

# Child Protection Policy

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## Statement of Commitment

*Hamilton Operatic Society values children and young people and is committed to their safety, security and wellbeing. Hamilton Operatic Society is committed to ensuring the existence of a safe environment for all children and young people participating in its lessons, programmes, classes, performances, practices, and events. By having a robust Child Protection Policy in place Hamilton Operatic Society is demonstrating that it has a commitment to the protection of the children and young people that it has been entrusted with.*

## Section One Introduction

### Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Hamilton Operatic Society provides a safe and positive environment where children and young people are free from all forms of harm and are treated with both dignity and respect.

1.2 This Child Protection Policy confirms the commitment of Hamilton Operatic Society to the protection of children and young people and proceeds to:

- outline the standards and principles by which Hamilton Operatic Society staff will abide
- define child abuse
- outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of child abuse or neglect is known or suspected
- establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff
- outline expected behaviour of staff and the safe working practices by which they must abide.

## Guiding Principles

- 1.3 Theatrical performance is important educationally and helps develop, among other things, imagination, motivation, and self-confidence. Hamilton Operatic Society asserts that all children and young people have a right to participate in such lessons, programmes, classes,
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performances, practices, and events, and to do so in an environment that is safe. Hamilton Operatic Society recognises that, when carried out in a safe environment, the art of theatrical performance, and all associated aspects, provide children and young people with positive experiences and teaches them vital skills that can last a lifetime.
- 1.4 Hamilton Operatic Society asserts that all children young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- 1.5 All decisions and actions of Hamilton Operatic Society in response to any protection concern will be guided by the principle of *“the welfare and best interests of the child or young person”*.
- 1.6 All services provided by Hamilton Operatic Society for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation, and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 1.7 All services provided by Hamilton Operatic Society for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people have regard to mana tamaiti (tamariki) – the intrinsic value and inherent dignity derived from a child or young person’s whakapapa and their belonging to a whānau, hapū, and iwi; ensuring the upholding, and protection, of Māori rights and interests, in accordance with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

## Scope

- 1.8 This policy applies to all Hamilton Operatic Society staff. For the purposes of this policy “staff” includes, but is not limited to, volunteers, boards of trustees, and committees.

## Legislation

1.9 This policy has been written with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in mind and in accordance with the following legislation:

- Care of Children Act, 2004
- Children's Act, 2014
- Crimes Act, 1961

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- Education Act 1989
- Employment Relations Act, 2000
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Health and Safety Act 1956
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Privacy Act 2020

## Review

1.10 This Policy will be reviewed annually, and updated regularly, to ensure it is kept up to date with changes that may have been made to legislation, related policies and procedures, and in light of operational experience.

1.11 The overall responsibility for this policy rests with Hamilton Operatic Society Committee, in consultation with the designated person for child protection.

## Definitions

1.12 For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

**"Child"** means any person under the age of 14 years

**"Child Abuse"** can involve the ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse or a child or young person, or it may arise from a single incident. Child abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- i. Physical Abuse
- ii. Sexual Abuse
- iii. Emotional Abuse
- iv. Neglect

**“Child Protection Register”** is a record of children and young people who are considered to be suffering, or who are considered to be at risk of suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse or neglect. The register includes information around those child protection concerns, including but not limited to:

- A record of facts, including observations, with time and date

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- What was said and by whom, using the person’s words
- What action has been taken, by whom and when
- All decisions, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki or the Police, with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

The Register must be kept up to date and its contents must be confidential other than to authorised enquirers. It must be held securely and separately from other records held by Hamilton Operatic Society.

**“Designated Person for Child Protection”** is a person/s within Hamilton Operatic Society who is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people. This person is responsible for ensuring that child protection is a key focus within Hamilton Operatic Society both at a strategic level and on a day to day basis.

