



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Child Protection Policy

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GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN TRUST NEW ZEALAND

Child Protection Policy

1. Statement of Commitment

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust New Zealand (GRG) is committed to the prevention and early detection of child abuse and/or neglect of children. The primary role of the family/whanau is caring for the children, unless this poses a threat to the child. Although child abuse/neglect can also occur outside the family, the strategy is focused on preventing, reducing and addressing abuse/neglect that occurs within families/whanau only. GRG believes that the welfare and interest of the child is the primary consideration.

2. Suspected Abuse

Where any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect is suspected, immediate action will be taken to ensure the safety of the child. GRG ensures that all staff are trained in recognising child abuse and are familiar with what steps to take should this occur.

3. Prevention

GRG will inform all caregivers of the policy in relation to the identification and reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of children. GRG encourages intolerance to violence in families/whanau, to bring about attitudinal change and to play their part in preventing it. GRG achieves an effective, integrated and co-coordinated response to situations of violence in families/whanau and ensures that quality services are available and accessible to all. It is encouraged with caregivers to contact GRG with any concerns they have of the safety of their children. We ensure that a focus on family violence prevention is maintained and ongoing through a range of printed information aimed at good parenting techniques.

4. Procedure

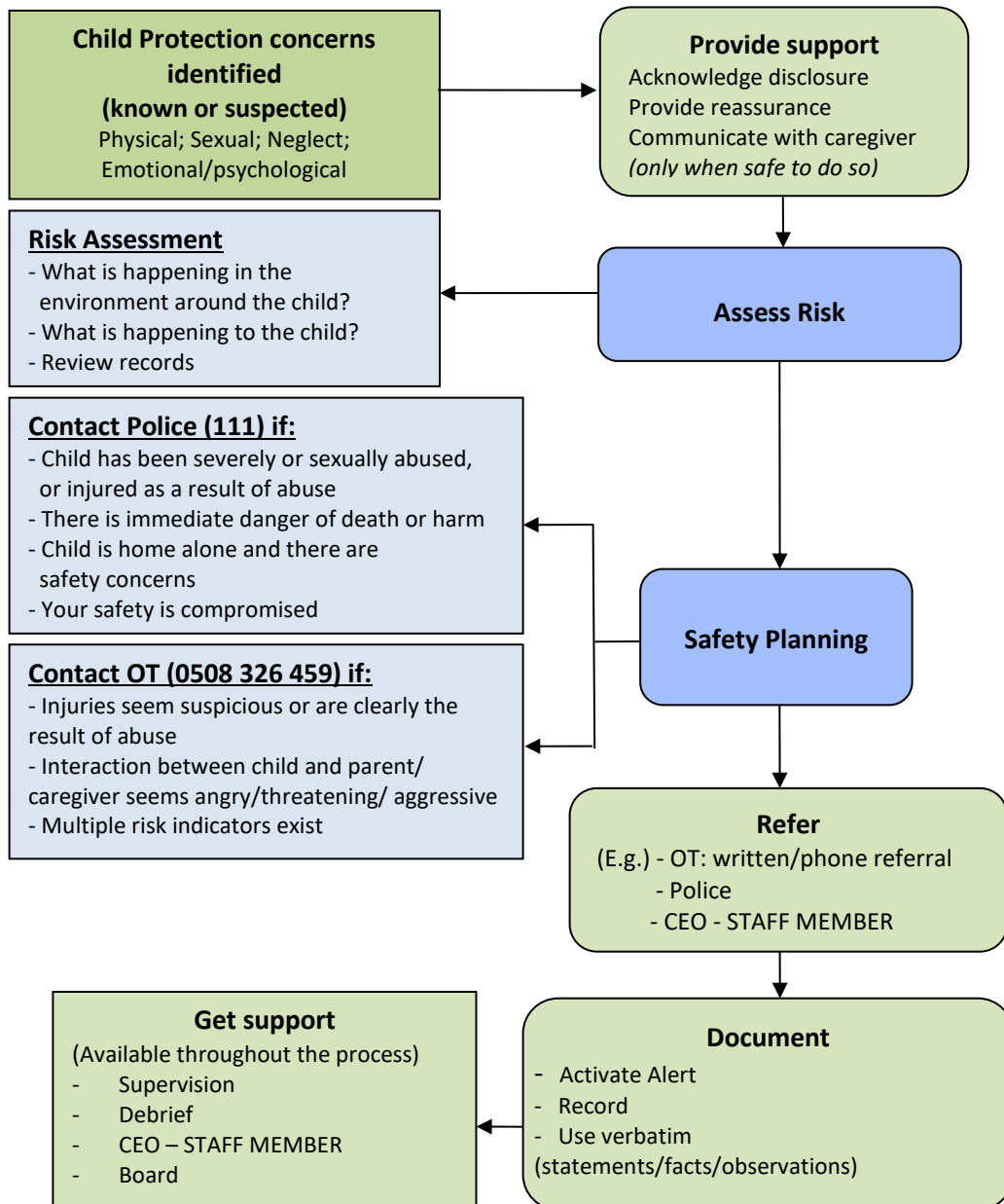
When a staff member/volunteer of GRG is informed of a risk of maltreatment of a child the following procedure is followed:

