

Te Atatu AFC Child Protection Policy



Rationale

Te Atatu AFC aims to ensure all children's safety, wellbeing, and security by practising open and accountable child-centred decision-making. We recognise the importance of involving family/whānau in decision-making about their children and will include children in decision-making about themselves in age-appropriate ways. We acknowledge that child protection is everyone's responsibility and promote our child protection policies to our community.

"Child/ren", in the context of our child protection policies, means a child or young person aged under 18 years (who is not married or in a civil union) – Children's Act 2014.

Sharing information

We share information with appropriate agencies if sharing that information will protect or improve the health, safety, and/or wellbeing of a child.

Child and volunteer safety

We take concerns about the safety of children seriously and respond to them quickly. Prevention and early intervention are important, and we use the least intrusive intervention possible to protect vulnerable children.

We promote a culture where people feel confident that they can challenge poor practise or raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal. See [Protected Disclosure](#).

Child protection policy requirements

Te Atatu AFC has chosen a policy in line with the Children's Act 2014. As required by the Act, child protection practices are incorporated into our policies and procedures. Te Atatu AFC has a designated group responsible for child protection policies. Our designated group is the Exec members of the committee; they are the primary point of contact for concerns about a child, including concerns about abuse or neglect. Our child protection policies apply to all employees and volunteers.

Abuse Recognition and Reporting

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, phone the police on 111. If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, or want to discuss, report, or refer a concern, contact Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children on 0508 EDASSIST (0508 332 774) or edassist@ot.govt.nz.

Te Atatu AFC is responsible for ensuring all **employed by** the club who work with children are **safety checked** before their appointment. Volunteers working unsupervised with young people are also required to undergo police vetting.

In cases of suspected abuse and/or disclosure, we acknowledge our responsibility to report to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and/or the police. We empower our employees to raise concerns.



Abuse recognition

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child.

Employees/ volunteers are alert to changes in a child's wellbeing or behaviour. We ensure employees/ volunteers are familiar with our child protection policies and procedures and abuse recognition and reporting procedures.

The club's primary responsibility is to protect the safety and wellbeing of our children. If someone has been accused of abuse, the club may take steps to prevent contact between that person and children.

Managing disclosure

While abuse is usually recognised through observation, children may willingly or accidentally disclose abuse. In this situation, we handle disclosure with care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, and to support any potential legal action.

Any person who receives a disclosure is advised to:

- remain calm, and remember that the safety and wellbeing of the child is the primary concern
- offer reassurance, but do not make any promises or commitments that cannot be kept
- write down information about the time, date, location, and any people present during the disclosure
- write down what the child says in their own words, making sure to distinguish between what the child says and any inferences made
- avoid formally interviewing the student and never ask leading questions
- ensure the child is supported and that there is a responsible adult who is available to them throughout any investigation by external agencies
- inform the child protection group as soon as possible
- refer to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, or the police

We encourage employees/volunteers to seek support for themselves after a referral, either from a relevant support person at the club or through external support agencies.

Abuse reporting

At Te Atatu AFC, anyone who has concerns about abuse can make a direct referral to Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, or the police. Those disclosing concerns in good faith about a child's safety and wellbeing should not be subject to civil, criminal, or disciplinary proceedings.

Under the information sharing provisions of the Oranga Tamariki Act, employees/volunteers are encouraged to proactively share information with other approved professionals (e.g. relevant members of the committee, and social, family, and community services) if it is in the best interests of the child. We will only share information relevant to student safety and wellbeing.

The Oranga Tamariki Act states that information may be shared to:

- prevent or reduce the risk of harm, ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation
- make or contribute to an assessment of the risks or needs of the child

Te Atatu AFC Child Protection Policy



- prepare, implement, or review any prevention plan or strategy made by Oranga Tamariki
- arrange, provide, or review services facilitated by Oranga Tamariki
- carry out any function in relation to a family group conference for children in care or anything else related to the care or protection of children.

If a concern does result in suspicion of abuse or neglect, the club may refer to a social service providers to identify and address the child's needs. Our designated child protection team contacts external providers as required. Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children and the police, in consultation with the Club President, decide when and who informs the parent(s) and/or caregivers.

Protected Disclosure

We make employees, committee members, and volunteers aware of our internal protected disclosure procedures and how to use them. We provide reminders annually and have information available in our clubrooms.

A protected disclosure is a disclosure of information made by a discloser (also known as a whistleblower) who complies with all of the below steps:

- believes on reasonable grounds that there is, or has been, serious wrongdoing in or by the discloser's organisation
- discloses information about that in accordance with these procedures and the Protected Disclosure (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022 (the Act)
- does not disclose it in bad faith.

Te Atatu AFC is committed to handling protected disclosures properly as required under the Act. We encourage employees, committee members, and volunteers to make a protected disclosure if they believe on reasonable grounds there is or has been serious wrongdoing. We treat protected disclosures seriously.

Confidentiality

All protected disclosures are dealt with fairly and we try to keep confidential any information that might identify a discloser. We may reveal a discloser's identity if the discloser consents, or we have reasonable grounds to believe releasing identifying information is essential to:

- the effective investigation of the disclosure
- the prevention of serious risk to public health, safety, or the environment
- compliance with the principles of natural justice.

If we propose to release identifying information, we consult with the discloser unless this is not practicable in relation to preventing a serious risk to public health, safety, or the environment. We notify the discloser if we release identifying information. We encourage anyone in our community to seek information and guidance from the Ombudsman concerning confidentiality and making a protected disclosure.

Te Atatu AFC Child Protection Policy



Protection

Disclosers are protected from retaliatory action. Protections still apply if the discloser is mistaken about the truth of the disclosure. Anyone who makes a disclosure they know is false or made in bad faith is not protected under the Act.

Review

The policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers.