

## Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Reg46/HS28

### **Rationale:**

Children's personal safety, security and wellbeing is paramount at all times, however there may be situations when interventions are necessary.

Educators and Coordinators of Little Giggles are made aware of this policy and the issues of emotional, physical and sexual abuse at the time of their induction.

All Staff/Contractors will operate within the national Code of Ethics which sets a high standard for professionals in our field. Under section 6 of the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989) "The interest, safety and wellbeing of children are Paramount."

Little Giggles are committed to protect our children against child abuse by developing Educator expertise to:

- Recognize and respond appropriately to indications of child abuse.
- Be familiar with and be able to implement these policies and know their roles and implement appropriate procedures, especially with regard to contacting and working with child abuse protection agencies.
- Be aware of the laws and regulations, rights and responsibilities of children, Staff/Contractors, parents and agency personnel, which relate to child abuse protection.

### **Objectives:**

The interest and protection of the child is paramount in all actions.

To develop an educator and a family/whanau awareness, of protection procedures which are relevant to identifying and notifying physical, emotional, sexual and neglect abuse.

If any person (parent, Educator or Coordinator) has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, their first obligation (after ensuring the child is in immediate danger) is to immediately advise the Management team of Little Giggles or the most senior person on duty immediately.

All matters related to individual cases are confidential to those directly involved and should under no circumstances be discussed with other Staff/Contractor, parents, children or any other person. Failure of Staff/Contractors to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Full and detailed written records are to be kept (as instructed by Little Giggles) of every related discussion or act or incident which involves a parent, child, or Staff/Contractor from the first instance child abuse is suspected.

Educators do not assume responsibility for action or advice beyond the level of their own expertise.

This policy will be given to all Staff/Contractors as part of the initial induction programme.

All staff/Contractor must be able to locate a copy of this policy if asked and must implement the procedures at all times.

The Staff/Contractor must be able to explain common indicators exhibited by a child who has been subject to abuse.

All Managers, Programme Coordinators and Educators need to be aware of the requirements of complying with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 or new contracting, funding or licensing requirements.

The management team of Little Giggles (and where appropriate other senior Staff/Contractor) may be asked to obtain or provide training, resources and/or advice that will enable to carry out their role in terms of this policy; particularly that which covers:

- Understanding child abuse and indicators of child abuse
- How to reduce the risk of child abuse in Home Based premises.
- Understanding and complying with legal obligations in regard to child abuse.
- Working with outside agencies on child abuse issues.
- Planning of environment, programme and supervision to minimize risk.
- Providing Staff/Contractors training and advice on child abuse policies.
- Dealing with child/parent/whanau.

**LEGAL DEFINITION:** Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually

- **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
  - **Contact abuse:** touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
  - **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, and causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, and drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
  - **Non-contact abuse:** exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
  - **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:
    - *Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.*
    - *Exposure to family/whānau or intimate partner violence.*
- **Neglect** – neglect is the most common form of abuse and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:
  - Physical (not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing).
  - Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
    - Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
    - Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).

- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

**Family violence:** has been defined by the NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse as violence and abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with. This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013).

Family Violence is also defined in Te Rito, the NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, as covering a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature that typically involve fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation. It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family. Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:

- Spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners).
- Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult).
- Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust).
- Parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent); sibling abuse (violence among siblings), (Te Rito – NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy, Ministry of Social Development, 2002).

**A legal definition of family violence** is provided in Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act 1995.

**Intimate partner violence** is a subset of family violence. The NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse states that intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse; Issues Papers 3 & 4 April 2013)

- Outdoor and indoor play areas are designed with the maximum amount of 'Open' spaces available.
- Parents are encouraged to visit at any time during the day. Parent settling children into a home based care are encouraged to witness and take part in our programme until such time as they feel secure enough to leave.
- Only adults named on the enrolment form are able to collect children from the Home Based Premises.
- Permission from parents is required for their children to participate in any outings or excursions.
- The complaints procedure ensures issues of concern are dealt with appropriately and parents are encouraged to express and concerns to enable improvements where applicable.
- We realise and accept our own limitations in dealing with issues of abuse. Professional agencies such as Police and the Children, Young families Services and Ministry of Education will be involved in suspected cases of abuse. These agencies are sought for their specialized knowledge.
- Visiting students are not allowed to change or toilet any child unsupervised and are not to be left alone with any child or group of children.
- Relievers will be allowed to change or toilet children and be left alone with groups at the discretion of Coordinator or Educator.
- Parents will be notified of presence of any student or reliever either before or if not possible the actual morning the child/ren attend the in home care service.
- Written documentation is kept on any issues of concern. Educators must record any incident about a child. Full, relevant, contextual factors are recorded in our confidential 'concern book'.

