



Child Protection

At St Margaret's College Preschool, we are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all tamariki. The wellbeing of tamariki is our paramount concern and we work together to prevent harm from abuse and neglect. Our child protection policies are designed to promote consistent practice supported by regular training.

We acknowledge that child protection is everyone's responsibility and we share our child protection policies with our wider community. We share our child protection policies with parents at enrolment, and these are displayed at our service. These policies are reviewed at least once every 3 years by our child protection lead(s), other kaimahi, and parents.

This policy must be read with:

- Identifying and Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect – we train and support kaimahi to be alert to changes in the wellbeing or behaviour of tamariki, and to recognise signs of abuse and neglect.
- Safety Checking and Police Vetting – we carry out all appropriate safety checks and police vetting to support safe recruiting practices and limit the risk of harm to tamariki.

Roles and responsibilities

Child protection lead

At St Margaret's College Preschool, our child protection lead is the primary point of contact for any concerns about tamaiti wellbeing and safety, including concerns about abuse or neglect. If our child protection lead is not available or if the concern involves this person, a secondary child protection lead is available to receive and respond to child protection concerns. If both of these people are unavailable, kaimahi should speak with another senior kaimahi.

Our child protection lead is the CPO/executive principal and our secondary child protection lead is the director of preschool.

Kaimahi

Kaimahi are expected to act professionally at all times to create and maintain a safe environment for tamariki. This includes complying with our kaimahi code of conduct, as well as professional teaching standards (i.e. Our code, Our standards for all certificated kaiako). Kaimahi have a professional responsibility to report any concerns about tamaiti wellbeing and safety, including concerns relating to abuse and/or neglect.

All kaimahi must:

- follow our child protection policies and procedures
- treat all tamariki with respect, fairness, and dignity
- take any concerns about the wellbeing of a tamaiti seriously
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all interactions
- avoid any behaviour that is inappropriate or could be misinterpreted
- report any concerns of abuse or neglect immediately
- participate in child protection training and professional development as required (see below).

Any kaimahi who are unsure about their responsibilities should seek guidance from the child protection lead. If kaimahi raise a concern and are unhappy with the response from the child protection lead, they can speak with the secondary child protection lead or contact Oranga Tamariki directly for advice.

We recognise that dealing with child protection matters can be distressing, and we ensure kaimahi have access to appropriate support following an incident or difficult situation.

Safe practice

The care of tamariki naturally involves some physical contact and this is an important part of our everyday professional practice. This may include giving appropriate affection to comfort, reassure, or support tamariki. Physical contact is always for a genuine care purpose and is kept to what is necessary.

- Physical contact must be child-initiated, and kaimahi respond appropriately.
- Physical contact with tamariki during changing, washing, or toileting must be for that purpose only and limited to what is required. Kaimahi ensure the privacy of tamariki while remaining in sight of another kaimahi.

- Kaimahi must not immobilise tamariki for any reason (e.g. restraining a tamaiti in bed, holding a tamaiti firmly by their wrist as they pull away).

During licensed hours and while tamariki are on site, we ensure there are at least two kaimahi in the building, where possible.

We take all practicable steps to ensure tamariki are not exposed to inappropriate material (e.g. checking materials such as magazines before they are added to the learning environment, monitoring music played for appropriate language, ensuring kaimahi do not wear clothing or show body tattoos/art that is inappropriate for an early learning setting).

Certain actions and responses constitute ill-treatment (e.g. verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, isolating or excluding tamariki, withholding food and drink) and are against the law and breach professional standards.

Care-giving routines

Care-giving routines are an important part of meeting the daily needs of tamariki. These include tasks such as nappy changing, sleep monitoring, and feeding.

- Student teachers on placement (i.e. not employed by our service) are safety checked by their course provider and are not involved in certain care routines (i.e. nappy changing, sleep monitoring, and washing soiled tamariki).
- Students who are employed by our service while studying are safety checked and can be involved in care routines.
- All relievers are safety checked and in order to be involved in care routines they must also be trained in our service's practices, and well known to our tamariki.

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Breaches of the law will be referred to the police.

Kaimahi training and professional development

We support kaimahi to uphold their responsibility for child protection by:

- including child protection policies and training in kaimahi induction
- ensuring we have child protection leads (primary and secondary) who are available to all kaimahi, and have experience and training in responding to child protection concerns
- providing regular reminders about identifying and responding to abuse or neglect
- offering professional development and support as required

- creating an environment where all kaimahi are alert to signs of abuse and neglect, and are comfortable and confident to share any concerns
Kaimahi take part in regular, professional discussions about any concerns or observed changes in behaviour (e.g. developmental regressions), or changes in family circumstances etc that may affect tamaiti wellbeing.
- making it clear that kaimahi should discuss any concerns with a child protection lead and reminding them that unless there is immediate danger no one should act or make decisions alone
- ensuring that after an incident (e.g. concern raised, disclosure made), we review our practices to ensure kaimahi feel supported and confident moving forward.

Kaimahi completes child protection training during their induction and every 2-3 years, with updates as required. Child protection leads to complete refresher training every 2 years.

Parents and others

Parents are invited to participate in the regular review of our child protection policies.

Parents and visitors must not undertake any care-giving tasks with other people's tamariki and must not be alone with other people's tamariki.

If parents or visitors have concerns about the treatment of a tamaiti by a kaimahi they are encouraged to discuss this with a child protection lead or another trusted kaimahi who ensures that the matter is investigated and acted on immediately – see Concerns and Complaints.

Others involved with our service (e.g. volunteers, contractors) have access to our child protection policies, which are displayed at the service. Regular or long-term volunteers may be invited to complete child protection training.

Child protection partnerships

We share information if it is in the best interests of a tamaiti. Consent from parents is not required to share information with regulated services (e.g. Oranga Tamaraki, the Police, health providers, education providers, social service organisations, and kaupapa Māori providers) if the intention is to prevent harm to tamariki and the information is shared in good faith. At all times, the safety and wellbeing of a tamaiti overrides privacy concerns.

We liaise with agencies (e.g. Ministry of Education, Strengthening Families, Plunket, Work and Income) and community organisations (e.g. social service organisations, kaupapa Māori providers) to support early interventions, and we work with Oranga Tamariki and the police as appropriate when concerns arise.

See [Privacy and Confidentiality](#) (Sharing personal information about a tamaiti with external agencies).

Related Policies

- [Safety Checking and Police Vetting](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect](#)
- [Concerns and Complaints](#)
- [Protected Disclosure](#)
- [Kaimahi Conduct](#)
- [Information Technology](#)
- [Kaimahi Wellbeing and Safety](#)
- [Kaimahi Induction and Training](#)
- [Visitors](#)
- [Volunteers](#)
- [Digital Safety](#)

Legislation

- Children's Act 2014
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Privacy Act 2020
- Family Violence Act 2018

Resources

- Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga: [HS125 Child protection](#)
- Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga: [Children's Act guide](#)
- Oranga Tamariki:
 - [Working with children - Te mahi me ngā tamariki](#)
 - [Working together to support tamariki, rangatahi and their family/whānau](#)
 - [Safer organisations, Safer children](#)
- [Child Matters](#)
- [Safeguarding Children](#)