*As at the date of this policy the Designated Person for Child Protection for Hamilton Operatic Society is:*

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*As at the date of this policy the secondary Designated Person for Child Protection for Hamilton Operatic Society is:*

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**“Emotional Abuse”** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child or young person’s self-esteem and emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child or young person. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people and their social competence undermined or eroded over time. A child or young person can

also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment which includes seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others, including but not limited to being exposed to family violence.

**“Family Violence”** can take many forms and may include, but is not limited to, actual physical violence (to a person, pet or property), threats of physical violence (to a person, pet or property), psychological, economic or sexual abuse. Children and young people are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.

**“Neglect”** is characterised as the persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and/or psychological need. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for and/or protect the child or young person. It may also include neglect of a child or young person’s basic or emotional needs.

**“Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children”** formally known as Child Youth and Family. Oranga Tamariki is a Government Ministry dedicated to supporting children and young people in New Zealand whose wellbeing is at significant risk of harm now, or in the future.

**“Physical Abuse”** is a non-accidental act that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

**“Sexual Abuse”** is an act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not. Sexual abuse can be committed by a relative, a trusted friend, an associate, or someone unknown to the child or young person. Sexual abuse includes situations where the adult seeks to have the child or young person touch them for a sexual purpose, and where they involve the child or young person in pornographic activities or prostitution.

**“Staff”** refers to any person working at, for, or on behalf of, Hamilton Operatic Society and includes, but is not limited to, persons employed directly by Hamilton Operatic Society, irrespective of whether they are paid or voluntary, or whether they are working on a full time, part time, casual, or temporary basis, as well as any persons contracted or invited to provide services to children and young people in the care of, or under the supervision of, Hamilton Operatic Society. “Staff” also extends to include the Hamilton Operatic Society Committee and [parent helpers].

**“Young Person”** means any person of or over the age of 14 years but under the age of 18 years. The term “young person” can also be extended to include some young adults for certain purposes and as specified in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

## Section Two

### Child Protection Procedures

2.1 The procedures set out in section two of this policy provide Hamilton Operatic Society staff with guidelines to assist with identifying and responding appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of Staff**

2.2 Hamilton Operatic Society recognises that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting children and young people from harm. It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect and abuse, whether actual or potential, and to report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations immediately. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that any concern, suspicion or allegation raised is taken seriously.

#### **Role of the Designated Person/s for Child Protection**

2.3 The Designated Person/s for Child Protection for Hamilton Operatic Society must:

- adopt, implement, comply with, and enforce Hamilton Operatic Society’s Child Protection Policy
- ensure that child protection is a key focus within Hamilton Operatic Society and that appropriate protocols, procedures and training are in place
- ensure that the needs and rights of children and young people come first - the safety and wellbeing of each child and young person is the paramount consideration in all circumstances
- promote and model appropriate behaviour at all times

- ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately

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- ensure, and safeguard, clear, confidential, detailed and dated records on all child protection concerns
- ensure that all members of Hamilton Operatic Society staff are aware of, have access to, and understand, this Child Protection Policy
- ensure that all staff are recruited and delegated responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines identified in this policy
- ensure that when child protection concerns arise, no internal investigation occurs without appropriate consultation and a decision whether a response from Oranga Tamariki and/or the New Zealand Police is required
- consult with the fellow designated person/s [where applicable], or an Oranga Tamariki duty social worker, regarding all protection concerns.

## **Role of the Committee**

2.4 The overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Hamilton Operatic Society Committee, in consultation with the designated person for child protection.

2.5 The role of the Committee is to:

- ensure that the needs and rights of children and young people come first as the safety and wellbeing of each child and young person is the paramount consideration in all circumstances.
- ensure that child protection is a key focus within Hamilton Operatic Society and that appropriate protocols, procedures and training are in place
- ensure the appointment of a designated person for child protection
- adopt, implement, comply with, review, and enforce Hamilton Operatic Society's Child Protection Policy, together with the designated person for child protection

- support the designated person for child protection to ensure that all allegations are managed appropriately.
- ensure that no investigation occurs without appropriate consultation and a decision whether a response from Oranga Tamariki or the Police is required.
- inform the designated person for child protection immediately should any member of the Committee be aware of a concern for the wellbeing and safety of a child or young person who is involved with Hamilton Operatic Society
- ensure that all staff are recruited and delegated responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines identified in this policy

## Identification of Abuse

2.6 Hamilton Operatic Society staff should be alert and aware of the fact that child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and child protection concerns may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or indirect disclosure by the child or young person;
- Direct or indirect disclosure from someone known to the child or young person;
- Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child or young person;
- Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child or young person's physical or emotional behaviour;
- Direct witnessing of abuse.