1. If immediate danger or risks are identified the safety of the child is the first concern. In this event, Dial 111 and ask for Police. The local Oranga Tamariki office will be contacted for advice and assistance. The Staff member is to remain with the child until the police or an Oranga Tamariki worker arrives.
2. The information received is logged in GRG's Child Abuse Register.
3. The information is passed on to the CEO or staff member responsible.
4. The information is assessed by both the CEO and the staff member/volunteer to ascertain whether the child is at risk.
5. When the child is not at immediate risk, but there is a concern the CEO/staff member will gather information and make a full assessment on the situation. Where appropriate the caregiver/whanau will be contacted to be informed of the situation and to discuss how the child can be protected from further harm. If this results in the CEO/staff member feeling the child will be inadequately protected, or if the CEO/staff member believes it is

inappropriate to contact the caregiver/whanau, they will contact the Child, Youth and Family service.

6. If the CEO/staff member decides that no risk exists from the information gathered, no further action is required. However, a date should be set to reassess the situation.
7. All details regarding the referral, including outcomes, are to be logged and signed off by the CEO/staff member involved. Once logged, these are filed in the Child Abuse Register file for future reference. Copies of relevant documentation will also be filed in the individual client case file on GR's secure client database (Exess®).
8. In cases when Oranga Tamariki are involved, GRG maintains contact with the caregiver/whanau and offers support where appropriate.