**The following measures will be taken by all Educators regarding suspected abuse:**

- All allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously.
- No Educator will act alone regarding suspected abuse. The Educator will be consulted by the Coordinator and If required will take ownership of the concern with the help of Little Giggles Management Team.
- Any person disclosing information in good faith regarding suspected abuse will be assured the protection afforded by Law.
- If Educator or Coordinator suspects a child is unsafe, she/he will report it to the police or Department of Social Welfare.
- If there are any allegations of abuse by an employee, Management are to be advised as soon as possible. Where necessary the authorities will be informed immediately and the Staff/Contractor will be suspended while the matter is investigated.
- We will offer support to all those involved in any abuse allegations.

## IDENTIFY POSSIBLE ABUSE OR NEGLECT

### Rationale

The well-being and safety of children and young people is a paramount concern of Little Giggles. This includes the prevention of child abuse or maltreatment.

The interest and welfare of the child or young person will be the primary consideration when any action is taken about suspected abuse. Little Giggles supports the roles of statutory agencies (the Police and Child, Youth and Family) in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspected abuse to these agencies, following the process outlined below.

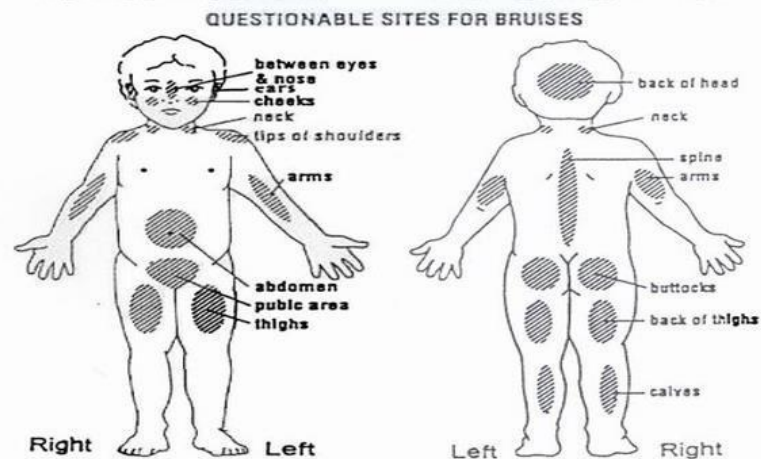
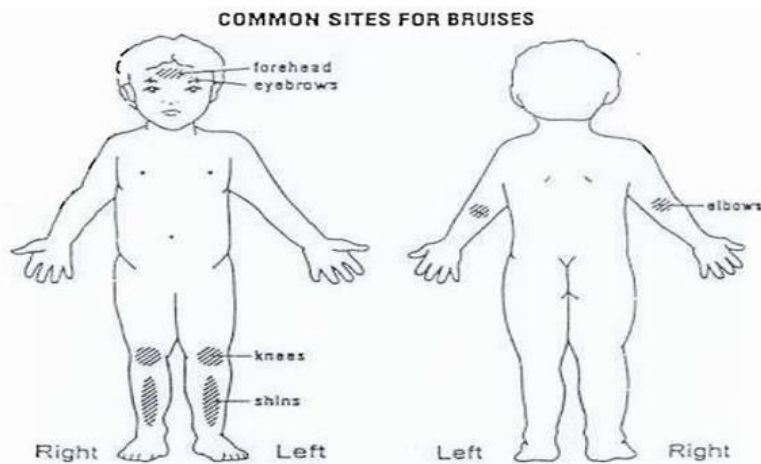
Little Giggles will maintain a good working relationship with the statutory agencies and be familiar with the laws which serve to protect children and young persons from abuse. We will consult with these and other agencies with specialist knowledge when needed, and our staff will not assume responsibility beyond their level of experience or training.



**Physical Abuse**

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.

Abuse	Childs behavior
Injuries	Not their normal self
bruises, lacerations and body marks	extremely aggressive or withdrawn
clusters of bruises & multiple bruises	fears parent or caregiver
finger nail marks	
fractures and head injuries any head injuries that cannot be explained	



## Emotional Abuse

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.

There should be a number of informed observations completed on the child before such an assessment can be made.

Where attitudes and behaviours of adults severely affect a child's emotional and physical development.

<b>Abuse</b>	<b>Child's behavior</b>
Physical and developmental signs: for no medical reason the child;	
fails to thrive	extremely immature or inappropriate social behavior
has stunted growth	apathy and depression
show developmental delay	extreme and age - inappropriate aggression
exhibits developmental regression	

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

Staff should be aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming of a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

Sexual Abuse which is the use of children for the sexual gratification of someone who takes advantage of their power and or the child's trust.