2.7 The signs and indicators of abuse to a child or young person may not be immediately obvious or identifiable. **Appendix One** of this policy sets out a non-exhaustive list of signs and indicators to help identify abuse.

2.8 If a member of staff is unsure about what might constitute child abuse, they should ask for advice and guidance from the Hamilton Operatic Society's designated person for child



protection. If the designated person for child protection is unavailable for advice and guidance, then staff should consult with Hamilton Operatic Society's secondary designated person for child protection. At any time, Hamilton Operatic Society staff may seek advice directly from Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) regarding any child protection concern.

## **Responding to Child Abuse/Suspected Abuse**

2.9 Hamilton Operatic Society will respond to allegations of child abuse in a manner which ensures the child or young person's safety and wellbeing is the first and paramount consideration.

2.10 In a situation where any staff member believes that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the staff member, in consultation with the designated person for child protection, will inform Oranga Tamariki and the Police of their concerns.

2.11 The child protection procedures set out in this policy must be followed regardless of whether the alleged offender is a member of the public, a participant of a Hamilton Operatic Society lesson, programme, class, performance, practice, or event, or a member of Hamilton Operatic Society staff.

2.12 Hamilton Operatic Society staff will not act alone about concerns of abuse but will refer to Hamilton Operatic Society's Child Protection Policy and consult with the designated person/s for child protection.

2.13 All concerns and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. All documentation relating to concerns and information will be held in a confidential and secure Child Protection Register.

2.14 **Appendix Two** of this policy sets out an overview to assist staff when responding to child abuse.

## **Responding to Disclosures**

2.15 Disclosures of abuse may come directly from a child or young person. It is important that staff take what the child or young person says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or

the member of staff's own opinion on what is being said. If there is information disclosed regarding actual or suspected child abuse staff must:

- stay calm
- listen and hear
  - give time to the child or young person to say what they want
- reassure them that they were right to tell
- tell the child or young person that they are being taken seriously and that they are not to blame
- explain that they have to pass on what the child or young person has told them as soon as they are aware that the child or young person is making a disclosure
- give an age appropriate explanation to the child or young person of what they can expect to happen next
- record in writing what was said as soon as possible, using the child or young person's own words where possible.
- Report the concern to the appropriate statutory agency, in consultation with the designated person for child protection.

Staff must not:

- make the child or young person repeat the story unnecessarily
- promise to keep secrets
- enquire in to the details of the alleged abuse
- ask leading questions

2.16 Under no circumstances should any member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns of abuse themselves.

## **Harmful Behaviour By One Child or Young Person Towards Another**

2.17 It is important to be aware that children and young people can harm other children and young people. These behaviours are outside of what may be considered the normal range, and can extend to bullying, violence or sexual assault. Therefore, when a child or young person alleges inappropriate harmful behaviour by another child or young person then the child protection

procedures outlined in this policy must be considered for both children or young people.

*2.18 [Refer also to the Hamilton Operatic Society **Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy**]*

## **Reporting Procedures**

2.19 All Hamilton Operatic Society staff must report concerns or allegations of child abuse to Hamilton Operatic Society's designated person for child protection at the first possible opportunity to best ensure the safety of the child or young person, even if the child concerned is not a participant of a Hamilton Operatic Society lesson, programme, class, performance, practice or event. If the designated person for child protection is unavailable, or if the concern involves the designated person for child protection, then consultation should occur with Hamilton Operatic Society's secondary person for child protection. A decision will be made as to whether to notify Oranga Tamariki. If an immediate response is required to ensure the child or young person's safety, Hamilton Operatic Society staff should contact Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police directly.

