise the designated person**	Tell the practice's designated person (unless there is a conflict of interest) and decide on next steps. The designated child protection staff members are **Dr Lisa Borgman and Amanda Bradley**
4.	**Notify the appropriate agency**	**If you have concerns about a child's immediate safety, phone the police on 111**. If there is no immediate danger, report your concerns: • Contact Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children. Phone 0508 326 459 Email contact@ot.govt.nz Reports of concern can be made by phone or email.
5.	**Keep accurate records**	Record in detail: • your concern and how/why it arose. • discussions, meetings, and phone calls. • advice received from agencies. • actions taken.