

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines our commitment to child protection and recognises the important role and responsibility of all our staff in the protection of children. It includes our expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by us.

All staff members (including contractors and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and abide by them.

We have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care. We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of all children. The safety and wellbeing of the child is our top priority. Advice will be sought through appropriate agencies in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

Identifying real and potential harm to children and young persons

In line with section 15 of the **Oranga Tamariki Act 1989**, any person working in our dental practice (whether as an employee or a contractor) who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) neglected, or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person, must report the matter to the Senior Clinician. They may, in turn, contact a social worker or the local police.

Dental Solutions of Tauranga shall:

- Ensure the interests and protection of the child are paramount in all circumstances.
- Recognise the rights of family/whanau to participate in the decision-making about their children.
- Ensure that all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect, deal with disclosures by children and allegations against staff members and are able to take appropriate action in response.
- Support all staff to work in accordance with this policy, to work with partner agencies and organisations to ensure child protection policies are understood and implemented.
- Promote a culture where staff feel confident they can constructively challenge poor practice or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.
- Consult, discuss and share relevant information, in line with our commitment to confidentiality and information sharing protocols, in a timely way.
- Make available professional development, resources and/or advice to ensure all staff can carry out their roles in terms of this policy.
- Ensure that this policy forms part of the initial staff induction programme for each staff member.

Conducting Safety Checks

In accordance with section 16 of the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015, **Dental Solutions of Tauranga** will:

- Conduct Safety checks for all new and existing children's workers.
 - Police vetting checks shall be completed as part on our Induction process.
 - Sight and copy original identity documents (saved in Personnel records).
 - Police vetting will be repeated every 3 years.

- Ensure that all Clinicians hold a current Annual Practicing Certificate as issued by the NZ Dental Council.

- Conduct Safety checks for all new and existing children's workers every 3 years.