2.20 All concerns or allegations of sexual abuse must be reported to Oranga Tamariki and the NZ Police.

2.21 When reporting an incident staff should:

- Inform the designated person for child protection as soon as possible (or the secondary designated person for child protection in their absence or if deemed more appropriate)
- Record in writing all conversations and actions taken and keep these records securely in a Child Protection Register.

2.22 Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must include the following:

- A record of facts, including observations, with time and date
- What was said and by whom, using the person's words
- What action has been taken, by whom and when

2.23 All decisions, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki or the Police, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in the Child Protection Register with the

reasons clearly identified and explained.

## **Keeping the Child or Young Person's Family Informed and Involved**

2.24 Wherever possible, a child or young person's family and whānau should participate in the decisions affecting that child or young person and the relationship between the child or young person, and their family and whānau, should be maintained and strengthened.

2.25 Although the parent or caregiver of the child or young person will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:

- the parent or caregiver is the alleged offender
  - it is possible that the child or young person may be intimidated into silence
  - there is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
  - the child or young person does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are deemed competent to make that decision.
- Any decision not to inform the child or young person's family or whānau based solely on the child or young person's wish should be made with careful consideration and in consultation with the designated, and secondary, person for child protection. Oranga Tamariki is always available for advice and assistance when it comes to communicating with family and whānau.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

2.26 Under the Privacy Act 2020, the giving of information to protect children and young people is not a breach of confidentiality. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 2020, states sharing of personal information is allowed if "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat".

2.27 Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, if a member of Hamilton Operatic Society staff raises a legitimate concern in good faith about suspected child abuse, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against that staff member, or the Hamilton Operatic Society.

## Section Three

### Safe Recruitment and Employment of Staff

#### Recruitment and Employment

3.1 Hamilton Operatic Society is committed to ensuring robust recruitment processes are in place, and followed, which emphasise the importance of child protection, and which ensure that every member of Hamilton Operatic Society staff is safe and suitable to be associated with an organisation that works directly with children and young people.

3.2 Before making any appointment, Hamilton Operatic Society will have taken all reasonable efforts to complete a full and robust safety checking process to ascertain the candidate's suitability and safety to be in contact with children and young people. This process may include, but may not be limited to:

- Identity verification check
- Employment verification check
- Reference check
- Professional membership check (where applicable)
- New Zealand Police vetting check
- Risk assessment
- Interview/s with the applicant

#### Police Vetting and Staff Supervision

3.3 All new offers of employment and employment agreements will remain conditional on receiving satisfactory results from the Police vetting. Until such time as the Police vetting process has commenced, and the results have been received, all newly appointed Hamilton Operatic Society staff working with children and young people will be supervised in their role and will not be permitted to work alone or carry out any alternative duties.

3.4 Hamilton Operatic Society staff working with children and young people will undergo a further Police vetting check every three (3) years.

## Staff Training

3.6 Hamilton Operatic Society recognises the importance of staff training when it comes to keeping children and young people safe.

3.7 Hamilton Operatic Society ensures that everyone working within the organisation has adequate and appropriate information about child abuse in order to protect children and to recognise and respond when children and young people are at risk.

3.8 All staff will be required to be familiar with, and adhere to, the Hamilton Operatic Society Child Protection Policy and will be given a copy as part of the induction process. Staff will be required to sign and acknowledge that this policy has been read and has been understood. Refer to **Appendix Four** of this policy.

## Section Four Safe Working Practices

4.1 Clear boundaries are important in maintaining professional behaviour. This policy reinforces the need for high standards of behaviour by Hamilton Operatic Society staff in order to protect children and young people from abuse and at-risk situations, and to protect Hamilton Operatic Society staff from unwarranted suspicion.

