

G 15.5 Child/Young Person Protection Policy

Summary

Graeme Dingle Foundation is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and young people, including prevention of child/young person abuse or maltreatment. This policy provides guidance to Graeme Dingle Foundation staff (including contractors and volunteers) on how to identify and respond to concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child or young person.

Policy Framework:

1. **Purpose, Scope and Principles**
2. **Definitions**
3. **Identifying Abuse/Neglect**
4. **Responding to Suspected Abuse/Neglect**
5. **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Appendix One - Flowcharts:

- **Responding to Suspected Child/Young Person Abuse/Neglect;**
- **Reporting to CYF; and**
- **When the Alleged Abuser is a Staff Member**

Appendix Two - Detailed definitions

The interests of the child/young person will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect. This organisation commits to support the statutory agencies (The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services [CYFS] and the New Zealand Police (the Police)) to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy.

Graeme Dingle Foundation's designated **Child/Youth Protection Officer** is the National Support Office **Operations Manager**. A Role Description for this role is attached as Appendix Three to this policy.

A copy of this Policy will be placed on Graeme Dingle Foundation's Website for public access and information.

1. Purpose, Scope and Principles

a. Purpose

This Child/Young Person Protection Policy supports our staff/volunteers/contractors to respond in a timely and appropriate way to potential child/young person protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect. This policy reflects Graeme Dingle Foundation's commitment to protect children and young people from abuse and recognises the important roles all of our staff/volunteers/contractors have in protecting children and young people.

b. Scope

Graeme Dingle Foundation's works with children and young people up to the age of 19. This policy will apply to all children and young people aged under 20 years.

This policy will apply to all staff /volunteers/contractors and should be used wherever abuse or neglect of a child or young person is suspected or identified, regardless of whether or not the child/young person is in one of Graeme Dingle Foundation's programmes.

c. Principles

Graeme Dingle Foundation's Vision is "All young people are confident contributors to New Zealand life". Graeme Dingle Foundation's Mission is "Transforming young lives forever". Graeme Dingle Foundation's values are: "Caring, Courageous and Collaborative". Graeme Dingle Foundation's Vision, Mission and Values underpin this Child/Young Person Protection Policy.

In addition, we:

- Have a commitment to ensure all staff /volunteers/contractors are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential abuse/neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response and will do so;
- Will support our staff /volunteers/contractors to share information about suspected child/young person abuse or neglect in a timely way, even if feeling uncertain, and to discuss any concerns with colleagues, their manager or Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child/Young Person Protection Officer;
- Are committed to building and maintaining an organisational culture where staff /volunteers/contractors feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practise or raise concern without fear of reprisal;
- Will keep the child/young person at the centre of all decision-making and will recognise the rights of the child/young person to participate, in age-appropriate ways, in decision-making about themselves; and
- Commit to ensuring staff /volunteers/contractors have access to the training they need to uphold this Policy and Principles.
- Support the role of the Police and CYFS in the investigation of suspected abuse/neglect and will report abuse/neglect to these agencies.

2. Definitions

Definitions are detailed in Appendix Two to this policy.

3. Identifying child/young person abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it is important to consider all available information about the child/young person and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

- We understand when we are concerned a child/young person is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either a colleague, manager/supervisor or Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child/Youth Protection Officer – we shouldn’t act alone.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child/young person. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child/young person abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children and young people.

a. Signs of potential abuse:

Concern	Examples
<i>Physical signs</i>	Unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases
<i>Behavioural concerns</i>	Age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression
<i>Developmental delays</i>	Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills
<i>Emotional abuse/neglect</i>	Sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm
<i>Allegation or disclosure</i>	Child/young person talking about things that indicate abuse

b. Signs of potential neglect:

Concern	Examples
<i>Physical signs</i>	Looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight
<i>Behavioural concerns</i>	Disengagement/neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression
<i>Developmental delays</i>	Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills

<i>Emotional abuse/neglect</i>	Sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm
<i>Neglectful supervision</i>	Out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to
<i>Medical neglect</i>	Persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues

4. Responding to suspected child/young person abuse or neglect

The process of responding to suspected child/young person abuse or neglect is detailed in the Flowcharts in Appendix One to this policy.

If a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact the Police immediately.

Staff /volunteers/contractors will report all suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents to their Manager, or to Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child/Youth Protection Officer as soon as possible. If there is clear evidence or reasonable cause to believe child/young person abuse or neglect has occurred, staff /volunteers/ contractors, their Manager or Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child/Youth Protection Officer will notify Child Youth and Family (phone 0508 326 459).

Graeme Dingle Foundation will always consider the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Child, Youth and Family and the Police. We will only inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after we have discussed this with these agencies.

When responding to suspected child/young person abuse or any concerning behaviour, staff/volunteers/contractors will document their observations, impressions and communications. Staff/volunteers/contractors and their Manager will ensure that any such documentation will be kept secure and confidential.

The Graeme Dingle Foundation Manager or the CYPO will ensure that the person making the incident report/observation/ allegation is aware of and has access to a copy of this policy.

The Flowcharts in Appendix One specifically address what to do if the alleged abuser is a staff member, volunteer or contractor of Graeme Dingle Foundation. Staff /volunteers/contractors involved in cases of suspected child/young person abuse are entitled to have support. We will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

5. Confidentiality and information sharing

We will seek advice from Child, Youth and Family and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the manager involved or the Graeme Dingle Foundation Child and Youth Protection Officer.

Staff /volunteers/contractors should be aware that the Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (CYPF Act) allow information to be shared to keep children or young people safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the CYPF Act 1989, any person who believes that a child or young person has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the

matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

6. Training

Graeme Dingle Foundation is committed to maintaining and increasing staff /volunteer/contractor awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse/neglect through appropriate training. Graeme Dingle Foundation will seek to deliver appropriate training as required, using the annual conference and/or other training platforms to achieve this policy.

As part of their training, new staff /volunteers/contractors are made aware of the policy on child/young person protection.

7. Review

This policy was approved by the Graeme Dingle Foundation board on 5 May 2015. A digital copy can be found on our website at [www.Graeme Dingle Foundation.org.nz/childyoungpersonprotection](http://www.GraemeDingleFoundation.org.nz/childyoungpersonprotection). The policy will be reviewed and updated annually by 30 June in each year, or earlier if new guidance is issued by Child, Youth and Family or the New Zealand Police.

Other related Graeme Dingle Foundation Policies:

Human Resource Policies (recruitment/reference checking/vetting/settlement agreements)

G15.6 Dealing with Alleged, Suspected or Confirmed Drug or Substance Abuse by Children/Youth

G15.8 Child/Young Person Disclosure and Confidentiality

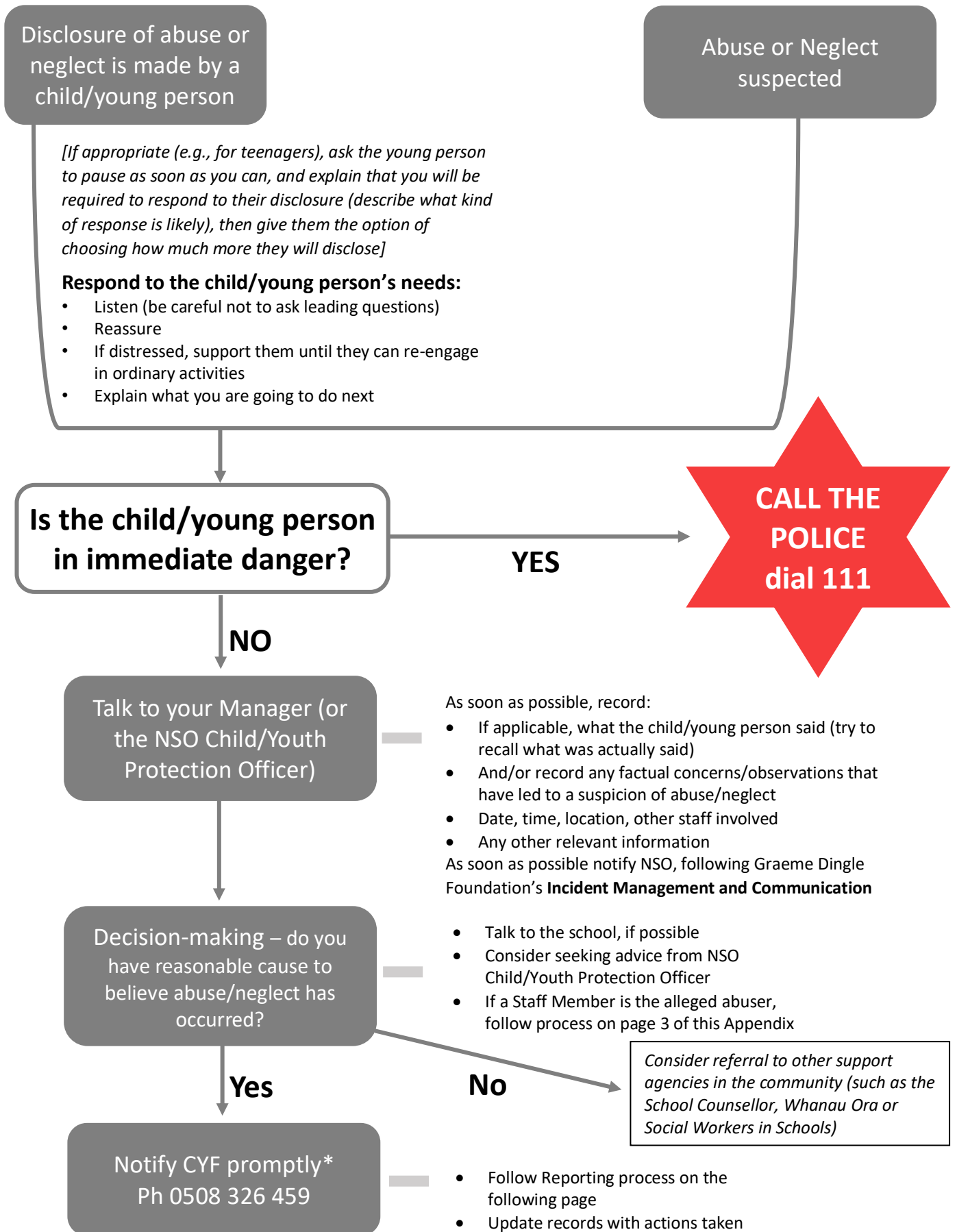
G15.9 Use of Force against a Child or Young Person