Child Protection Flow Chart



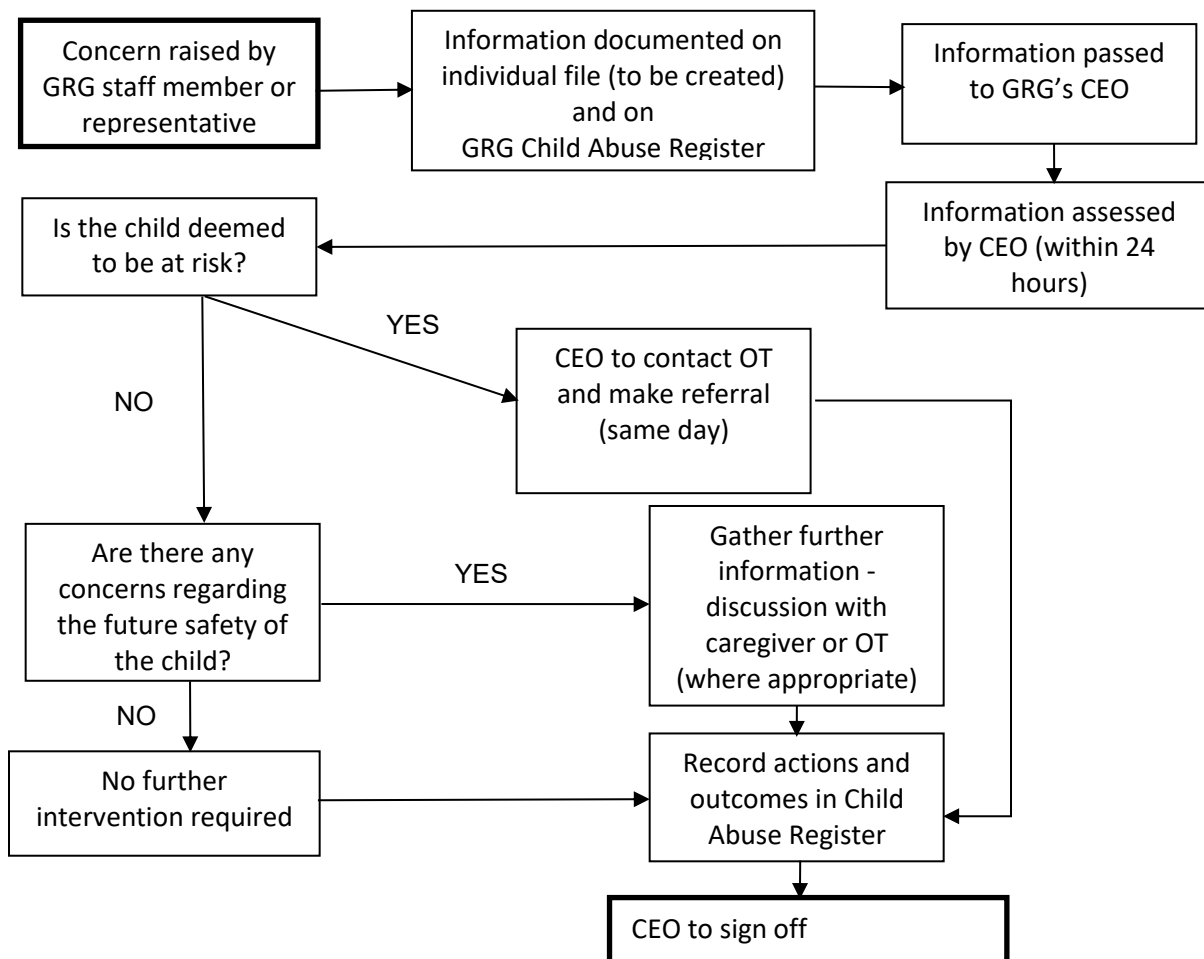
5. Training

GRG will provide training to all staff members and volunteers to enforce the Child Protection Policy. All staff and volunteers are to complete and implement the training provided. The training involves emphasizing the need for the referral logbook and the accompanying protocol, teaching staff/volunteers how to be aware of signs of neglect/abuse together with early prevention and detection. Specialist training of information gathering techniques, assessment and decision making and advanced information about identifying abuse and neglect is necessary for the Staff member and other staff/volunteers that may need to attend to the staff member's position if he/she is unavailable. Attendance by staff members (including volunteers) at external seminars and workshops is encouraged.

6. Internal Controls

The Child Abuse Prevention Policy is monitored through the use of the log book ensuring that all details about a referral are recorded and follow up procedures have been applied. (Statistics of these referrals are in annual reports.) The staff member ensures that all staff members/volunteers have been through the initial training process and recorded as such. If further training is required, this is implemented. The Child Abuse Prevention Policy and abuse reporting procedures are reviewed annually and amendments are made wherever necessary to increase effectiveness.

7. Flow Chart – Child Abuse Reporting Process



For a full copy of the forms associated with this policy and a copy of the Interagency Protocol with Oranga Tamariki, please refer to GRG's relevant Sharepoint site or email GRG's NSO for a copy.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN™ TRUST NEW ZEALAND

Child Abuse Register

Reported to GRG by: _____ Date Reported: ____ / ____ / ____

GRG Staff member/volunteer name: _____

Section One – Child Details

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Sex: M / F (please circle) Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Note: *If more than one child, please complete Section Two*

Section Two – Additional Child details

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Sex: M / F (please circle) Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Sex: M / F (please circle) Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Section Three: Care Details

Currently in care of: (full name) _____

Address: (if known) _____

Reasons for suspicion: _____

Reported to OT? Yes / No

If yes, please state the date reported and the name of the OT representative reported to:

If no, this must be reported to CYF immediately as per the OT/CYF Inter-Agency Protocol

INTER-AGENCY PROTOCOL

This Inter-Agency Protocol is made on

Between GRG

And The Chief Executive, Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 GRG

Family violence, including child abuse and neglect, is a major health issue, giving rise to negative outcomes, both short and long term, for children's health and well-being. The focus of the work of GRG, referred to as (GRG) is that once children are in the care of grandparents/kin carers they will be kept safe and endure no form of abuse. New Zealand child protection law requires that children should be placed with their extended family/whanau when in need of care in order that they may know their identity and experience a healthy sense of belonging. In a great many of cases, it is the grandparents who take on the caregiving role. While some become caregivers as the result of legal care and protection process, many others have just taken their grandchildren into their care in response to a family/whanau crisis, without any formal or statutory intervention. GRG will support all grandparents or kin carers of children and has developed and will maintain a reciprocal, positive and fully functional relationship with Oranga Tamariki, The Ministry for Children referred to as Oranga Tamariki.

1.2 Oranga Tamariki

Oranga Tamariki encourages, promotes and develops safe children, strong families and stronger communities. Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 particularly, and under certain other statutes, it is obliged to provide a range of services. These include prevention services, social work services, family group conference services, adoption services and approval and contracting of social services to the community. Community service providers include services to families in need of support, such as counselling and therapy as well as services to promote community welfare, including emergency accommodation. Oranga Tamariki believes that a multi-agency approach is required to avoid duplication and gaps in services. The Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki has a duty to develop and implement protocols with agencies such as GRG as regards the reporting of child abuse.

2.0 Aims

2.1 The aims of the joint protocol are to:

Promote a positive, two way working relationship between the two agencies.

Ensure that abused children, and children thought to be at risk of abuse, are responded to in a manner that puts their safety first and provides them and their families/whanau with services which will promote their long-term health and well-being.

Formalise and define the relationship between the two agencies.

These aims will be achieved by:

The development and maintenance of a shared vision of child protection and commitment to it.

Agreement about the principles underpinning this protocol.

The implementation of the *GRG Safe Caring document* (which have been reviewed and endorsed by Oranga Tamariki).

- The identification and honouring of clear working procedures around the interface between the two agencies.
- Collaboration between the two agencies on matters related to child abuse prevention. Active implementation of this protocol and ongoing monitoring and review of its effectiveness.
- Commitment to address issues of disagreement, whether about individual cases or implementation of this protocol, in a way which is likely to lead to resolution and to meeting the best interests of children.

3.0 Roles

3.1 The role of GRG is to have guidelines for safe child care to its enrolled membership. GRG will also supply support, information, and provide social activities which include both the grandparents/kin carer and the children they raise. It aims to normalise the function of grandparents/kin caregiving.

3.2 The Oranga Tamariki's primary responsibility is towards children and young people who are at risk of abuse, neglect or who are at risk of offending. This includes supporting families in need to meet their care and control responsibilities. Oranga Tamariki's statutory role is defined by the following legislation: the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, the Adoption Act 1955, the Adult Adoption Information Act 1986, the Adoption (Inter-country) Act 1997, and the Care of Children Act 2004 and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

4.0 Statements of Commitment

4.1 Children and families are the foundation of our society. GRG and Oranga Tamariki are committed to working collaboratively within the terms of this protocol to protect children from abuse and neglect and promote the health and well-being of the family/whanau.

*GRG will pursue the well-being and safety of children as being **paramount**. In regard to child protection this means that GRG will:*

Ensure that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (partnership, protection and participation) are upheld, by referring grandparent/kin carer to the culturally appropriate person.

- Support the roles of the statutory agencies (the Police and Oranga Tamariki Services).
- Support GRG volunteers to fulfil their child protection duties.
- Contribute to primary prevention of child abuse and neglect (education of GRG) and secondary prevention of child abuse (interventions with at risk groups) by using GRG's special relationships with families and their knowledge and skills to prevent child abuse.
- Regularly review GRG's services nationally to ensure that this policy and the protocol are being implemented from time to time.
- Ensuring that the best possible care is provided to abused children and those at risk of abuse.
- Continuing to provide relevant safe childcare to abused children.
- Ensuring that the GRG's child abuse policy and protocols are effective.

- 4.2 Procedures will follow the Policy & Protocols as stated in the Oranga Tamariki Caregivers Handbook.
- 4.3 Oranga Tamariki is committed to ensuring that:
- The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount consideration in any care or protection matter.
 - While the child or young person must be protected from harm, every effort should be made to limit the damage and disruption to the child or young person relationship with their family/whanau.
 - Every notification is treated seriously and sensitively and all notifiers are treated with respect.
 - An enhanced collaborative working relationship between Oranga Tamariki and GRG is developed and maintained.
 - The values of respect, fairness and integrity, which guide decision-making, are exemplified.

5.0 Principles

- 5.1 The guiding principles underlying this protocol are based on the provisions of:
- The Treaty of Waitangi.
 - The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - Paramount safety of the child.
 - Commitment to keeping children within a family/whanau whenever possible.

The operating principles are:

The safety and best interests of children is always the first and paramount consideration.

- The family is usually the context in which a child is best cared for. Except where safety is compromised every effort will be made to support parents and extended family to care for their own children well and to assist the child to preserve his or her identity.
- The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 is the basis for care and protection procedures.
- Children and their families are entitled to investigations and interventions, which are of a high standard and performed by competent staff.
- While statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki and the Police) have primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of children, effective care and protection can only come about through inter-agency collaboration at all levels.

6.0 GRG's Safe Care and Protection Policy and Protocol.

The principles of the policy are described in the statement of commitment above.

The protocol details GRG's expectations of volunteers in regard to:

Identification of suspected or actual abuse.

Assessment.

- Referral to Oranga Tamariki.
- Family support and provision of services.
- Attendance at family group conferences and court.

6.1 Critical incident review.

- Employment screening and suspected abuse by staff.

6.2 The GRG's protocol is consistent with good child protection practice and has been reviewed by Oranga Tamariki. Key to good practice is a fully functional and positive relationship between GRG volunteers at all levels and other agencies involved in child protection and family violence prevention, in particular Oranga Tamariki.

6.3 GRG will ensure that all key volunteers receive regular education about child abuse prevention and response to child abuse. GRG's Safe Care and Protocol will be actively implemented.

7.0 Interface

7.1 Identification of abuse or risk of abuse and making referrals to Oranga Tamariki
GRG requires that all key volunteers discuss concerns about abuse confidentially with The Board of Trustees. GRG requires that in the following situations referral to Oranga Tamariki is mandatory:

- Injuries known to have been, or suspected to have been, inflicted by a parent or caregiver.
- Disclosures of abuse by a parent or caregiver.
- Child in violent home and parent/caregiver considered unable to protect child.
- Serious neglect of care, supervision or medical attention.
- Loss of contact with a family where there are significant risk factors.

