

## GRANT & DOUGLAS OPTOMETRY & EYEWEAR - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### ***Policy Statement***

**Grant & Douglas Optometry** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in our activities.

Staff will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

This policy is based on the following principles:

The welfare of children is the primary concern.

- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters, which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- Our organisation will work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- Adhere to the recommendations of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 where no child will be in the care of a person whose safety cannot be ascertained.

### ***Policy Objectives***

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through:

- Promoting the health and welfare of children.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Requiring staff to adopt and abide by the Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with the Policy and procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and procedures.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Screening**

As part of our duty of care, we must ensure that suitable and appropriate employees are engaged to work with children. When recruiting people to engage with children we will ensure that there is robust recruitment process that includes:

- creating a role description;
- developing candidate specifications;
- advertising the position;
- an application process;
- following up on referees;
- interviewing; and
- screening (e.g. police vetting).

### **2. Appointing a Child Protection Officer**

A Child Protection Officer (CPO) shall be appointed to manage child protection issues by:

- Ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members;
- Acting as the main contact for child protection matters;
- Keeping up-to-date with developments in child protection legislation;
- Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken; and
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

### **3. Good Practice Protocols**

The protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations.

- Applying a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity.
- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.

Creating a safe and open working environment

- Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity.
- Seek permission to touch when doing the above.
- Do not engage in any intimate, over-familiar or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18 years.
- Ensure that any filming or photography of children is appropriate. (Obtain consent prior to filming or photographing & explain purpose e.g. to promote course etc).
- Do not invite or encourage children to your home

### **4. Codes of behaviour**

A code of behaviour sets out an organisation's expectation of its employees. These codes can be developed to cover a variety of roles including support staff and optometrists. They will also reinforce the good practice protocols.

An effective code of behaviour:

- identifies risk factors;
- addresses risk factors;
- is developed collectively with those who are expected to follow the code;
- is clear and unambiguous; and
- is widely promoted and used within your organisation.

Complaint and internal discipline procedures for breaches of the code procedures should be developed in conjunction with the code of behaviour and also be widely distributed and promoted.

### **5. Dealing with allegations, responding to concerns**

In accordance with members' responsibility to act on any serious concerns, the following should be brought to the attention of the CPO.

- Any instance where policy is breached or good practice guidelines are not followed.
- Any disclosure by a child that abuse or harm is occurring.
- Any suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to abuse.

### **6. Where concerns about poor practice are reported**

Poor practice involves actions that are contrary to the good practice guidelines provided by our organisation and increase the risk of harm to children.

- Initial concerns should be discussed with your CPO (in the absence of a CPO the board or executive of your organisation should be notified).
- Consider the allegation and where there is a legitimate concern provide a written notice to the individual(s) involved.
- If the poor practice is continued or repeated poor practice following a written notice then enact disciplinary procedures. This may include expulsion from your organisation.

### **7. Where abuse is suspected or reported**

The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount considerations.

- Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm
- Consult immediately with nominated CPO/person-in-charge
- As soon as possible, record accurately and appropriately the information received
- Records should be factual (not opinion or hearsay) and concise and include:
  - i. The nature of the allegation
  - ii. Who noticed/disclosed the abuse and their relationship to the child
  - iii. Details of any witnesses
  - iv. Signs and symptoms noted (including behavioural change)
  - v. Any particular incidents with dates, times and places (if possible)
  - vi. Any action taken
- Consult with other others as necessary – do not work alone
- Avoid questioning the child beyond what has already been disclosed
- Do not question or counsel the alleged offender
- Do not investigate/presume expertise unless very experienced and qualified to do so.
- Notify Child Youth and Family or the Police.

### **Policy Review**

This Policy and Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within **Grant & Douglas Optometry**.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within **Grant & Douglas Optometry**.
- In all other circumstances, at least every twelve months.

### **Additional Guidance**

Grant & Douglas Optometry will:

- Have a record for every child under the care of the organisation and have a contact name and number accessible in case of emergencies
- Treat everybody with respect
- Set an example we would wish others to follow
- Where possible consider activities that involve more than one adult being present or within sight and hearing of others
- Be aware that on occasions our actions may be misinterpreted by others even if they were well intentioned
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy
- Provide time and attention for children to talk to us
- Encourage children to respect and be courteous to others
- Intervene to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- Ensure that any suspicions or allegations of abuse are REFERRED not INVESTIGATED
- Only refer and seek support from other agencies for those identified under the child protection policy
- Complete Personal Profile and vetting pro-formas (if applicable – see attached.)

