

# Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT

Stopping Violence Services (Christchurch) Incorporated (SVS) is committed to the prevention and early detection of abuse and/or neglect of children and young people. In all interactions with children, young people and their family/whānau SVS will be guided by the principle that the welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount consideration. SVS staff will ensure that early and appropriate action is taken when child abuse is suspected.

SVS is also guided by the principle that the family/whānau have the primary role in caring for and protecting children and young people and unless this poses further risk to the child or young person, family/whānau will be involved in all decision making.

## PROCEDURES

### Suspected Abuse

SVS acknowledges the right of any person to report suspected abuse to Child Youth and Family and the Police. Documentation will be kept of any concerns and observations. Where any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or neglect, is suspected, immediate action will be taken to ensure the safety of the child or young person. SVS will report suspected abuse to Child Youth & Family for full investigation in accordance with the Child Abuse Reporting Protocol. SVS staff will not investigate the suspected abuse with the child or young person.

### Protections

SVS will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on identifying child abuse, fully understand their obligation to act in the interests of the child or young person and know what steps to take to ensure the immediate safety of any child or young person they are concerned about. All staff and clients who notify abuse are informed of the protections that exist under Section 16 of the CYP&F Act 1989 and the Privacy Act (Privacy Principle 11) in relation to giving information or making a referral regarding a child or young person they are concerned about.

### Prevention

Safety is a key aspect of SVS programmes, in relation to identifying high risk situations of violence and being able to de-escalate or remove oneself. Enabling Youth (EY), the youth section of SVS, has a behaviour management policy that forbids the use of methods of discipline or control that involve physical or emotional punishment. SVS programmes teach zero tolerance to the use of violence and at all times non-violent methods of relating to others are taught and encouraged.

# Child Abuse Reporting Protocol

Where any staff member is concerned or alerted that a child or young person is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The concern or information received is recorded on the individual file and in the Child Abuse Notification Folder.
2. The staff member concerned reports their concern to their team leader and the information available is assessed to determine if the child is currently at risk. The level of risk is then reported to the Clinical Director. If the child is on the premises, this must occur before the child leaves. If the child is not on the premises, this must occur within 24 hours.
3. If the child or young person is on the premises, the staff member and team leader concerned will adhere to the following protocol:
  - Where appropriate contact a member of the child or young person's family/whānau, inform them of the action and request they come to support the young person.
  - All notifications to CYF are made to the 0508 326 459 number and a written CYF Notification Form is completed with a copy emailed to CYF.
  - In the event an acknowledgement of a notification is not received from CYF, the above notification process is repeated and documented.
  - In cases of immediate risk, the staff member will remain with the young person until a Child, Youth and Family worker has assessed the situation and taken appropriate action.
4. If the child or young person is not on the SVS premises, the Clinical Director or delegated staff member will contact the local Child, Youth and Family office and make a referral under the provisions of section 15 of the CYP & F Act. The referral is to be made the same day.
5. Where a staff member considers a concern exists because of past abuse of the potential for future harm:
  1. The staff member concerned will gather further information to make a full assessment of the situation and discuss with the team leader or Clinical Director.
  2. Where appropriate the staff member may refer the concern to the SVS Partner Support Worker who will contact the caregivers to gather more information.
  3. If concerns for the young person's safety remain for any of these staff members, a referral is to be made to Child, Youth and Family.
  4. If the concerns are not substantiated no further action is required, although the staff member concerned may choose to set a date to reassess the situation.
6. Section 51I of the Domestic Violence Amendment Act 2013 requires that the Registrar of the court must be notified of safety concerns of a protected person and/or their dependents.
7. All action taken pertaining to the reporting of abuse and neglect and the outcomes are to be documented on the person's file. The Clinical Director or Team Leader must sign off all information recorded.

# Training

Police Vetting and Identity Checks are completed for all staff prior to their employment by SVS as required under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. Police vetting is repeated biannually. SVS implements a programme of induction and specialist training to support the Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy.

All staff must attend induction training, which includes:

- Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy
- Child Abuse Reporting Procedures
- Behaviour Management Policy

This documentation must be signed off by the staff member and retained on their staff file.

SVS will ensure all staff receive further training and professional development which includes:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- Prevention and early detection of abuse and neglect
- Understanding the effects of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect
- Information gathering techniques
- Assessment and decision making

Training and Induction Records will be kept on staff member's files.