7.2 Referral will be made initially by phone and be followed up with full documentation of concerns.

7.3 GRG provides safe childcare directions to any grandparents whom are on the membership base. If they are not a member of GRG then that opportunity will be extended to them.

7.4 Oranga Tamariki will:

- Respond in a timely manner to reports from GRG of children and young persons believed to be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Advise GRG whether any further action has been taken as a result of the notification as well as to advise them of the investigation outcome.
- Raise the awareness of social workers, care and protection co-ordinators and youth justice co-ordinators of the role and services provided by GRG in relation to children and young persons and their families.
- When appropriate, ensure that GRG have involvement in meetings particularly when they have provided services and have had significant involvement with a family.
- When appropriate, invite GRG to attend Family Group Conferences when they have special information to share with the family group.

8.0 Inter-Agency Collaboration and Local Relationships

8.1 Effective child protection practice depends on true inter-agency collaboration. At a local level this means that all staff at all levels will:

- Maintain a positive working relationship with the other agency.
- Be encouraged to build relationships with and work alongside staff from the other agency.
- Be encouraged to understand each other's roles and processes.

9.0 Training

- 9.1 In addition to collaborating on direct care and protection work with children and families, both agencies will, when opportunities arise and resources are available, work collaboratively to:
- Explore opportunities for joint training.
 - Share education opportunities.
 - Take part in joint projects and other ventures.

10.0 Sharing of Information

- 10.1 Oranga Tamariki and GRG will seek to develop pro-active strategies to share information, in order to enhance the well-being and safety of children, young persons and their families. Each organisation should inform the other where there are issues that seem to be of interest to both. Such strategies should seek to take advantage of new technology whilst respecting the privacy rights of the children and families each works with.
- 10.2 Unless constrained by legal limitations, staff from both agencies are expected to maintain open communication with each other and will share information relevant to keeping children safe and well and providing families with high quality support.

11.0 Communication and Strategies

- 11.1 Both agencies are committed to maintaining positive working relationships with each other. They will regularly keep the other informed about relevant policies, projects or concerns. Relevant policies will be reviewed by the other agency.
- 11.2 Each agency will ensure that staff and volunteers understand **and support this joint protocol**.

12.0 Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

- 12.1 GRG will ensure that key volunteers are well informed about the provisions of the Joint Protocol by including them in child protection education, providing all key volunteers with a copy of the protocol.
- 12.2 The overall responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reporting of this protocol rests with GRG's Board of Trustees and Manager: Service Delivery Support, Oranga Tamariki.

13.0 The operation of this Protocol.

Any resolved issues identified in the operation of this Protocol.

Any unresolved disputes between the Agencies.

Any other matter they consider relevant to this Agreement.

Allegations of Child Abuse Against GRG Members:

Where allegations of suspected child abuse is raised against a GRG member GRG will offer support for that person but will put the interests of the child first. If the grandparent desires, a culturally appropriate person will be offered as support.

14.0 Dispute Resolution

- 14.1 Resolution of all disputes and differences, or other issues arising between the two parties in relation to the interpretation or performance of the Inter-Agency Protocol shall, in the

first instance, be resolved if at all possible, at the earliest opportunity, at the local level. Local representatives or managers should attempt resolution.

14.2 Only when matters remain unresolved or require further adjudication, should they be referred to the General Manager Clinical Services and Manager: Service Delivery Support, Oranga Tamariki.

14.3 If agreement cannot be reached as set out above, then the matter shall be referred to either; the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki or the Board of Trustees of GRG for final resolution within 28 days.

15.0 Conclusion

15.1 Children in New Zealand will be best protected from abuse and neglect when organisations and families are well educated about child abuse and its prevention and work together with common goals and collaborative practices. In signing the Joint Protocol between their two organisations the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust and Oranga Tamariki, The Ministry for Children make explicit their requirement that staff comply with its provisions which will promote safe and healthy outcomes for children and families.