G16.1 Incident Management and Communication, Incident Management and Communication Plan

Additional Resources:

- 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>
- 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-violenceguidelines> ;
<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/child-abuse-neglect-policy.pdf>

Appendix One: Responding to Suspected Child/Young Person Abuse or Neglect



If time is available, discuss the situation with the School (e.g., School Counsellor, School Liaison teacher or Principal) and seek his/her support for notifying CYF. In practise the notification will often be done by the School Counsellor, but remember it is **your obligation to make sure CYF is notified.*

Reporting To Child Youth and Family (CYF)

GATHER INFORMATION

Ensure you have a full report from the person who identified the abuse. Offer them support. Ideally get them to sign the report. Tell them what actions you will take.

REPORT ABUSE

Ring CYF on 0508 326459 and tell them:

- Your name, organisation, role and contact details
- Name of child/young person (also known as/nicknames)
- Date of birth (if known)
- Ethnicity (if known)
- Name of caregivers, parents and other family members, and current living situation
- Current legal custodians
- Reasons why it is believed that the child/young person has been abused / neglected
- Any other significant background information
- Any concerns for your physical safety in making this notification

ASK WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – get timeframe

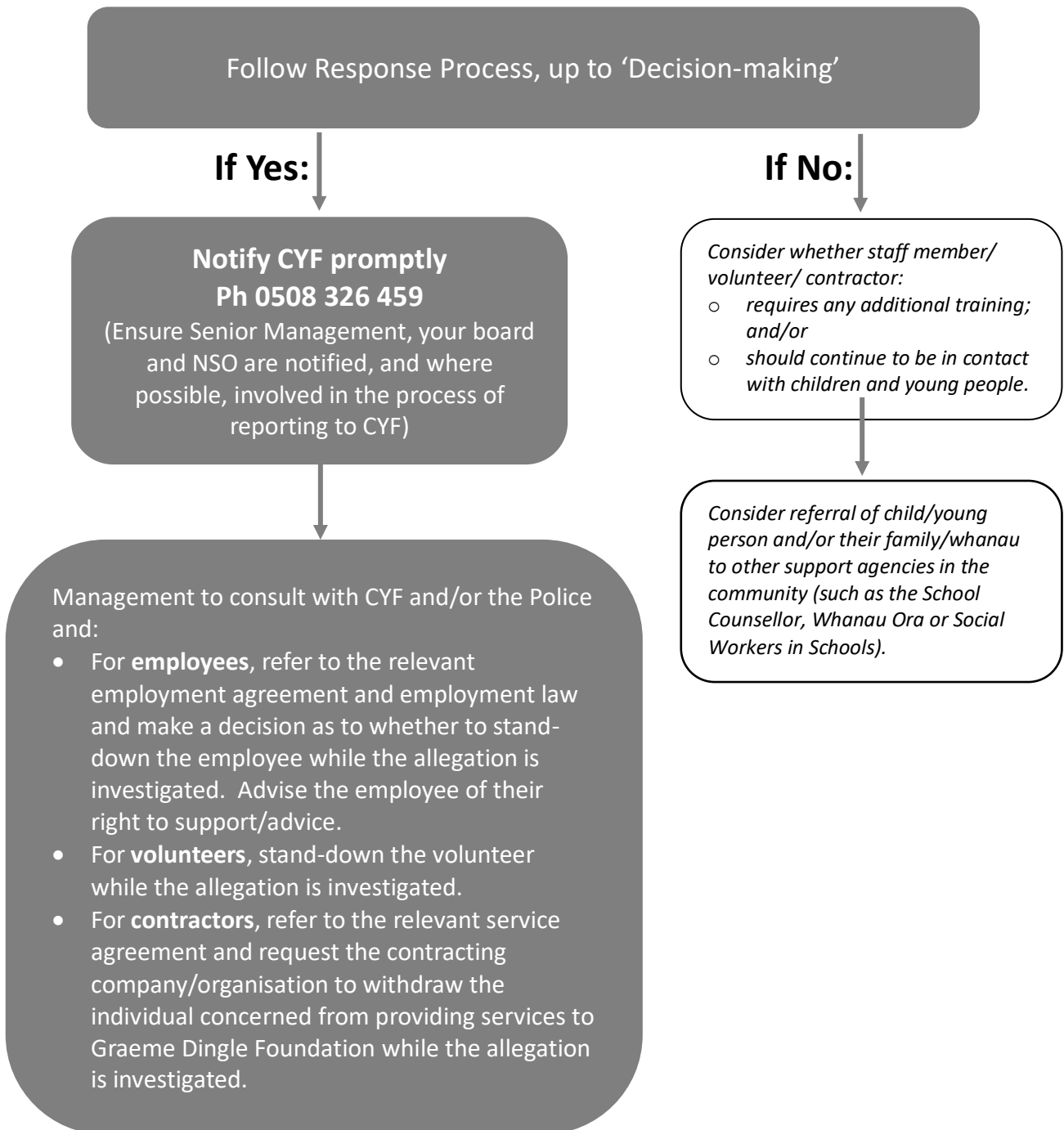
NEXT STEPS

- Work with CYF to decide how and when parents/caregivers are told
- Work with CYF to communicate next steps to the child/young person
- While the child/young person is in your care, ensure he/she is not at risk of being further abused

SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED

Attend to healing of your community and get support for yourself

When the Alleged Abuser is a staff member /volunteer/contractor



Appendix Two: Definitions

- **Child** – any child aged under 13 years.
- **Young Person** – any young person aged 13 to 19 years
- **Child protection** – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Child/Youth Protection Officer** – the designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff members/contractors/volunteers where they have a concern about an individual child/young person or who want advice about child/young person protection policy.
- **Staff Member**– any employee of Graeme Dingle Foundation or one of its Licensed Community Partners.
- **Volunteer** – a volunteer for Graeme Dingle Foundation or one of its Licensed Community Partners
- **Contractor** – a contractor to Graeme Dingle Foundation or one of its Licensed Community Partners
- **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member/contractor/volunteer by a child/young person, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS)** – the government department responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children and young people found to be in need.
- **New Zealand Police** – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child/young person is in immediate danger and for working with CYFS in child/young person protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **Physical abuse** – any acts that may result in physical harm of a child/young person or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.
- **Sexual abuse** – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child/young person 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/young person to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child/young person in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
 - **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/young person 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 or young people 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).

Appendix Three: Role Description – Graeme Dingle Foundation Child/Youth Protection Officer

Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child/Youth Protection Officer (CYPO) is responsible for the operation of Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child and Youth Protection Policy (CYPP), including:

- supporting Graeme Dingle Foundation staff/volunteers/contractors to **identify** suspected child/youth abuse and/or neglect;
- supporting Graeme Dingle Foundation staff/volunteers/contractors to **respond** to suspected child/youth abuse and/or neglect;
- organising a debrief for each instance of identified child/youth abuse/neglect to consider if the CYPP provided sufficient guidance and direction, and if any aspect of the policy or the response could be improved;
- training new Regional Managers in the CYPP, so they can train and support their staff to follow the policy; and
- contribute to the Graeme Dingle Foundation Board's annual review of the CYPP, seeking to improve this policy.

The CYPO will be familiar with the terms of the CYPP and with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. He or she will also be familiar with all of Graeme Dingle Foundation's Policies and Procedures. Graeme Dingle Foundation's CYPO will be supported in this role by specialised social workers from Edge Lifeskills Ltd (provider of Graeme Dingle Foundation's MYND Youth Mentoring Programme); in particular, the MYND Social Workers will provide guidance to the CYPO on the identification of child/youth abuse/neglect and guidance on the appropriate response.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Positively reviewed by each Graeme Dingle Foundation staff member/volunteer/contractor, and/or their manager, that the CYPO supports with a child protection issue.