



## Hokitika Gymnastics

### Child Protection Policy

#### Rationale

This Child Protection Policy has been developed to ensure that coaches, committee members, volunteers, and all associated parties understand Hokitika Gymnastics' duty of care and the systems in place to support and protect all children.

This policy aligns with the **Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989** and the **Children's Act 2014**.

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#### Purpose

This policy provides clear guidance to employees, club members, parents, and relevant stakeholders regarding:

- Staff training
  - Prevention
  - Early intervention
  - Reporting
  - Responding
  - Staff obligations
  - Staff behaviour
  - Duty of care
  - Police vetting
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#### Coach Training

All coaches will receive training in **recognising and responding to suspected child abuse**.

Training will include:

- Identifying signs of potential abuse or neglect
- Understanding reporting procedures
- Awareness of relevant agencies and their roles

Child Protection training will be conducted **annually**.

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## **Prevention**

Coaches will take all reasonable steps to protect children while participating in programmes.

This includes:

- Maintaining awareness of children's whereabouts and activities
- Monitoring the actions of other coaches
- Ensuring appropriate supervision at all times

Supervision procedures include:

- Children remaining in designated, supervised areas
- No one-to-one interactions behind closed doors
- Visitors being supervised at all times
- Visitors not entering the gym floor without permission from the supervising coach

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## **Early Intervention**

All coaches are trained to recognise early warning signs of abuse or neglect and are encouraged to listen carefully to children's concerns.

If concerns arise:

- Coaches must discuss them immediately with a committee member
- The committee will determine appropriate action, including:
  - Seeking advice from Oranga Tamariki
  - Making a Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki or Police
  - Taking any other necessary action

If abuse is suspected or disclosed:

- Record all observations, incidents, and disclosures accurately
- Follow reporting procedures

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## **Reporting Concerns To A Statutory Agency**

All suspected child abuse cases will be handled in a way that prioritises the child's immediate and ongoing safety.

### **Step 1**

Record the concern or disclosure as soon as possible.  
Notify a committee member immediately.

## Step 2

- Believe the child
- Do NOT investigate independently
- Do NOT question or confront the alleged offender
- Do NOT act alone

If concerns are not confirmed, continue monitoring. If confirmed, proceed to reporting.

## Step 3

A committee member will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki or Police to determine next steps.

## Step 4

Follow guidance from Oranga Tamariki/Police regarding informing parents or caregivers.

## Step 5

Hokitika Gymnastics will provide access to external support for coaches if required.

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## Important Notes

- The **Children's Act 2014** requires this policy to outline how abuse is identified and reported
- The **child's safety and wellbeing is always the primary concern**
- Staff are **not required to seek parental permission** before reporting concerns
- Coaches are strongly encouraged to consult the committee before taking action

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## Responding To Allegations Against Staff Or Others

- All incidents must be documented in full as soon as possible
- The committee will review the incident promptly with relevant parties
- The accused individual will have the opportunity to provide their account

Where necessary:

- The individual may be reassigned duties or suspended during investigation

- External advice will be sought from Oranga Tamariki
- Police will be notified if a criminal offence is suspected

Additional provisions:

- Staff have the right to seek independent legal advice
- Parents will be informed as directed by Oranga Tamariki or Police

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## **Obligations To Staff**

While child safety is paramount, Hokitika Gymnastics will:

- Ensure fair and unbiased investigations
- Maintain the presumption of innocence
- Provide appropriate support, including counselling if required

All records will be kept confidential and documented appropriately.

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## **Staff Behaviour**

All coaches and volunteers must:

- Read and sign the Code of Conduct
- Act as positive role models
- Maintain professional and appropriate relationships

## **Physical Contact Guidelines**

- Must only occur to meet the child's needs
- Must never be for the adult's benefit
- Must be appropriate to the child's age and development

Additional expectations:

- Avoid being alone with a child
- Maintain awareness of all children at all times
- Ensure visitors and volunteers are supervised
- Store medications safely out of reach
- Avoid "adult" conversations in the presence of children
- Maintain professional boundaries with families

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## **Duty Of Care**

All staff and volunteers have a legal and ethical duty to:

- Take reasonable care to avoid harm
- Act in the best interests of the child
- Ensure a safe and supportive environment

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## **Police Vetting – Employment Process**

Hokitika Gymnastics is an approved agency of the **New Zealand Police Vetting Service**.

All staff and volunteers may be subject to:

- Interview
- Reference checks
- Work history verification
- Identity verification
- Police vetting
- Code of Conduct agreement

Requirements:

- Written consent must be obtained prior to vetting
- Consent records must be retained

Hokitika Gymnastics reserves the right to conduct ongoing vetting where required, including for external organisation requirements (e.g. schools).

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## **Exclusions**

None, unless approved by the Hokitika Gymnastics Committee.

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## **Review**

**Date Approved:** 10 May 2025

**Next Review:** 2027