

	Policy
	Policy Category: Governance, Management and Administration
	Date Reviewed: 11 July 2023
	Policy Name: Teacher/Staff Safety Checking Policy

The purpose of this operational policy is to ensure that there is a procedure to ensure all those working at our childcare centre meet the safety check requirements specified in the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014. This policy also contributes to the human resource management policies operated by this centre and ensures we comply with the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Education Licensing Criteria **GMA7A**.

Position Statement

Our centre ensures the safety of children through a robust teacher/staff selection process. We want our teachers/staff to:

- be safe to work with our children
- understand the needs and development of children and know how to act to ensure these are met
- actively contribute to our culture of child protection; to support and adhere to our child protection and child abuse policies
- be prepared to make child safety at our centre their top priority.

A breach of this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and subject to disciplinary action.

Issue Outline

Not all children have the support and protection of a trusted adult, but they must do at our centre. The risks to our children and their families would be severe and permanent were this not to occur. The risks to our reputation would shut us down. The safety checking process detailed in the Vulnerable Children’s Act is not only a legislative requirement; it gives assurance to parents that their children will be safe.

Policy principles

To ensure our children are safe, we undertake a series of safety checking steps when appointing all teachers/staff at this centre:

- verification of identity
- recruitment interview
- information about work history
- referee information
- information from the Education Council
- acceptance of a Police vet check report.

On the basis of these safety checking steps, we will then form a view about the suitability of teachers/staff to work as a “Children’s Worker” under the Act (a Risk Assessment). This view will be recorded on the teachers/staff member’s personnel file.

Detail

Verification of identity

We require two forms of photo identity from prospective teachers/staff when applying for roles with us. These forms of identification must comply with the primary and secondary identification requirements of the Vulnerable Children’s Act.

We will obtain a photograph of a teacher/staff member certified by an appropriate authority if the primary and secondary forms of identification do not include a photo.

We will require proof where the forms of identification provided indicate a change in name (eg: Marriage Certificate).

A copy of these forms of identification will be placed on the teacher/staff member’s personnel file.

Recruitment interview

We will interview all prospective teachers/staff. The interview will not only examine the background of the candidate, but also their suitability to demonstrate the values of our centre and in a manner that meets the expectations of this policy.

The interview will also examine the candidate’s experience and/or attitudes toward child safety.

Notes from the interview will be placed on the teachers/staff member’s personnel file.

Information about work history

Each candidate for a role at our centre will submit a personal resume (or CV).

We look for a work history that is clear and transparent; declaration of any memberships or registrations with professional organisations and caveats associated with same.

Associated with the candidate’s resume, we will require all candidates to complete an Application for Employment form for our Centre. This will include the requirement to declare any convictions, the awaiting of criminal proceedings and any other issues that could impact upon the candidate’s suitability to work as a children’s worker at our centre.

The candidate’s resume and their application for employment will both be placed on their personnel file.

Referee information

We undertake a minimum of two telephone referee checks, one of which must be with a recent employer or co worker, and will examine matter of safe practices as part of the discussion.

Notes from referee discussions will be placed on the teacher/staff members personnel file.

Information from the Education Council

For all teaching staff with a current registration and practicing certificate, we will check with the Education Council to ensure there are no endorsements that reflect concerns over the teacher's safe practice with children.

Any relevant information gathered will be placed on the teachers/staff member's personnel file.

Acceptance of a Police vet check report

We will obtain a current Police vet check report for all teachers/staff at our centre to identify any issue in the individual's recent background that would reflect children at our centre might be at risk. We accept a Police vet report from the Police vet team or from another childcare centre or tertiary institution, so long as that report is within three years of age and the teacher named in the report has given their permission for it to be shared;

OR

We accept a registered teacher's current practicing certificate as evidence that a current Police vet check report has been obtained by the Education Council and that this has met their criteria for being of good character and fit to be a teacher;

OR

We will require the teacher to provide a copy of the covering letter sent by the Education Council with their current Practicing Certificate, as an attestation that there were no adverse issues contained in the teacher's Police vet report.

We will obtain a current Police vet check report for all other staff at our centre to identify any issue in the individual's recent background that would reflect children at our centre might be at risk.

All teachers/staff will be required to pass a Police vet check every three years.

A copy of each teachers/staff member's current Police vet report, **or** their practicing certificate, **or** the covering letter to their renewed practicing certificate from the Education Council will be kept on that teacher/staff member's personnel file.

Personnel records

We retain information gathered to comply with this Teacher/Staff Safety Checking Policy in individual personnel files. Police vet check reports, where gathered, are retained for three years until replaced with a more current version. All personnel records are kept strictly confidential in secure storage.

Risk Assessment

We understand and acknowledge the requirement under the Vulnerable Children's Act to complete the safety checking process with a Risk Assessment on each teacher/staff member. This is an expression of our judgement, based on all the information available above together with consideration of our centre values, that each teacher/staff member is a fit and proper person to be a children's worker at our centre.

We document this risk assessment as a signed and dated statement that is included in each teacher/staff member's personnel file.

Repeating the Safety Check

The Vulnerable Children's Act requires that aspects of the safety check process be repeated every three years. These aspects include:

- to the extent that this is necessary, updated identification documents
- updated information from the Education Council (if a teacher)
- an updated Police vet Report (noting the options above)
- an updated risk assessment.

The Manager will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child
- Carry out teacher/staff safety checking (including requesting and assessing the Police vet report) in accordance with the Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
- Maintain appropriate records.

Teachers/Staff will:

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child
- Notify the centre manager immediately of any change in their circumstance that would otherwise impact on information provided under this safety check policy.
- Familiarise themselves with this centre policy
- Maintain confidentiality.

Alignment with Other Policies and Procedures

- Outings and Excursions Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Recruitment Procedure

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008.

Ministry of Education Early Childhood Education Licensing Criteria Governance and Management GMA7A.

Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and associated regulations.

Impacts of Policy on Staff, Parents, Children

Comprehensive safety checking of all staff will give assurance to parents, staff and children that our centre takes child protection seriously and that our centre is a safe centre for children.

Alignment with the Centre Philosophy

This policy is aligned with the centre's philosophy.

Implications and/or Risks

This policy provides a reassurance to parents, other teachers/staff, management, and authorities that the teachers/staff working at our centre meet the safety requirements of the Vulnerable Children's Act and associated regulations and are otherwise fit and proper to be children's workers as defined under that Act at our centre.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy influences the centre's recruitment and HR policies and will form part of all staff induction and in-service training.

Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	
Date:	
Review Date:	
Consultation Undertaken:	Storypark, notice boards foyer and staff room, emailed to RCC Board