<b>Abuse</b>	<b>Childs Behaviour</b>
Physical and developmental signs	knowledge of sex is inappropriate to the child's age, sexual play that is sophisticated beyond the child's years, abnormal awareness of, or anxiety about touch, undue interest in sex and sexual play
pain and discomfort in the genital area	fear of particular adult, signs of distress
discharge or infection in the genital and anal area	describes sleep disorders, especially with sudden onset
repeated urinary infection	abrupt change in behaviour or personality

	unusual anxiety about toileting or changing clothes
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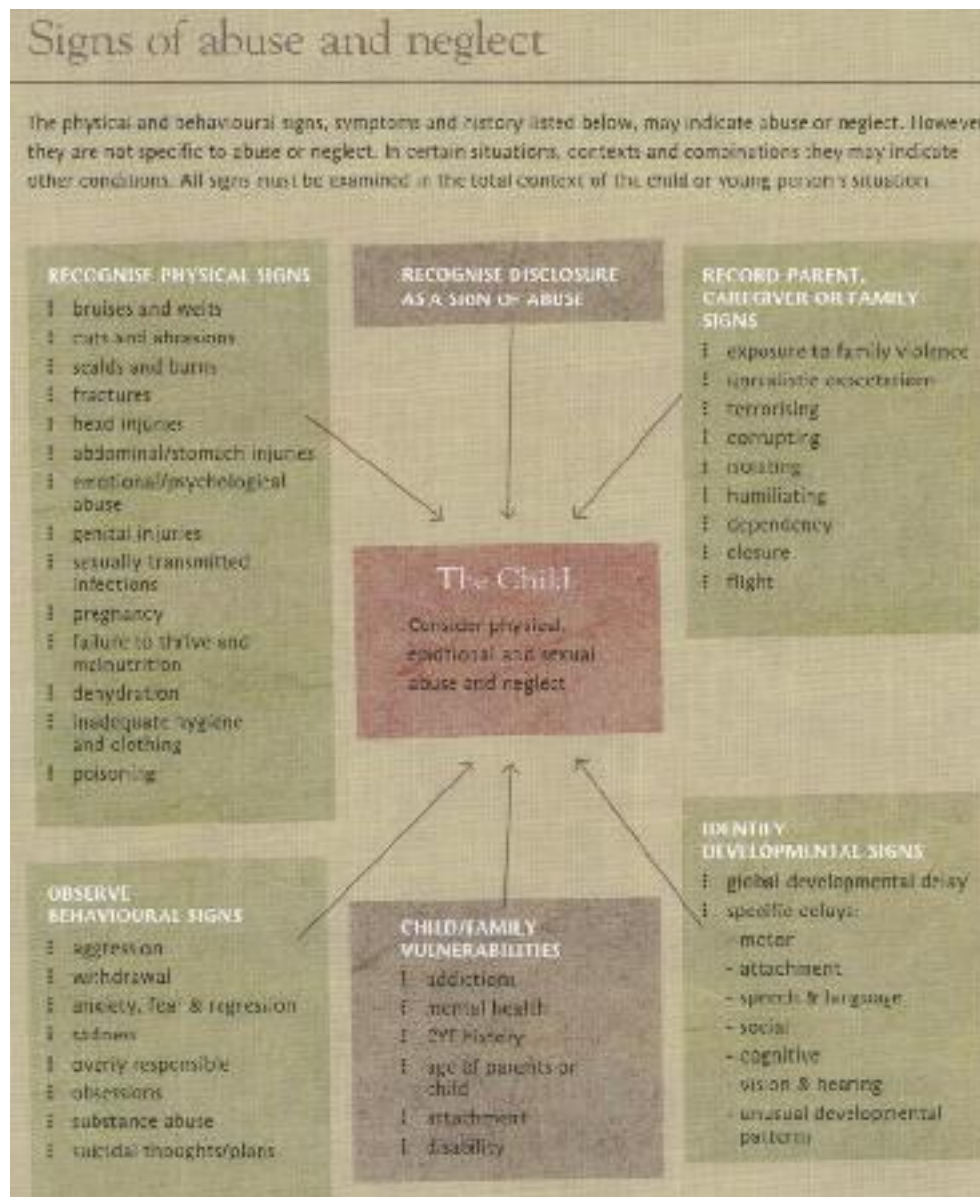
## Neglect

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 health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: of action, emotion or basic needs.

Deprives children of necessities i.e.; food, shelter, supervision appropriate to their age, and essential physical and medical care.

<b>Abuse</b>	
Physical and developmental signs: for no medical reason the child;	
fails to thrive	
shows signs of malnutrition	
has low weight for size, body type, and health	
has frequent accidental injuries	
falls asleep often (without being ill, and not consistent with their developmental stage)	

**See further signs of abuse and neglect below.**



## Additional Guidance

Child, Youth and Family's has developed the *Working Together* guide on inter-agency working to identify and respond to potential abuse and neglect.

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/27713-working-together-3-0-45ppi.pdf>

- To identify possible abuse or neglect here is a link to follow provided by Child Youth and Family. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/whatiscan.pdf>

### Contact details

**To contact the Child, Youth and Family agency, the phone number is as follows:**

**Northern Call Centre: Ph: 912 3820, Free phone: 0508 FAMILY (0508 326459)**

Reference: *The interagency guide to breaking the cycle "let's stop child abuse together"*  
2001 CYF

*Early Childhood Regulations: 2008, 46, 47, 56 - Licensing Criteria HS31, 32, 33*  
*GMA 7, 10,*

The Ministry of Health has also made guidance available in the health sector

<http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence/family-violence-guidelines>

## **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION- HS28 & REGULATIONS 56**

### **Rational**

- To protect children from any form of abuse.
- To respond in ways that keep children safe when abuse is suspected or identified.
- To reduce stress on staff/contractors and other adults from being wrongly blamed of child abuse.
- To promote community involvement, awareness and ownership of the problem.
- To inform parents, Staff/Contractors of anti-abuse practices and appropriate agencies to assist.

### **Procedures**

#### **Responding to abuse**

- On-going commitment to the prevention of Child Abuse: sexual, physical, and emotional will be a priority for the protection of children. This commitment means that the interests and welfare of the child are of the prime considerations when any decision is made about suspected abuse. Little Giggles will also be committed to giving support to families.
- Committing to maintaining and increasing Staff/Contractors awareness of how to prevent, recognize and respond to abuse. To be reinforced by Staff/Contractors attending workshops or training sessions that are available annually on Child Abuse. As part of their induction, new Staff/Contractors will familiarize themselves with our Home Based policies on Child Abuse and will be encouraged to read the relevant resources material.
- To maintain a good working relationship with the Children Youth and family Service and will seek familiarity with CYF's laws and regulations, which serve to protect children from abuse. We will not assume responsibility beyond the level of our experience.
- Staff/Contractors will respond to suspected child abuse by writing down observations, impressions and communications, which cause concern. No staff/Contractor will act alone on any suspected child abuse cases and will consult with the coordinator and/or Little Giggles Management team. These senior members will be committed to taking action and arranging for consultation with appropriate agencies.
- Where a suspicion of child abuse has occurred and the child is unsafe, such matters will be reported to the police, and Children Youth and Family Service. If it is certain that the suspected child abuse has occurred outside the family or by a person not clearly known to the family, Little Giggles may inform the parents before we consult or report. Little Giggles will ensure that personnel will have the required skills, help and support to present the information to the parents in the most appropriate and effective manner.
- Where there is suspicions of abuse by a family member or someone close to the family of the child seeking professional advice (and cultural advice if necessary) will be the first call of action, and the Little Giggles will inform the child's parents at the appropriate time.

## **Regulations 56**

Little Giggles excludes any person employed or engaged in the service from coming into contact with children if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person>

- has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children; or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilization, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection. And if necessary to ensure there is no ill-treatment of children, excludes that person from the service and home while the educator is providing care and education.
- Where it is suspected that child abuse has been perpetrated by a Staff/Contractors or any other person assisting at the Home Based service, the matter will be reported promptly to the management team who will also take prompt actions to report the same to the relevant authorities. Staff/Contractors under suspicion will be suspended without pay while the matter is investigated. They will be fully informed of their rights.
- We believe those children, families, Staff/Contractors and others involved in the investigation of suspected child abuse will be removed from the source of abuse, and provided with all the required support.

The appointment of all new Staff/Contractors will include a thorough checking of applicants' work histories by making contact with the applicants' referees and past employers. All employees will be checked and cleared through the police checking and verification process. All Little Giggles Educators will have completed a Police Vet check prior to providing care for children, and anyone 17 years of age or over living at the care address will also have to complete a Police Vet check.

