

# Eastside Paddlers Inc

## Child Protection Policy

### Policy Statement

Eastside Paddlers Inc is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in our care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in our activities.

Club staff (including employees and contractors), coaches and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- *The welfare of children is the primary concern.*
- *All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.*
- *Child safeguarding and protection is everyone's responsibility.*
- *Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.*
- *Our organisation will work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.*

### Policy Objectives

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through:

- Promoting the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in paddling activities safely.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Requiring employees, contractors and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and these procedures.

### Policy Scope

This Policy shall apply to Eastside Paddlers Inc staff (including employees and contractors), coaches and volunteers who interact and engage with children participating in club activities. Club staff refers to both employees and contractors.

## Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Club employees, coaches and volunteers must be able to clearly identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and have the confidence to take appropriate action should abuse be suspected or disclosed.

The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as “...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.”

**Physical abuse** is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child’s emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours. Employees, coaches and volunteers should be aware of their ‘duty of care’ which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child’s development. It may also include neglect of child’s basic or emotional needs.

## Procedures

**1. Recruitment and Screening** – As part of our duty of care, Eastside Paddlers Inc will ensure that suitable and appropriate staff, coaches and volunteers are engaged to work with children, through ensuring a robust recruitment and screening process should be followed for all roles where there is interaction with children.

When employing or contracting people to engage with children there shall be a robust recruitment process that includes:

- an application process;
- Interviewing the applicant;
- Verifying the applicant’s application form and referees.
- Obtaining a Police Check for the preferred applicant.

In addition, Eastside Paddlers Inc shall conduct police vetting for existing and future volunteers in a role in which the person is likely to have individual and unsupervised contact with participants under 18 years of age.

The purpose of the Police Check is to see whether the person has any previous criminal convictions and/or had any contact with the NZ Police. If the person has had contact with the NZ Police, then the following requirements apply:

- a. Subject to the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004, If the person has had a criminal conviction involving dishonesty, drugs, threatening behaviour, harassment, violence, or other crimes against a person (e.g. sex offences, assault) then they must not be appointed to the role.
- b. If the person has had a criminal conviction other than those in (a), and conviction concerns a matter that does not suggest that the person is a potential risk to children, then the person may be appointed, subject to satisfaction of other criteria for the role.
- c. If the preferred applicant is not willing to agree to the Police Check or Ministry of Justice Criminal Check, then that person shall not be appointed to any role in which the person is likely to have contact with children.

All information obtained during the course of screening (including any Police or Criminal Checks) is personal information and shall comply with the Privacy Act. It must be kept confidential to the persons or committee within Eastside Paddlers Inc, who has been delegated the task of investigating and/or making the appointment for the role and, where relevant, the Child Protection Officer. Information collected during the screening about a person who is not appointed to the role must be destroyed within twelve months and not retained by Eastside Paddlers Inc unless the applicant agrees for them to do so.

**2. Child Protection Officer** – Eastside Paddlers Inc will appoint a Child Protection Officer (CPO) to manage child protection issues by:

- ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all staff/volunteers and members, including through training and raising awareness within the organisation;
- establishing and maintaining the complaints procedure;
- regularly reporting to the Club Committee
- acting as the main contact for child protection matters;
- keeping up-to-date with developments in child protection legislation;
- maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken; and
- regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

**3. Education and training** – Education and training of staff and volunteers will help Eastside Paddlers Inc to:

- recognise the risks inherent in the sport;
- recognise when children are at risk and from what;
- take appropriate precautions to manage and limit identified risks;
- respond in an appropriate manner to children who have been harmed or are suspected of being harmed;
- understand our responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe both in terms of prevention and management of cases that may arise.

There shall be monitoring and training of staff and volunteers in order to ensure that they are working safely and effectively with children.

1. Staff and volunteers shall undergo an induction process going over this Child Protection Policy and other club Health & Safety policies and procedures relevant to their roles.
  - a. Staff/volunteers should be clear what constitutes inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour.
  - b. Identify any potential risk situations and provide staff/volunteers with guidelines to ensure every step is taken to remove them from situations where potential for abuse or allegations of abuse could occur.
2. All staff and volunteers must complete the Sport NZ “Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport” e-learning module as part of their induction. Their certificate of completion must be provided to Eastside Paddlers Inc and stored by the club. This must be kept up to date and repeated upon expiration.
3. Staff and volunteers shall be observed and monitored in their roles on a regular basis to ensure their practices and behaviors align with all club policies and procedures.
4. Unacceptable behaviour or practices of staff and volunteers shall be identified and responded to i.e. via training to improve practices.
5. The Child Protection Officer will also ensure that staff/volunteers receive ongoing education and training to keep up-to-date with any changes to the law or internal processes for managing incidents of harm to children.

**4. Good Practice Protocols** – These protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations. The intention of these protocols is to reduce the likelihood of harm to a child as well as minimising the risk to staff/volunteers of an allegation or complaint being made.

- *Applying a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity.*
  - Activities should be appropriate for the age and development of the children in our care.
  - Ensure feedback to children is about their behaviour/performance and not of a personal nature.
  - Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.
  - Respect a child’s right to personal privacy.
  - Treat everyone with respect
  - Set an expectation of behaviours for everyone and encourage children to respect and be courteous to others
  - Intervene to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- *Creating a safe and open working environment.*
  - Ensure all club Health and Safety procedures and protocols are followed, as per Duty of Care requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
  - Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity. Seek permission to touch when doing the above.