4.2 Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. Staff who work with children and young people must act in a way that is considered to be safe practice. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Avoiding situations where they are alone with a child or young person;
- Ensuring that they are visible to others when with a child or young person;
- Using an open door policy where practical;
- Avoiding circumstances where their behaviour (both verbal and physical) may be misinterpreted as hostile, suggestive, inappropriate, offensive, or neglectful;
- Not transporting a child or young person, other than their own, alone at any time other than in an emergency situation;

- Monitoring visitors to a Hamilton Operatic Society programme, class, practice, event or activity;
- Not taking, or displaying, images of children and young people unless they have consent to do so from parents and caregivers, and the child or young person themselves where appropriate;
- Ensuring no child or young person is left unsupervised on Hamilton Operatic Society premises;
- Ensuring all other safe working practices of Hamilton Operatic Society are adhered to.

## **Physical Contact**

4.3 It is imperative that in all dealings with children and young people, a balance is struck between the rights of the child or young person and the need for intervention. When physical contact is made with a child or young person this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Hamilton Operatic Society staff should always use their professional judgement, observe and take note of the child or young person's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child or young person for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.4 When teaching a lesson, programme, performance, or class, Hamilton Operatic Society staff should minimise any physical guiding and where possible demonstrate any required theatrical performance technique themselves. Where a child or young person requires physical guiding, the child or young person will be asked if that guidance is ok and all touch will be carried out for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.5 Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a child or a young person will be regarded as a criminal offence, will always be reported to the Police, and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

## **Communication**

4.6 Communication between children, young people, and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking and blogs. Staff should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child or young person other than that which might be

appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

## **Supervision of Children and Young People**

4.7 All efforts are made to ensure that a safe environment is provided when carrying out Hamilton Operatic Society lessons, programmes, classes, performances, practices or events.

4.8 Hamilton Operatic Society lessons, programmes, classes, performances, practices or events are designed to be provided without the presence of a child or young person's parent or caregiver. Safe working practises will be followed at all times to protect children and young people from the risk of inappropriate behaviour from Hamilton Operatic Society staff and any other adult, child, or young person, present.

4.9 Where a parent or caregiver is not present, only Hamilton Operatic Society staff whose role it is to teach the lesson, programme, practice, or class, and/or supervise children and young people, may do so.

4.10 Any visitors to Hamilton Operatic Society, or its lessons, programmes, practices or classes must be approved by the appropriate staff member and supervised at all times.

4.11 Where practical, open door policies should be used for all spaces and no staff member should be left alone with a child or young person.

### **○ Chaperones**

4.12 In consultation with the designated person for child protection, in a theatrical production setting, Hamilton Operatic Society will appoint a member/s of staff to act as a [children's coordinator]. This member of staff will be responsible for chaperoning children during rehearsal and show times, and ensuring that they are safely collected by a parent or guardian at the end of each session.

4.13 At all times, the staff member/s responsible for the chaperoning of children will adhere to the safe working practices of Hamilton Operatic Society.

4.14 Refer to the Hamilton Operatic Society **"Duty of Care"**.



## **Excursions**

### **○ Trips and Transportation**

4.15 Taking children and young people out of otherwise familiar environments can provide them with life-changing experiences which they will remember for the rest of their lives. It can also put them at risk and into unfamiliar situations. Careful planning and preparation is needed to minimise risks and make the activity a positive experience for each child and young person.

4.16 Hamilton Operatic Society staff will take all precautions to ensure that when transporting children and young people.

4.17 Only designated members of Hamilton Operatic Society staff with full drivers licences will carry out the transportation of children and young people.

4.18 Hamilton Operatic Society staff will only transport children and young people in warranted, registered, and insured vehicles.

4.19 Parents or caregivers must give written consent for their child or young person to be transported by a designated member of Hamilton Operatic Society staff.

4.20 When providing transport for Hamilton Operatic Society, staff will ensure that they do not deviate for the route, or purpose, agreed to in advance with the designated persons, unless in an emergency situation.

4.21 Hamilton Operatic Society staff will not transport children or young people after consuming any alcohol, regardless of whether or not they are under the legal limit.

