



Child Protection Policy for ParaFed Otago (2020)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of the children involved with ParaFed Otago. The policy aims to clearly define processes to be taken in the event of child abuse, the definitions of the types of abuse and outlines the responsibilities of staff, volunteers and carers in terms of maintaining children's safety in this context.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, carers or other representatives who work with ParaFed Otago in conjunction with all children who interact with ParaFed Otago. Managers are responsible for ensuring staff, volunteers and carers understand and adhere to this policy

Definitions

Children are young people under the age of 18

Staff are members of ParaFed who are under contract or involved in the committee

Volunteer is an individual who agrees to undertake activities to benefit ParaFed Otago and its members. Volunteers offer their time of their own free will for no financial reward

Carers are parents or caregivers of a child involved with ParaFed Otago who may also be periodically involved in ParaFed Otago events

Policy

This policy sets out how ParaFed Otago will protect the interests of the children involved.

Definition of Child Abuse:

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989 defines child abuse as the *"...harming (whether physical, emotional, sexual), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person."*

Physical abuse is the actual or potential physical harm perpetuated by another person, adult or child. It may involve but not limited to hitting, beating, shaking, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a child is given an inappropriate training programme or is forced to participate with an injury.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional mistreatment of a child. It may involve but is not limited to patterns of rejection, degrading, ignoring, isolating corrupting, exploiting, threatening or terrorising a child. This also includes the seeing or hearing of the ill treatment of others, adult or child.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity where consent is not given or cannot be given as well as enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative, or non-penetrative). It may involve but is not limited to rape, kissing, touching, masturbation, children looking at, or in the production of sexual

images, inappropriate behaviour via social media i.e. sexting, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the continual failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to impair the child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It may involve but is not limited to the neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs or the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff, Volunteers and Carers

Sustained abuse and neglect of children, in whatever capacity it occurs, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of children's health, development and overall wellbeing as well as their ability to sustain meaningful and stable relationships in the future with their peers and others.

It is ParaFed Otago's intention to ensure that all staff, volunteers and carers understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children at all times. It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers and carers to be attentive and vigilant, have awareness and knowledge of the signs of neglect, actual or potential abuse. It is also their responsibility to report any allegations, suspicions or concerns of abuse in the appropriate manner immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

If a child is in immediate danger, the police must be called. If the child is not in immediate danger, a conversation with the manager must be had to decide the best course of action. Every situation is different. Staff, volunteers and carers should look at all the information available about the child and the environment before deciding what needs to be done.

ParaFed Otago are placed to recognise and respond to concerns for the wellbeing of children. There are a number of ways in which situations of concerns might be raised with a staff member, volunteer or carer which may not involve a child making a disclosure directly to a staff member, volunteer or carer. Therefore, staff, volunteers and carers should be alert and aware of the fact that a range of situations could give rise to concerns about child protection.

ParaFed Otago will have an appointed Designated Person for Child Protection. This function will be held by the Sports Development Officer.

Child Protection Procedures

All concerns of potential, suspected or alleged abuse must be brought to the attention of the Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection. If the DP is unavailable, then consultation should occur with an alternative appropriate manager. A decision will be made as to whether seek further advice or notify Child, Youth and Family.

If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a staff member, volunteer or carer, it is important that that person take what the child said seriously.

ParaFed Otago has a duty of care to the children it provides services to. A failure to report a significant concern about a child is a breach of that's child's human rights.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff, volunteer or carer attempt to undertake an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone

All decisions taken, including if the concern does not require notifying Child, Youth and Family, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in a Child Protection file with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

Giving information to protect children better is not a breach of confidentiality. Wherever possible, the family/whanau should be kept informed of what information has been shared and to what agency, and for what purpose. Guidance of sharing information with family/whanau is to be sought from either the Police or Child, Youth and Family. In the Privacy Act 1993, it states, *"disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat"*.

Safe Recruitment of Volunteers

In conditions where the volunteer has no connection or relationship with ParaFed Otago, an informal interview will taken place, resume collected and references contacted where appropriate. A full assessment of the information available will be conducted and a decision to recruit the volunteer will be made. In conditions where the volunteer has connections with ParaFed Otago, that relationship will be investigated and judgement made whether further investigation is required or not before the recruitment of the volunteer.

All ParaFed Otago volunteers who engage in our programmes will be police vetted and will not commence their volunteering until the results of the vet are received. A review for each volunteer granted they are still with ParaFed Otago will be undertaken every three years.

Safe Working Practices

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is a potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

All staff, volunteers and carers are expected to behave in manners that maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others