- Do not send children off to paddle/perform activities alone and out of sight and supervision.
  - Do not engage in any intimate, over-familiar or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18 years.
  - Ensure that any filming or photography of children is appropriate. (Obtain consent prior to filming or photographing & explain purpose e.g. to promote course etc).
  - Request parental consent before transporting young people in a vehicle. Ensure vehicle is insured & has current WOF/registration.
  - Except in an emergency where it is unsafe to delay, ensure you have parental consent to administer first aid if required.
  - Do not use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during Eastside Paddlers coaching sessions or racing and do not offer alcohol or drugs to children under any circumstances.
  - Do not engage in communication on a one-to-one basis or otherwise through social media or email other than relevant coach/trainee feedback or administration.
  - Do not engage in any bullying activity.
  - Do not allow parents, coaches, other children, or spectators to engage in any type of bullying behaviour (this includes cyber/text bullying).
  - Do not encourage, engage in or condone any watching of pornographic or age-inappropriate images or literature at any time with any children under the age of 18. Those 18 or older should be discouraged from this in the context of the Club environment and this should not be allowed at any Club sanctioned training or event.
  - Have a pre-arranged policy with parent/guardians for the safe collection of children after paddling session, events/camps have finished.
- *Avoiding situations where you are alone with a child:*
    - Where possible consider activities that involve more than one adult being present or within sight and hearing of others.
    - Avoid private or unobserved situations, including being alone with a child in the changing rooms.
    - Avoid entering changing rooms. If you must enter, knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you.
    - Avoid driving a child unaccompanied.
    - Do not invite or encourage children to your home.
    - Always have another adult present when staying overnight anywhere with children. Same sex chaperones should be used.
    - Do not share a room with a child, other than your own.

**5. Code of Ethics/behaviour** – Eastside Paddlers Inc has a Code of Ethics which sets out expectations of its staff, coaches, instructors, volunteers and supporters.

The Code of Conduct has been developed to cover a variety of roles including coaches, instructors, officials, parents, and administrators. The code also reinforces the good practice protocols.

Complaint and internal discipline procedures for breaches of the code procedures have been developed in conjunction with the Code of Ethics.

**6. Dealing with allegations, responding to concerns** – In accordance with Eastside Paddlers Inc’s responsibility to act on any serious concerns, the following should be brought to the attention of the CPO.

- Any instance where this policy is breached, or good practice guidelines are not followed.
- Any disclosure by a child that abuse, or harm is occurring.
- Any suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to abuse.

Any person may report suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to harm or abuse, or make a complaint about a person to whom this Child Protection Policy applies if they consider that a person has, or may have, breached any part of this policy.

*Where concerns about poor practice are reported*

Poor practice involves actions that are contrary to the club policies and procedures and good practice guidelines provided by the club and increase the risk of harm to children.

- Initial concerns should be discussed with the CPO (in the absence of a CPO, the club committee/board or President should be notified). The CPO (or, where relevant, the board or President) may:
  - Consider the allegation and where there is a legitimate concern provide a written notice to the individual(s) involved.
  - If the poor practice is continued or repeated poor practice following a written notice, then enact disciplinary procedures. This may include expulsion from the role and club.
  - Consider actions across all circumstances for example – regular coaching and game situations, overnight stays.

*Where abuse is suspected or reported*

In responding to suspected child abuse or neglect, there are a few key principles that should be applied immediately. These are;

- The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount considerations.
- Suspected and actual incidences of reported harm should be responded to and recorded accurately and appropriately and as soon as possible.
- Notify Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Children if you are worried about suspected abuse or neglect.
- If you think the child is at immediate risk, the Police should be notified immediately.

SITUATION	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
Harm suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed	<b>Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm-</b>	Consult with others- do not work alone. Do not formally interview the

	<p><b>notify the Police if required.</b></p> <p>CONSULT immediately with CPO</p> <p>RECORD accurately and appropriately any information received/observed</p> <p>LISTEN to the child and reassure them</p> <p>CPO to REPORT the concern to Oranga Tamariki or the Police</p>	<p>child or make any judgements or commitments you cannot keep. Avoid questioning the child beyond what they have already disclosed.</p> <p>Confidentiality is important.</p> <p>Records should be factual (not opinion or hearsay), concise and include the following: nature of allegation/ type of harm, who disclosed the abuse and contact details, contact details of witnesses, signs and symptoms noted, any particular incidents with dates, times and place and any action taken.</p> <p>Suspicious or allegations of abuse are REFERRED not INVESTIGATED</p>
<p>If alleged harm is by a staff member or volunteer</p>	<p>Follow the advice of Oranga Tamariki or the Police.</p> <p>Ensure there is no contact between the staff member or volunteer and the child</p>	<p>A staff member or volunteer must be informed of any allegations against them. Be guided by the Police on this as each situation will be judged in its merits. Where there is a criminal offence the Police may want to notify the person. Do not investigate/presume expertise unless very experienced and qualified to do so. The employee or volunteer may be stood down while the matter is being investigated</p>
<p>If alleged harm is by a non-</p>	<p>Follow the advice of Oranga</p>	<p>Decide who will inform the parents and provide support</p>

staff member	Tamariki or the Police.	to the family. Seek help from trained personnel in order to manage this process effectively.
Investigation by the police	Follow the advice by the police	Note that there is a difference between a criminal investigation and an employment matter and that these must be kept separate
The Club Debrief		Debrief will include decisions about the person's future involvement and a review of how the situation was managed and what changes to policy or safeguards need to be made.

## Policy Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within Eastside Paddlers Inc.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within Eastside Paddlers Inc or from Canoe Racing NZ.
- In all other circumstances, at least every twelve months.

<b>Date of Policy:</b>	18/May 2023
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Annually
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	17 May 2024

## Important Contacts

**NZ Police-** 111

**Oranga Tamariki-** 0508 326 459 , <https://orangatamariki.govt.nz/>

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