### **○ Social Events and Gatherings**

4.22 At all times children and young people associated with Hamilton Operatic Society are to be treated in a way that is both physically and verbally safe and respectful – actively encouraging mutual respect and support. This includes at both formal and informal social events and gatherings held by, or associated with, Hamilton Operatic Society.

4.23 At no time should children and young people associated with Hamilton Operatic Society social events or gatherings be treated in a way that is degrading, humiliating, or causes

unreasonable fear or anxiety. Regardless of setting, the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person is the paramount consideration and the Hamilton Operatic Society Child Protection Policy must be adhered to.

## Section Five **Allegations Against Staff**

- 5.1 Concerns may be raised regarding members of Hamilton Operatic Society staff. These may be as a result of behaviour within the workplace, or of behaviour within their home environment.
- 5.2 All Hamilton Operatic Society staff have a responsibility to understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to a children and young people and to maintain this behaviour.
- 5.3 Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff will be taken seriously and reported to the designated person for child protection. The designated person for child protection, in consultation with Hamilton Operatic Society [Director/Manager/Board of Trustees/Committee], will deal with the allegation, suspicion or complaint immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined in this policy.
- 5.4 Any concern of abuse of a child or young person will follow the child protection procedures outlined in this policy under Section Two. In the event of an allegation of abuse by a staff member a report of concern will be made to the Police and Oranga Tamariki.
- 5.5 When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both the staff member's and the child or young person's rights are to be attended to. This means that the safety of the child or young person is of first concern, and that the staff member must have access to legal and professional advice, in accordance with the Employment Relations Act.
- 5.6 The designated person for child protection must immediately assess risk before allowing the staff member in question to have any contact with the person making the allegation. A risk assessment must be undertaken to determine what level of access that person should have, if any, to members of the public in their capacity as an Hamilton Operatic Society staff member.
- 5.7 In all child protection cases, Hamilton Operatic Society will co-operate fully with both Oranga Tamariki and the Police in their investigations and assessments.

- 5.8 It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal or Oranga Tamariki investigation.
- 5.9 If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then an internal disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken subject to internal disciplinary procedures. In these circumstances the [designated person for child protection/Manager/Director/Board of Trustees/Committee] will inform the complainant of the process to be followed, what information will be taken into consideration and when the internal investigation is likely to be complete.
- 5.10 A staff member tendering his or her resignation, or ceasing to provide their services to Hamilton Operatic Society, will not prevent an allegation of abuse against a child or young person being followed up in accordance with these procedures.

## Appendix One

### Indicators of Abuse

The indicators for child abuse and neglect fall into three general categories:

**Physical indicators:** Injuries to a child or young person that are severe, occur in a pattern or occur frequently. These injuries range from bruises to broken bones to burns or unusual lacerations and are often unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given

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**Behavioural indicators:** The child or young person's actions, attitudes, and emotions can indicate the possibility of abuse or neglect. Behavioural indicators alone are much less reliable than physical indicators, as a child or young person's behaviour may be the result of a variety of other problems or conditions. When observing changes in behaviour, look for the frequency and pattern of the new behaviour, as well as a child or young person's age and stage of development. For example, it is normal for younger children to be wary of adults, as they may have been taught not to talk to strangers. Look for a combination of physical and behavioural indicators.

**Caregiver indicators:** Caregivers who abuse, neglect or exploit children and young people are either unable or unwilling to provide care and protection in an appropriate way. Those who are unable to provide care and protection may be physically unable due to their own medical or health condition. They may be overly stressed, tired, or working under the influence of drugs or alcohol which limits their abilities. Caregivers who are unwilling to provide children and young people with the appropriate level of care and protection are more aware that what they are doing is wrong but continue to act in that way. These caregivers may not view the child or young person as someone who has feelings and emotions and often have the need to control others or have displaced aggression towards weaker persons.

The indicators alone do not prove child abuse or neglect. Likewise, the absence of indicators does not exclude the possibility that abuse is occurring. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing

of a child or young person, seek advice from your designated person/s for child protection or directly from Oranga Tamariki.

### **Emotional Abuse Indicators**

- Physical Indicators
  - Bed wetting or bed soiling with no medical cause
  - Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
  - Non-organic failure to thrive
  - Pale, emaciated
  - Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea
  - Malnutrition
    - Dressed differently to other children or young people in the family
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Severe developmental lags with obvious physical cause
  - Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
    - Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
  - Overly compliant
  - Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
  - Running away from home, avoiding attending at school
  - Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
  - Anti-social behaviours
  - Lack of self esteem
  - Obsessive behaviours
  - Eating disorders
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - Labels the child or young person as inferior or publicly humiliates the child or young person (e.g. name calling)
  - Treats the child or young person differently from siblings or peers in ways that suggest dislike for the child or young person
  - Actively refuses to help the child or young person
  - Constantly threatens the child or young person with physical harm or death
    - Locks the child or young person in a closet or room for extended periods of time
  - Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
  - Withholds physical and verbal affection
  - Keeps the child or young person at home in role of servant or surrogate parent
  - Has unrealistic expectations of child or young person
    - Involves child or young person in adult issues such as separation or disputes over child or young person's care
      - Exposes child or young person to situations of arguing and violence in the home

## Neglect Indicators

- Physical Indicators:
  - Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
  - Often extremely dirty and unwashed
  - Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
  - Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods
  - May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult
  - Does not receive adequate medical or dental care
    - Malnourished - this can be both underweight and overweight
  - Lacks adequate shelter
  - Non-organic failure to thrive
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
  - Lack of attachment to parents/caregivers
  - Indiscriminate attachment to other adults
  - Poor school attendance and performance
  - Demanding of affection and attention
    - Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
  - May steal food
  - Poor social skills
  - No understanding of basic hygiene
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - Puts own need ahead of child or young person's
  - Fails to provide child or young person's basic needs
    - Demonstrates little or no interest in child or young person's life - does not attend school activities, social events
    - Leaves the child or young person alone or inappropriately supervised
  - Drug and alcohol use
  - Depression

## Physical Abuse Indicators

- Physical Indicators:
  - Bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions
  - Burns -small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns etc
    - Fractures and dislocations - skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
  - Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
  - Fractures in very young children
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
  - Wary of adults or a particular person
  - Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
  - Cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly

- May be extremely compliant and eager to please
  - Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
  - Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
  - May regress (e.g. bedwetting)
  - May indicate general sadness
  - Could have vision or hearing delay
  - Is violent to other children or animals
- Caregiver Indicators:
    - Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
      - May appear unconcerned about child or young person's wellbeing
    - May state the child or young person is prone to injuries or lies about how they occur
    - Delays in seeking medical attention
      - May take the child or young person to multiple medical appointments and seek medical treatment without an obvious need

## Sexual Abuse Indicators

- Physical Indicators:
  - Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
  - Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
    - Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
  - Blood in urine or stools
  - Sexually transmitted infections
  - Pregnancy
  - Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably
- Behavioural Indicators:
  - Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
  - Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
    - Refuses to go home, or to a specific person's home, for no apparent reason
  - Fear of a certain person
  - Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
    - Self-destructive behaviour. This can include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse
  - Overly compliant
  - Extreme attention seeking behaviours or extreme inhibition
  - Dresses inappropriately to hide bruising or injuries
  - Eating disorders
  - Compulsive behaviours
- Caregiver Indicators:
  - May be unusually over-protective of the child or young person
    - Accuses the child or young person of being sexually provocative
  - Misuses alcohol or drugs

- Invades the child or young person's privacy (e.g. during dressing, in the bathroom)
- May favour the victim over other children and young people