- The paramount considerations in choosing Staff/Contractors is to ensure that they have the skills and attributes which contribute to the children's safety health, physical and emotional wellbeing, intellect and social development.
- All other individuals who would normally reside at the Home Care Premise will be checked and cleared through the police checking and verification process.
- The child abuse policies will be available to all parents and prospective parents. If parents have concerns about the treatment of a child by our educators or other Staff/Contractors, they will be encouraged to make these known to the respective coordinators or the management team who will ensure that the matter is investigated and acted on, using an outside advisor if necessary.
- Little Giggles believes that education of children and parents is important in the prevention of child abuse. Little Giggles will encourage parents to make use of educational programmes organized by any professional group or individual in the community.
- Little Giggles will also organize and conduct programme for parent awareness of cultural values, beliefs, norms, sanctions and sensitivities regarding child discipline and child abuse.
- All information on child abuse occurring at our Home Based Premises will be treated with confidence from the beginning to end. All Staff/Contractors who are involved in a child abuse case will ensure that they fully understand the seriousness of the case and the importance in keeping to facts and steering clear away from gossip.

## **Professional Agencies**

### **We will maintain working relationship with:**

- ❖ Ministry of Education
- ❖ Child Youth and Family (1989)
- ❖ NZ Health Boards
- ❖ NZ Police
- ❖ Plunket/Public Health Nurse
- ❖ Family Support Service providers
- ❖ Special Education Services

### **Below are relevant agencies and legislations**

- Vulnerable Children Act
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1993
- Children Young Persons and their families Act 1989
- Domestic Violence Act 1995
- Victims Right

## **Staff/Contractors Training**

We will ensure that Staff/Contractors have access to on-going training and support in recognizing and responding to child abuse, and how to respond to questions and responses from children about sexual abuse.

All Staff/Contractors will familiarize themselves with Little Giggles policies on child abuse and will be encouraged to read the source material available; this will include “The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act; 1989”.

## **Employment and Approved Contractors**

When appointing Staff/Contractors, prime consideration will be given to their skills and attributes to contribute towards the children’s safety and their health, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. The employment and engagement of Staff/Contractors will include checking work histories and making contact with referees and past employers.

To ensure that thorough checks are made into the background of applicants before they are employed to work with Little Giggles children, by following The Children’s Action Plan (CAP) publication Safer recruitment, safer children provides best practice guidance and Children’s worker safety checking under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

- All prospective Staff/Contractor will be required to sign a statement declaring any conviction.
- All prospective Staff/Contractors will be required to sign a form to allow Little Giggles undertake a police check on them.

- No appointments will be made without an interview to ensure that these requirements are carried out.  
If selected for the position the police vet will be obtained/renewed every 3 years as per Regulations education Act S319FA and will be kept in record

### **Professionalism**

All Staff/Contractors will protect themselves by being clear about their role in child's life and maintaining high standards of adult behavior and attitudes. Staff/Contractors will be encouraged to keep professional and personal lives separate. This policy will be reviewed on regular basis where we will evaluate our performance in keeping the standards outlined.

### **Supervision**

Staff/Contractors will keep a written note of all adults visiting the Home based Premise. Staff/Contractors and other adults will be well supervised and visible in the activities they perform with the children. Staff/Contractors will make regular checks of the toilet area and sleep room.

Parents will perform care-taking tasks **only** with children they are responsible for. Visitors to the Home Based Premise will not perform care-taking tasks with the children or be alone with them. Doors will remain open at all times where intimate care-taking of children is required. Relationship with Parents/Families/Whanau Parents will be encouraged to visit the Home Based Premise and be involved as much as possible. The child abuse policy will be available to all parents and prospective parents.

### **Relationships with Parents/Families**

Parents will be encouraged to visit the Home Based Premise and be involved as much as possible.

The child abuse policy will be available to all parents and prospective parents.

The complaints process will be displayed so that parents know the steps to take when making a complaint. Parents will be encouraged to make any concerns known to the educator who will ensure the matter is investigated and acted upon.

### **Preventative Education**

Little Giggles In-Home Childcare will encourage parents/matua, Staff/Contractors, children and the community to attend courses, receive training and have access to written material on child abuse. Families with difficulties can be advised of support agencies. Resources about personal safety for children will be available to the children, families and Staff/Contractors.

## Conclusion

The implementation of this policy will ensure that people involved in the Home based Premise are aware of procedures to follow when protecting children from any kind of abuse.

This policy will be reviewed when appropriate or any other incident or occasion in which significant elements of this policy have been exercised to update the practical relevance of this policy.

This policy was authored by Little Giggles Management in July 2016. The policy is due to be updated in July 2017. It is consistent with Child, Youth and Family and Police guidelines and will be updated when new guidance is issued.

Date Approved.....July, 2016.....

Date Reviewed.....July, 2017.....

## REPORTING PROCESS FOR SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED CHILD

