

Child/Young Person Protection Policy

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Committee with delegated responsibility:	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Committee Endorsement (date):	12 th December 2023
Board approval:	12 th December 2023
Next review:	December 2024

Revision history:

Version Number	Changes made	Person responsible	Date updated
V5	<p>The age range has been extended to 25 years to accommodate young people engaged in our Career Navigator Community programme.</p> <p>Additional step added to ensure reports of child abuse/neglect are followed up and are being managed/overseen by the appropriate agency if required.</p> <p>Addition of the word harm to capture instances such as self-harm.</p> <p>Addition of the word 'Manual' and put in italics to highlight that this sentence refers to the collective general and programme policies and procedures.</p> <p>Replaced staff with officers (trustees and managers) and workers (staff/volunteers/contractors).</p> <p>Removed recommendation to talk to colleagues (to protect privacy).</p> <p>Amended various potential signs of abuse/neglect.</p>	National CP and Ops Director	Jan 2021
V6	Update around wording and policy reference	General Manager National Operations/Ops Manager	September 2022
V7	<p>Addition of reference to Transportation of Young People and Social Media Policies. Inclusion of email address for reporting concerns to OT. Removal of refence to MYND. Updated pronouns.</p> <p>Addition of definitions for children's worker/core worker and non-children's worker</p>	Ops Manager	November 2023

Summary

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

Policy Framework:

1. **Purpose, Scope and Principles**
2. **Definitions**
3. **Identifying Harm, Abuse or Neglect**
4. **Responding to Suspected Harm, Abuse or Neglect**
5. **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**
6. **Risk and Consent**
7. **Training**
8. **Review**

Appendix One – Flowcharts:

- **Responding to Suspected Child/Young Person Harm, Abuse or Neglect;**
- **Reporting to Oranga Tamariki; and**
- **When the Alleged Abuser is a Staff Member**

Appendix Two – Detailed definitions

Appendix Three – Role Description – Graeme Dingle Foundation Child/Young Person Protection Officer

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

Graeme Dingle Foundation's designated **Child/Young Person Protection Officer (CYPPO)** is the Operations Manager or will be delegated by the CEO in their absence. 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 officers and workers to respond in a timely and appropriate way to potential child/young person protection concerns, including suspected harm, abuse, or neglect. This policy reflects Graeme Dingle Foundation's commitment to protect children and young people from harm, abuse or neglect and recognises the important roles all our officers and workers have in protecting children and young people. This policy sets out the Foundation's commitment to provide a safe and positive environment for children and young people.

b. Scope

This policy will apply to all officers and workers and should be used wherever harm, 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.

The *Policies and Procedures Manual: General and Programme* for Community Partner Trusts who deliver the Foundation programmes under licence in regions across Aotearoa, should be read in conjunction with this policy.

c. Principles

Graeme Dingle Foundation's Vision, Purpose and Values underpin this Child/Young Person Protection Policy.

In addition, we:

- Have a commitment to ensure all our officers and workers are able to identify the signs and symptoms of potential harm, abuse or neglect and are able to take appropriate action in response and will do so;
- Will support our officers and workers to share information about suspected child/young person harm, abuse or neglect in a timely manner, even if feeling uncertain and to discuss any concerns with their manager or Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child/Young Person Protection Officer;
- Are committed to building and maintaining an organisational culture where our officers and workers feel confident that they can constructively challenge poor practice 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.
- Commit to ensuring our officers and workers have access to the training they need to uphold this Policy and its principles.
- Will report all concerns to the school/agency as appropriate.
- Will support the role of the school/agency in the pastoral care of their child/young person, in the reporting of suspected harm, abuse or neglect, and when and if there is an investigation.
- Support the role of the Police and Oranga Tamariki in the investigation of suspected harm, abuse or neglect and will report harm, abuse, or neglect to these agencies as appropriate or as concerns become apparent.
- Ensure appropriate escalation to school/agency for any report of serious harm, abuse or neglect.

2. Definitions

Definitions are detailed in Appendix Two to this policy.

3. Identifying child/young person harm, abuse or neglect

Our approach to identifying harm, 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 harm, abuse or neglect we should talk to someone, either their manager/supervisor or

Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child/Young Person Protection Officer – we should not act alone.

- While there are different definitions of harm, abuse or neglect, 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 harm, 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. (Safer organisations, safer children guidelines, p. 7)

a. Signs of potential abuse:

Concern	Examples
<i>Physical signs</i>	Unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive scratching of genitalia, genital injuries
<i>Behaviour concerns</i>	Age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, risk taking behaviour such as substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression, deliberate self-harm
<i>Developmental delays</i>	Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor communication and social skills
<i>Emotional signs</i>	Sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness
<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 unkempt and/or uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight
<i>Behavioural concerns</i>	Disengagement/neediness, risk taking behaviour such as substance abuse, aggression
<i>Developmental delays</i>	Small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills
<i>Emotional signs</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>	Untreated skin and/or other medical issues

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

The process of responding to suspected child/young person harm, 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.

Workers will report all suspicions or observed incidents or reports of incidents to their Manager, or to Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child/Young Person Protection Officer as soon as possible who will support them in reporting concerns to the school/agency. If there is reasonable cause to believe child/young person harm, abuse or neglect has occurred, if they are enrolled in a school the school will be given the opportunity in the first instance to take the lead in taking the appropriate and reasonable steps to address the issue. This may include making a report of concern to Oranga Tamariki. Graeme Dingle Foundation Managers or Graeme Dingle Foundation's Child/Young Person Protection Officer may also insist that a report of concern is made to Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459, contact@ot.govt.nz) and will ensure that the school is kept informed if they proceed with this (if the young person is enrolled in school).

Graeme Dingle Foundation will always consider the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki and the Police. As well, we will endeavour to communicate with family/whānau as appropriate and in discussion and collaboration with the worker's manager and the host school/agency.

When responding to suspected child/young person harm, abuse, or any concerning behaviour, workers will CLEARLY document their observations, impressions, and communications. Workers and their manager will ensure that any such documentation will be kept secure and confidential, except when being provided to Police or Oranga Tamariki to support their investigations as appropriate and discussed with their manager.

The Regional Manager or the Child/Young Person Protection Officer 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 worker of Graeme Dingle Foundation. Officers and workers 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 Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than those directly involved, the manager and/or the Graeme Dingle Foundation Child/Young Person Protection Officer.

Officers and workers should be aware that the Privacy Act 2020 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 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 Oranga Tamariki 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 Oranga Tamariki or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

6. Risk and consent

For any activities requiring informed consent we will ensure the risks are explained to participants and/or parents/guardians.

7. Training

Graeme Dingle Foundation is committed to ensuring and increasing officer and worker 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 support this policy.

As part of their induction, new officers and workers whether they are children's workers or non-children's workers are made aware of the detail of the policy on child/young person protection and who the CYPPO is.

Other related Graeme Dingle Foundation Policies:

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

General and Programme Procedures:

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 Plan

G15.10 Transportation of Young People Policy

G6.2 Social media policy

Additional Resources:

- Oranga Tamariki has developed the *Safer organisations Safer children* guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations
<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Working-with-children/Childrens-act-requirements/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>
- The Ministry of Health has also made guidance available in the health sector:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence-and-sexual-violence>

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

Disclosure of abuse or neglect is made by a child/young

Abuse or Neglect suspected
do you have reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect has occurred?

Explain that you will be required to respond to their disclosure (describe what kind of response is likely)

1.Listen to the child	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with particular care, including an awareness of the child's cultural identity and how that affects interpretation of their behaviour and language.
2.Reassure the child	Let the child know that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not in trouble • Have done the right thing
3.Ask open ended prompts- e.g. "What happened next?"	Do not interview the child (in other words, do not ask questions beyond open prompts for the child to continue). Do not make promises that can not be kept, e.g, "I will keep you safe now".
4.If the child is visibly distressed	Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
5.If the child is not in immediate danger	Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.

Talk to your Manager (or the NSO Child/Young Person Protection Officer - CYPPO)

If it is an emergency, follow the Incident Management and Communication Plan and Dial 111

Log as an incident and follow Incident Management and Comms Plan as required
Date/time/location/other workers(s) involved
Record word for word what was said
Record factual concerns/observations

SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED
Attend to healing of your community and get support for yourself

Manager responsibilities:
Ensure NSO (incl CYPPO) and school are advised
May advise Trust Board Chair, meet with school counsellor/ liaison, family, mentor
May require referral to external agencies follow Appendix 1, pg. 2
If staff member is alleged abuser follow Appendix 1, pg. 3

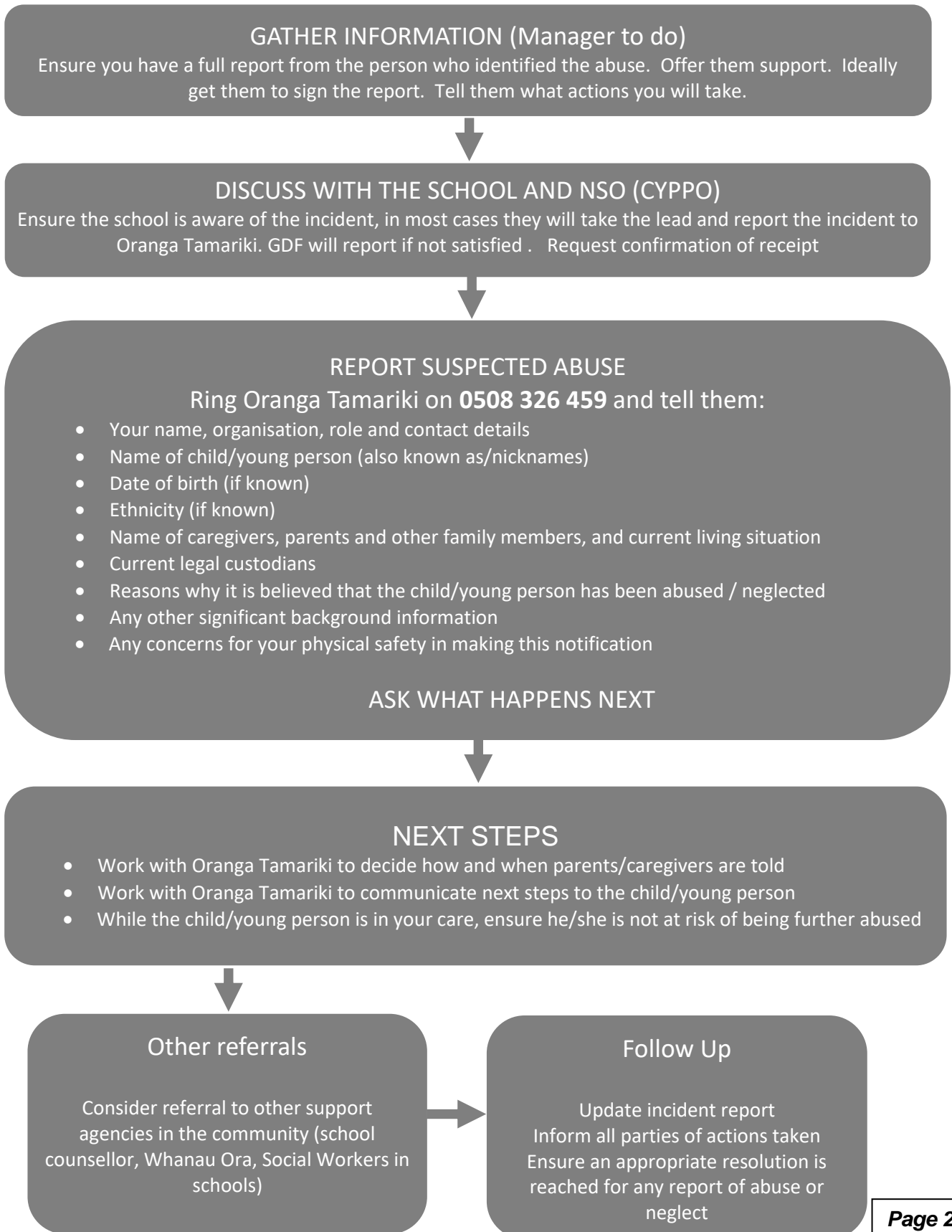
Notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if appropriate *
(see pg 2 of Appendix 1)

** 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 Oranga Tamariki. In practice the notification will often be done by the School Counsellor, or your manager, but remember it is **your** obligation to make sure Oranga Tamariki is notified.*

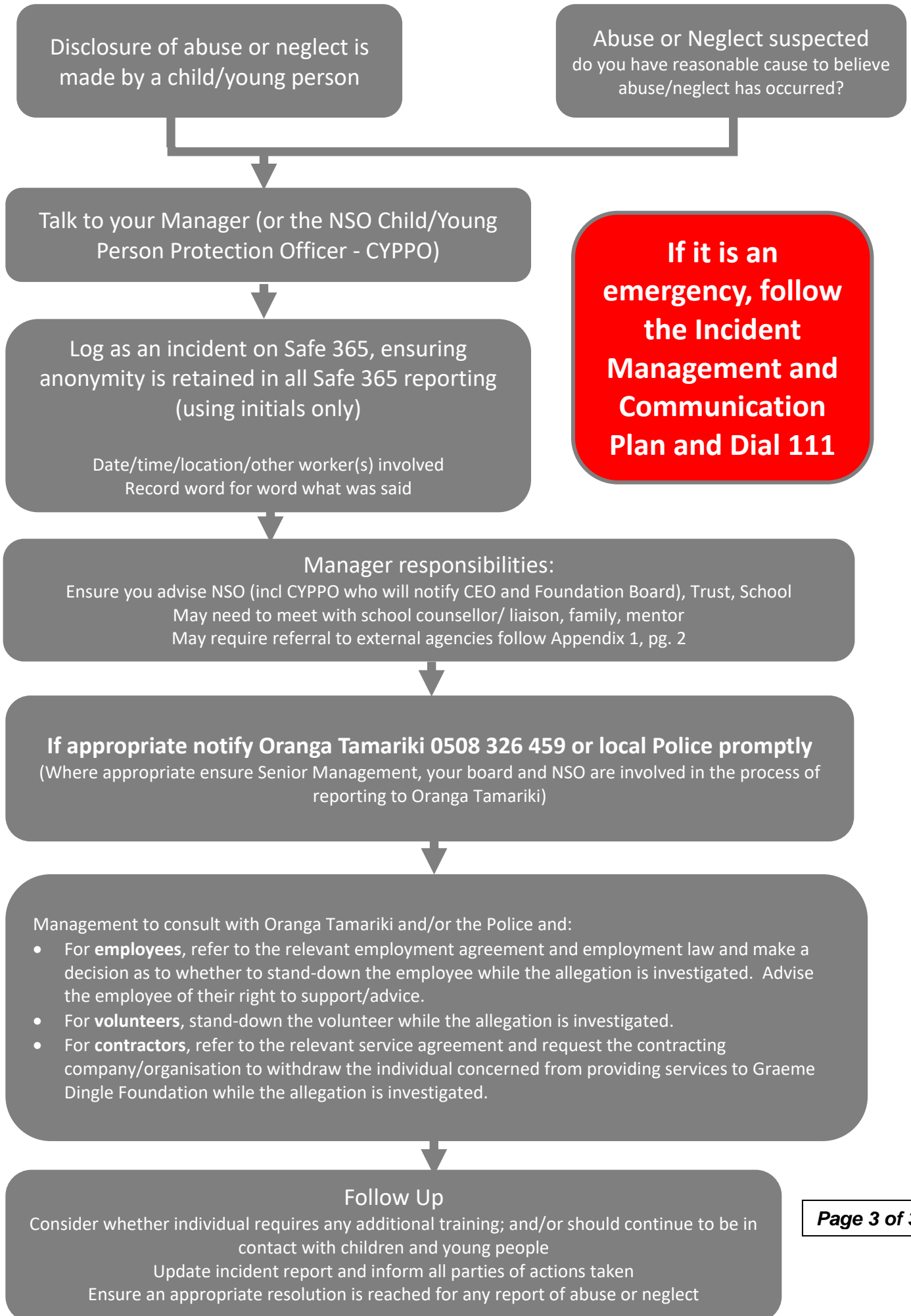
Reporting to Oranga Tamariki

(if under 18 years, if over 18 years report to Police)

In most cases this will be done by the school or a manager within the Foundation



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



Appendix Two: Definitions

Child – any child aged under 14 years.

Young Person – any young person aged between 14 and 25 years.

Officer – An officer is a person who occupies a specified position or who occupies a position that allows them to exercise significant influence over the management of the business or undertaking, i.e. Trustee or Senior Manager.

Worker – A worker is an individual who carries out work in any capacity for the business or undertaking, i.e. employee, contractor, volunteer.

Children’s Worker- a person who works in, or provides, a regulated service, and the person’s work—

(a) may or does involve regular or overnight contact with a child or children (other than with children who are co-workers); and

(b) takes place without a parent or guardian of the child, or of each child, being present

Core Worker- a children’s worker whose work in or providing a regulated service requires or allows that, when the person is present with a child or children in the course of that work, the person—

(a) is the only children’s worker present; or

(b) is the children’s worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or children present.

Non Children’s Worker- A person who works on behalf of children but not directly with children.

Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected harm, abuse or neglect or are at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

Child/Young Person Protection Officer – the designated person responsible for providing advice and support to workers 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 worker by a child/young person, parent, or caregiver or a third party in relation to harm, abuse, or neglect.

Oranga Tamariki – the government department responsible for investigating and responding to suspected harm, abuse, and neglect and for providing care and protection to children and young people up to age 18 years 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 Oranga Tamariki in child/young person protection work and investigating cases of harm, 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/Young Person Protection Officer

Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child/Young Person Protection Officer (CYPPO) is responsible for the operation of Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Child and Young Person Protection Policy (CYPP), including:

- supporting Graeme Dingle Foundation workers to **identify** suspected child/young person harm, abuse and/or neglect;
- supporting Graeme Dingle Foundation workers to **respond** to suspected child/young person harm, abuse and/or neglect;
- organising a debrief for each instance of identified child/young person harm, abuse or 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 workers to follow the policy; and
- contribute to the Graeme Dingle Foundation Board’s annual review of the CYPP, seeking to improve this policy.

The CYPPO will be familiar with the terms of the CYPP and with the Children’s Act 2014. They will also be familiar with all of Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Policies and Procedures. Graeme Dingle Foundation’s CYPPO will be supported in this role by Edge Lifeskills Ltd (contracted to Graeme Dingle Foundation); in particular, the contractor will provide guidance to the CYPPO on the identification of child/young person harm, abuse or neglect and guidance on the appropriate response.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Positively reviewed by each Graeme Dingle Foundation worker, and/or their manager, that the CYPPO supports with a child protection issue.