Last updated: 20/06/2018

Next review date: 20/06/2019

Approved By:

Jenny Stewart (Partner)

## **Appendix 1: RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

There are numerous pieces of legislation relating to the protection of children less than 18 years.

### ***Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992***

- This Act deals with the health and safety obligations of an employer to its employees.
- There is also an obligation to ensure the safety of volunteers (some of whom may be children) while they undertake the work activity.
- Employers will be held vicariously liable to a third party for acts of its employees.

### ***Privacy Act 1993***

The Privacy Act governs the collection and use of personal information where a person's identity is apparent from the information.

### ***Crimes Amendment Act – Protection of Children***

- The key purpose of this amendment to the Crimes Act 1961 is to ensure that children are adequately protected from assault, neglect and ill-treatment.
- The amendment places greater responsibility on adults (parent or persons in place of a parent) who have actual care or charge of a child to take reasonable steps to protect that child from injury.
- The amendment also compels people who live with a child and those who are in frequent contact with children and know, or ought to know, that the child is at risk of death, grievous bodily harm or sexual assault to take reasonable steps to protect the child from that risk.

### ***Vulnerable Children Act 2014***

Child protection is about practices that keep children accessing services safe, ensuring that potential abuse and neglect, along with general concerns about child wellbeing, are identified and appropriately responded to. It is key to building a culture of child protection where the safety and security of children is paramount.

### **Other relevant legislation includes:**

- Income Tax Act 2007;
- Minimum Wage Act 1983;
- Equal Pay Act 1972;
- Smoke Free Environments Act 1990;
- Sale of Liquor Act 1989;
- Human Rights Act 1993;
- New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990; and Care of Children Act 2004.

## **Appendix 2: PERSONAL PROFILE FORM**

*To be completed by all new employees.*

**1. Organisation's Name:** Grant & Douglas Optometry & Eyewear

### **2. Personal Details:**

Title: Forename: Surname:

Date of Birth:

Telephone No (incl. STD code):

Address:

Occupation: Currently Employed: **YES/NO**

**3. Declaration** – I have read and understood the organisation's Child Protection Policy and agree to CONFIDENTIAL vetting procedures. I agree to inform the Grant & Douglas Optometry of any change in circumstances.

**4. Referees**– Please provide the names and addresses of TWO responsible persons for reference purposes. Referees should not be related to you and, where possible, should have knowledge of your ability to conduct yourself appropriately in the proximity of children. All references will be taken up. You should secure prior agreement of referees before providing their names.

#### **Referee 1**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

#### **Referee 2**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

5. If referees can not be provided, eg for owners of the business, a police vetting check will be completed.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

### **Appendix 3: VETTING CHECKLIST**

***To be completed by the Organisation.***

Organisation's Name: Grant & Douglas Optometry & Eyewear

Name of Employee:

**This Checklist and a Child Protection profile form must be completed for all new employees in Grant & Douglas Optometry who have substantial access to children.**

1. Have you explained the need for vetting to the potential volunteer/employee? **YES / NO**
2. Have you given the volunteer/employee an opportunity to read your Child Protection Policy and discussed any issues arising out of this with him/her? **YES / NO**
3. Have you set up a personal file for the potential volunteer/employee? **YES / NO**
4. Has the employee completed a Child Protection Personal profile Form? **YES / NO** *(Please attach the completed form to this checklist)*
5. Have you carried out appropriate vetting? **YES / NO**
6. Were the results satisfactory? **YES / NO**
7. Have you taken up two written references? **YES / NO** *(Please attach the references to this checklist)*
  8. If no, has a police vetting check as been completed? **YES / NO**
9. Have you followed up these references with either a telephone call or conversation? **YES / NO** *(Please attach a written record with full details including the date of the call or conversation to this checklist)*
10. Has the above individual been approved as a employee with **Grant & Douglas Optometry**? **YES / NO**  
*(You must be able to answer YES to questions 1-8 above before you sign this form)*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Name (in block capitals):**

**Position held:**