### Family Violence Indicators

- Indicators in the Child/Young Person:
  - Physical injuries consistent with the indicators of Physical Abuse
  - Absenteeism from school
  - Bullying or aggressive behaviour
  - Complaints of headaches or stomach aches with no apparent medical reason
  - Talking about or describing violent behaviours
- Indicators in the Victim:
  - Physical Injuries including: bruising to chest and abdomen, injuries during pregnancy
  - Depression and/or anxiety
  - Inconsistent explanations for injuries
  - Fearful
  - Submissive
- Indicators in the Offender:
  - Isolates and controls partner and children/young people
    - Threatens, criticises, intimidates, uses aggressive and physical abuse towards partner and children/young people
    - Minimises and denies own behaviour, or blames victim for the perpetrators own behaviour

## Appendix Two

### Child Protection Overview - Responding to Abuse:

***Abuse is "... the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person" - Section 2, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989***

Child abuse can involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or it may arise from a single incident. Child Abuse may take many forms but it can be categorised into four different types:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

Child abuse can occur in many different settings and forms and may come to light in a variety of different ways. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or indirect disclosure by the child/young person or someone known to the child/young person;
- Suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child/young person;
- Allegations and/or direct observations or signs displayed in the child/young person's physical or emotional behaviour;

- Direct witnessing of abuse.

When disclosures of abuse come directly from a child or young person, it is important that you take what the child or young person says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or your own opinion on what is being said. When a child or young person tells you what has been happening to them, or when you witness or suspect child abuse, it is important that you, as the adult, remain calm and confident.

**RESPOND:** Respond to the person (adult, young person, or child) – Believe what they tell you and/or what you see.

**SAFETY:** Ensure the safety of the child/young person. Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child/young person. This will mean contacting Oranga Tamariki (**0508 326 459**) or the Police (**111**) if you think there is an immediate risk to the child/young person.

**RECORD:** Record immediately all initial statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date.

**CONSULT:** Do not make decisions alone. Consult with your Child Protection Policy and your designated person for child protection. Oranga Tamariki is always available to give advice.

**REPORT:** Decide to act on your concerns. If you have told the person you believe is responsible for taking action and they do not act, take further action yourself.

**SUPPORT:** Seek support for yourself. Responding to a child protection issue can be stressful.

**Think “what if I’m right?” .... Not “what if I’m wrong?”**

## Appendix Three Contact List

**Your Designated Person for Child Protection Is:**

**(these details will be given to company members in 2026)**

.....

**Your Secondary Designated Person for Child Protection Is:**

.....



**[Committee/Board/Manager/Producer Details:]**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Ministry for Children - Oranga Tamariki**  
**0508 326 0459**

**New Zealand Police**  
**111**

**Musical Theatre New Zealand**

.....

**Child Matters**  
**(07) 838 3370**

**Appendix Four**  
**Safe Working Practices - Agreement:**

As an Hamilton Operatic Society staff member, I **WILL**:

- Ensure that I am fully aware of, and adhere to, the Hamilton Operatic Society Child Protection Policy.

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- Treat all children and young people with respect at all times, regardless of their gender, race, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background, and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- Promote an environment where children and young people feel safe and comfortable in my care and contact.
- Act professionally and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.

- Avoid circumstances where my behaviour (both verbal and physical) may be misinterpreted as hostile, suggestive, inappropriate, offensive, suggestive or neglectful.
- Where practicable, ensure that a minimum of two adults are present when with a child or young person. If it is not possible to have another adult present, I will ensure that I always operate an “open door” policy and that I am visible to others.
- Act swiftly to ensure that any perceived risk to a child or young person is immediately reported in consultation with the Designated Person/s for Child Protection.
- Inform the Designated Person/s for Child Protection of breaches in safe working practices, regardless of whether this has resulted in the harm of a child or young person.
- Not engage in any unwarranted or inappropriate touching of a child or young person. I will only engage in touch if it can be done in a safe manner and while visible to other adults.
- Not transport a child or young person alone in my vehicle, unless in an emergency situation.
- Ensure that all communications with children and young people, by whatever methods, are transparent and open to scrutiny.

I certify that I have read, understood, and will comply with, the Hamilton Operatic Society Child Protection Policy: