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Sanitisation Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-------------|------|--|
| Operational | 2020 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Directors/ Poutokomanawa |

The hazard of human infection for those exposed to water bodies has been known for a long time, but the public is becoming more aware of it as new evidence of the oceans rapidly deteriorating health emerges. Even the most pristine sea waters are inhabited by large numbers of microbes. The sheer volume of seawater and its constant movement usually dilute foreign microbes below concentrations necessary for human infection. Risk of direct infection by microbes from seawater is very small. However, the risk increases significantly in warm, brackish waters, in waters proximate to sewage and run-off inlets, at places of animal access and at populated beaches. Microbes generally infect humans through ingestion, inhalation or mucous-membrane exposure (naturally occurring or in wounds).

Microbes can infect through injured skin, the ears and the mucosa of the mouth, eyes and nose. If equipment is not properly cleaned, dried and stored after use, colonies can grow and microbes can reach sufficient numbers to infect users. Divers are encouraged to disinfect equipment properly. Make sure to use a cleaning agent that does not contain hydrocarbons and refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for use. (Source <http://www.alertdiver.com/Microbial>)

EMR snorkel equipment sanitisation

- Instructions for care of equipment and what to do with the snorkel equipment after use will be given verbally to the participants by the coordinator, including the use of de-fog or equivalent product (no spitting in masks). This instruction will also include information on where to put used masks, snorkels and wetsuits when finished (so that used masks and snorkels do not get mixed up with sanitised ones).
- Snorkel briefing will include a reminder for participants not to use our wetsuits as a toilet.
- The mask and snorkels must be sanitised after every single use, by soaking in a sanitisation product, we recommend [DX50](#)
- Whenever possible allow the mask and snorkel to dry completely in the sun (one hour max, do not leave in sun for prolonged period). Especially important for mask and snorkels to be completely dry for winter storage
- If undiluted disinfectant accidentally gets in the eye, flush with fresh water

- It is recommended that participants suitably cover any exposed wounds with suitable dressing or refrain from snorkel diving.
- If you suspect that someone urinated or had an accident in the wetsuit, leave the suit to soak for 10 or more minutes (in a separate bin) and then rinse several times in freshwater and leave to dry.
- Wetsuits should dry on a line in a secure site, once dry; they must be stored in a lockable area, they should be placed on hangers during long breaks in use.
- Fins should be rinsed in freshwater before storing for long periods and should not be left in the sun when not in use.

General public health advice:

- Regularly disinfect surfaces;
- wash and dry hands,
- cough into elbow,
- don't touch your face;
- stay home if you're sick,

WBC Gear Sanitisation and Biosecurity

Protect New Zealand's waterways

We need help to stop freshwater pests reaching – and spreading within – New Zealand. Freshwater weeds can form dense mats, completely smothering waterways and badly affecting water quality. The mats can also kill native plants, cause flooding and disrupt recreational activities.

SNEAKY LITTLE BUGGERS

Stealth is the main way these freshwater invaders travel. Sometimes a stream is infected but the pest isn't visible yet, so unaware, we spread the organism somewhere else. These pests can start off microscopically small – just one drop of water on a bike spoke or one damp tramping sock can be its way in. Once you're in the habit, it's not hard to stop them spreading – it just takes a bit of dedication to the cause. Protect your patch – check, clean, dry.

Prevent the spread

Freshwater weeds are easily spread by people, diggers, boats and fishing equipment. Many of them grow from small fragments, rather than from seed. Before using your gear in a waterway please:

CHECK for plant fragments and pests

CLEAN using detergent (5% dishwasher) or salt water (sea strength or 5% salt) until completely soaked through
DRY completely to kill freshwater pests.
Tell the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) about it



For more information about freshwater pests, or to report something unusual in a waterway, please contact MPI on 0800 80 99 66.

WHAT ARE THEY?

The list of invasive plants includes didymo, hornwort, lagarosiphon, salvinia and hydrilla. Please visit [MPI's website](#) for more information on freshwater pests.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Form mats over waterways, affecting water quality
- Endanger fish and crowd out native species
- Create drowning risks for people and animals
- Aesthetically damage our clean, clear waterways
- Have significant economic impact
- Make recreational activities in the waterway difficult
- Block dams and irrigation systems

FOLLOW THESE STEPS FOR EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN WET, WHEN YOU MOVE BETWEEN ANY WATERWAYS IN NEW ZEALAND.

- Remove any plant matter. Check anything that's been in contact with the water, especially things like the tread of your shoe.
- Soak or scrub your equipment in water with detergent for at least a minute. Make sure the item is fully wet – without air-pockets or bits the water can't get to.
- Wait till the equipment is dry to touch, and leave it dry for at least 48 hours to make sure any invisible pests are completely dead.

CLEANING TIPS

- If you're cleaning something made of absorbent material, soak it for longer to make sure it's wet right through.
- Tip the cleaning water out well away from waterways. If you can, use a biodegradable detergent, and make sure it's safe for your equipment too.
- Freezing until solid is an effective alternative to cleaning.
- Use quick-dry or non-absorbent equipment where you can – you'll save on drying time.
- If there are two different waterways you use frequently; it might be easier to have a separate set of gear for each.
- For more cleaning tips go to www.mpi.govt.nz.

WHICH STEPS WHEN?

- I'm only using one waterway Great – you don't need to Check, Clean, Dry.
- I have several days between using one waterway and using another – CHECK AND DRY
As long as your gear is clear of plant debris and has been dry to the touch for at least 48 hours, you're ok.
- I'm moving between waterways – CHECK AND CLEAN
This is the prime time for spreading pests. Check and clean every item that has been wet. If possible, leave to dry as well to be really sure.

If you ever catch pest fish as part of your stream studies you **MUST NOT** return them to the stream – it is illegal. You **must** dispose of them humanely – either put them in the freezer straight away if possible or 'release them' onto the grass away from the waterway and try to squish or iki (spike into brain) them quickly to minimise any suffering.

Kauri Dieback

Background: Kauri dieback can kill kauri of all ages. It's a disease caused by a microscopic fungus-like organism, called *Phytophthora agathidicida* (PA). Kauri dieback spreads through the movement of contaminated soil and soil water. It is possible that it is also spread by streams and rivers particularly in times of flooding.

There's currently no proven cure or treatment and nearly all infected kauri die. The disease is easily spread through soil movements e.g. when soil is carried on dirty footwear, animals, equipment and vehicles. A pinhead size of soil is enough to spread the disease.

Guidelines for Whitebait Connection (adapted from www.kauridieback.co.nz)

AVOID

- working or holding events around kauri where possible (events, planting, survey work)
- leaving formed tracks
- Working in wet conditions
- Propagating or planting kauri - if particular projects require this, follow best practice guidelines

Prevent the spread. Arrive clean - leave clean. Scrub, Spray and Stay

Hygiene practices and how to clean equipment

Ensure all equipment is clean and soil-free - Boots, spades, or any other equipment which has been in contact with any soil - be also mindful of equipment like stakes for fish traps!

Kauri dieback spores can be removed from footwear and equipment simply by scrubbing them with clean water to remove all soil then allowing gear to dry. However, it is also recommended to use Sterigene to increase the effectiveness of these hygiene measures.

COVID-19

COVID-19, like the flu, covid can be spread from person to person. COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus.

Traceability of all participants is recorded via supervisor forms, pre site assessment and school attendee list. We will sanitise public surfaces (ie: bathrooms) during delivery.

MTSCT has prepared guidelines for our coordinators, volunteers and contractors based on the government's and Ministry of Health's guidelines for what is permitted and recommended under the different Levels. Keep up to date <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

EMR Operational Snorkel Policies

Full face masks

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-------------|------|---|
| Operational | 2017 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Marine |

We do not allow the use of full face masks as of 2017/18 season, due to possible H & S risk. (mask can be hard to remove when full with water)

Shark policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-------------|------|---|
| Operational | 2022 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Marine |

Any shark larger than 1.8 m (about the size of a human) should be considered potentially dangerous, any observation of any shark that size should prompt an orderly immediate evacuation of the water, as per EMR evacuation protocol.

WBC Operational Stream Based Policies

Waders

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-----------------|------|--|
| WBC Operational | 2017 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh |

Definition

Waders are a key piece of equipment used by Whitebait Connection (WBC) coordinators to stay warm and dry during field work. They are high waterproof boots, or a waterproof garment for the legs and body, used especially by anglers when fishing.



Chest Waders



Thigh Waders

Purpose

To provide informative safe operating procedures and important Health & Safety points which local/regional/national coordinators need to consider when undertaking wader activities, particularly the use of waders by students.

Background

Wading in stationary or flowing water is hazardous, particularly when the depth and/or water flows are excessive. The likelihood of drowning is increased when wearing waders, compared to when you're not wearing waders. In the event of a fall, waders are likely to quickly flood with water, reducing your buoyancy. Hypothermia is also a potential hazard if your waders fill

with water. It is always best practice to have at least one other person on site with you when wearing waders.

Preparation

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure the Health & Safety of all persons when using waders.

Prior to using waders

- Check the forecast for any potential adverse weather.
- Ensure you inform the school and/or manager of the planned schedule, and when you expect to return.
- Construct a robust communication plan and itinerary and stick to it, within reason.
- Always plan your route of entry and exit.

Safe Operating Procedure

There are a variety of important factors which should be considered before entering a stream wearing waders. It is strongly recommended that anyone wearing waders for WBC delivery undertake Wader Safety training with a professional provider such as [OENZ](#) and wear neoprene waders. If PVC chest waders are worn, then a chest belt should be worn too.

These factors include

- Stream depth – only enter the water in waders if the water is no higher than mid-thigh level. If a coordinator wears waders in the stream and wades deeper than mid-thigh depth, they must also wear a PFD e.g. lifejacket.
- Stream velocity – only enter the water in waders if the water in the stream has a calm/low flow, it is also important to ensure there is no swift flow.
- Local conditions
- Recent weather conditions (heavy rainfall, flooding etc)
- The user's physical fitness and competence with waders
- Prior knowledge of the stream
- Substrate of the stream (e.g. soft sediment, cobble, bed rock etc). Cobble can be very slippery and silt can be a lot deeper than you initially think.
- Proximity to emergency services in the event of an incident
- Ensure there is a safety person onshore watching the entire time ready to initiate emergency response procedure if a participant gets into trouble.
- Wader use is incorporated into the Risk Assessment Form (RAF).

In the event of any persons falling into deep, fast-flowing water

- Immediately tuck up. In a tuck position, less water is likely to leak in and the air in your waders will be trapped maintaining your buoyancy and keeping you drier.
- Roll onto your back keeping your knees tucked. You will need to put your arms in the water to balance yourself.
- Do not panic. You must not try to swim, tread water or float in an upright position. If being carried by the current, face downstream (feet first).

In the event of an emergency, follow emergency procedure/response and dial 111.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-----------------|------|--|
| WBC Operational | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh |

In the event of a coordinator undertaking any WBC activity that isn't a group activity, and not having another person with them, **they must wear a PFD such as a lifejacket when close to or in a waterway.** This applies even when the waterway is shallow in case of the coordinator slipping on a rock and becoming unconscious. A lifejacket will be provided as part of your coordinator's kit.

Walking Pole Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-----------------|------|--|
| WBC Operational | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh |

When undertaking site recces, Whitebait Connection coordinators should use a walking pole particularly when close to or in a waterway, or in dense vegetation where the ground level is uneven and obscured. The walking pole should be used to test the depth of water in front of you and/or to detect any holes which are obscured by water or dense vegetation. The walking

pole can even be a stick which is long and sturdy enough for the purpose. Any participants (e.g. landowners or teachers) should also use a walking pole, particularly if they are unfamiliar with the terrain.

LittaTrap Health & Safety Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-----------------|------|--|
| WBC Operational | 2020 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh |

LittaTrap Description

The LittaTrap is a low cost, hand-maintainable storm drain catch basin insert; designed to stop plastics and other gross pollutants from reaching waterways, beaches and harbours. The 1000 micron gross pollutant bag insert catches at least 95% of gross pollutants at a flow rate of up to 100 l/sec.

There are two standard sizes to fit most precast regular and kerb entry catchpits.

Site Selection

LittaTraps can be installed either in a catchpit in the school itself, or in a catchpit on a nearby road.

Equipment required for site selection:

- LittaTrap installation instructions
- Tape measure
- Gloves
- Safety boots
- Road Cones
- Special grate lifting tool or crowbar optional

Procedure for site selection:

1. Choose a catchpit close to the school in consultation with the Drains To Harbour programme lead school teacher, at a location with low traffic volumes.
2. Choose a time of day for installation when traffic volumes are low.
3. Park in close proximity to the catchpit.
4. Isolate catchpit from pedestrian and vehicular traffic with road cones stationed at least 1.5m out from catchpit edge.
5. Hook and pull up the grate using special grate lifting tool (if the grate is missing, report immediately to your local council). Put grate on kerbside. Take care to avoid falling or dropping anything in the catchpit.
6. Inspect and measure the catchpit to ensure a LittaTrap will fit. If the catchpit requires maintenance before a LittaTrap can be installed, contact Whangārei District Council to arrange this.
7. Replace grate using special grate lifting tool.
8. Recover road cones
9. If catchpit is unsuitable, begin at Step 1.
10. Mark catchpit location on Whangārei District Council stormwater GPS map.
11. Print location map, attach to school maintenance agreement.
12. Email proforma LittaTrap school maintenance agreement with attached location map, to Drains To Harbour programme lead school teacher for them to sign.
13. Follow up with lead school teacher to obtain signed copy of LittaTrap school maintenance agreement and attached location map.

Installation

Installation is by a WBC contractor, following Stormwater360 LittaTrap installation instructions. A signed copy of the LittaTrap school maintenance agreement is required before installation can commence.

View the [instructional video](#) and follow the installation instructions before attempting installation.

Equipment required for installation:

- High visibility jacket
- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Gloves
- Road cones with barrier arms
- Aspiration protection

- Measuring tape and floor mat to lie on
- Box knife or tin snips
- Rotary hammer drill, bits, charged battery
- Paperwork (RAFs, Incident Forms)
- First Aid Kit and Hand Sanitiser
- Hammer
- Marker Pen
- Battery Impact Driver and bits
- LittaTrap kit
 - Bracket with masonry bolts
 - Filter box with 4 plastic seals
 - Self driving screws
 - Filter bag
 - Installation guide
- Special grate lifting tool or crowbar (optional)

Procedure for installation:

1. Choose a time of day for installation when traffic volumes are low.
2. Park in close proximity to the catchpit.
3. Cone off and neutralise hazard: isolate catchpit from pedestrian and vehicular traffic with road cones stationed at least 1.5m out from catchpit edge. Put up barrier arms between road cones
4. Hook and pull up the grate using a special grate lifting tool or crowbar (if the grate is missing, report immediately to your local council). Working with another person, lift the grate onto the kerbside. Take care to avoid falling or dropping anything into the catchpit.
5. Install LittaTrap as per Stormwater360 supplied instructions or instructional video.
6. Replace the grate by working with another person to lift it into place.
7. Recover road cones and barrier arms

Maintenance

Maintenance is by the school, led by the school's Drains To Harbour programme lead teacher. Children participating in the programme should be present when the LittaTrap is lifted out for inspection.

Equipment required for maintenance:

- Gloves
- Safety boots
- Road Cones
- Special grate lifting tool
- Container to transfer contents of LittaTrap into
- Groundsheet for sorting contents of LittaTrap.

Procedure for maintenance:

1. Choose a time of day for maintenance when traffic volumes are low.
2. Ensure school children are located on kerbside, at least 1.5m from the catchpit.
3. Isolate catchpit from pedestrian and vehicular traffic with road cones stationed at least 1.5m out from catchpit edge.
4. Hook and pull up the grate using special grate lifting tool (if the grate is missing, report immediately to your local council). Put grate on kerbside. Take care to avoid falling or dropping anything in the catchpit.
5. Lift LittaTrap out of pit using handles.
6. Tip contents out of LittaTrap into suitable watertight receptacle.
7. Replace LittaTrap securely back into surrounding frame and seal.
8. Record the date of the maintenance event and the specific quantities of plastics, organics and other debris found in the LittaTrap. Take photos of the sorted contents of the LittaTrap. Provide this information to your Whitebait Connection Coordinator.

Material disposal

Material recovered from LittaTraps is intended to be sorted and audited by students for educational purposes.

Organic material

Organic material such as sediment and leaves should preferably be composted onsite by the school.

Recyclable material

Recyclable material must be put out for recyclable collection.

Landfill waste

Non-organic or recyclable material must be disposed of to landfill. The school is responsible for disposing of this material appropriately during the period the school has agreed responsibility for maintaining the asset.

Animal Ethical Considerations and our Kaupapa Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|----------------|------|--|
| WBC Operations | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh |

All of our WBC experiences are to be of the 'no-take' kind! We think it's important for us to role-model the ethic of kaitiakitanga and utilise our resources for conservation purposes to be able to effectively communicate our messages. All native animals caught or handled during field trips or classroom experiences must be returned to the stream alive after observation and being photographed.

However, If you ever catch pest fish as part of your stream studies you MUST NOT return them to the stream – it is illegal. You must dispose of them humanely – either put them in the freezer straight away if possible (great if you can then use as plant fertiliser) or 'release them' onto the grass away from the waterway and try to squish or iki (spike) them quickly to minimise any suffering. Please see the [section 2.2. on gear sanitisation and biosecurity policy](#) for more information.

When trapping fish please follow best practice guidelines outlined in our WBC Freshwater Monitoring Handbook, keep the fish alive in well oxygenated fish tanks for observation and return to the stream alive no later than two hours after capture.

When netting and collecting macroinvertebrates, please model best practices and keep the invertebrates in the shade when they are in the trays. Return ALL invertebrates to the waterway after study, even if they have perished during observation.



Figure 2. Please keep invertebrates in the shade during observation and return to the stream afterwards.

Antihistamine Use Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|-----------------|------|---|
| MTS Operational | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Formal procedure for antihistamine administration.

Our team may carry over the counter antihistamine for personal first aid items. Coordinators do not administer any medication without specific written permission. We must ensure that we have captured information and increase identification of participants with known allergies and anaphylaxis via our pre – site assessment forms and/or other forms. Find out if there is an 'action plan for anaphylaxis' in place as part of our notes for medical/swimming management.

Smoking Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|----------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operational | 2021 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

This policy applies to any Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust independent contractor, trustee, coordinator, regional coordinator or volunteer (including rangatahi/taitamariki).

We define uniform as a programme tee shirt/singlet and/or Wette Wetsuit or EMR rash shirt

- No smoking or vaping in front of any participants or members of the public during school or public event delivery
- No smoking or vaping while on school grounds or while in public in uniform
- Independent contractor, trustee, coordinator, regional coordinator are to refrain from smoking or vaping in front of any volunteers or while in uniform
- We look to provide incentives and support for those struggling with nicotine addiction and making gains in the area above

Trailer Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|----------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operational | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

For coordinators/ contractors/ trustees who will be towing/ storing MTSCT trailers.

Before you tow:

- Make sure you have your own third-party vehicle insurance and your vehicle is suitable for towing the trailer (load, towbar rating etc.). The 'wet weight' of the trailer is estimated to be a maximum of 750kg. More information on towing can be found [here](#)
- Ensure that you read those parts of the [NZ Road Code pertaining to towing trailers](#)
- Please make sure you familiarise yourself with this policy

Before moving off with your trailer:

- Check that you have lifted the stands and the pin is securely in place
- Check that you have connected your trailer to your tow bar
- Check that the lock pin is in place and locked down so that trailer cannot pop off tow bar
- Check that you have fitted your D pin shackle with chain
- Connect your lights and make sure they are working

When driving your trailer:

- Ensure that you read those parts of the NZ Road Code pertaining to towing trailers and note the maximum speed for a light vehicle towing a trailer on the open road is 90 km/h. Warning – Be aware of the reduced stopping distance of the vehicle due to the weight of the trailer
- Make sure you follow the road rules - Coordinators are liable for all fines incurred while towing the trailer

Care of trailer:

- Make sure your trailer is kept locked (tow pin and trailer contents) and secure at all times
- Regularly clean your trailer with freshwater (once a week when in use and before storing your trailer, mild detergent can be used to remove any mould and this should be removed regularly)

- When storing the trailer for long periods, cover the trailer with a tarpaulin to protect the canvas and signwriting from UV degradation, and keep an eye out for pests and carry out pest control if needed, e.g., rats, mice & ants might move in

Report any problems with the trailer to the Regional Coordinator.

Training

Before training

- Coordinator reads through and familiarises himself/herself with this policy.
- Coordinator to provide evidence of full driver's licence.

Coordinator is able to demonstrate

- Knowledge of road rules when towing a trailer (speed and weight limit, load distribution, following distance, length of safety chain)
- Correct connection of trailer to vehicle
 - Safety Chain hooked up with D-shackle
 - Lock pin in place and locked
 - Electronics connected and checked
 - Jockey Wheel up
 - Trailer stands are up and secured
 - Load is secured and loaded correctly; all sides tied down
- Correct parking of trailer
 - Secure (and level) parking spot
 - How to put stands down (EMR) and adjust jockey wheel for secure storage
 - Disconnection of safety chain and electronics
- Knowledge of trailer care and tyre pressure
- Desirable: Demonstration of trailer backing

Scenarios to be discussed

- Secure storage of trailer (long term and overnight)
- Parking options and planning for on-site delivery (e.g. Goat Island, Maitai Bay, Reotahi) - safety cones?
- Safe loading of trailer
- Insurance and accidents

It is the coordinator's responsibility to make sure the vehicle towing the trailer is safe and suitable for towing the EMR trailer (towball rating, towing capacity, rated safety chain and shackle).

Safe towing guidelines from NZTA:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode/heavy-vehicle-road-code/road-code/about-driving/key-driving-skills/towing/>

Safe towing guidelines

- You must be able to see behind the towed trailer or vehicle. If you can't see behind with your rear-view mirrors, you may need to fit a special mirror.
- There must be no more than 4 metres between your vehicle and the trailer or vehicle it is towing.
- At night, the back of the trailer/towed vehicle must show a red light.
- If you're towing a disabled vehicle at night, its headlights must light up the towing connection.
- Remember, you may be slower than other traffic when towing. Check behind often to see if other vehicles are held up behind you.
- If the road is winding or narrow and vehicles can't pass you, stop at a safe place and let them pass.
- Leave more space than usual between your vehicle and the vehicle in front, so that others can pass you.
- Remember that the added weight behind you means you will need more space to stop.
- The towing connection and safety chain or cable that holds the trailer/vehicle must be safe and strong.
- If you are towing another vehicle without a rigid towing system, eg with a rope or a strop, the maximum allowable speed is 50km/h.
- If you are towing another vehicle with a rigid towing connection, the maximum is 90km/h.

Privacy Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Governance | 2022 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Privacy Statement for Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust.

Objective

Describe the potential collection, use, disclose and protection of personal information of individuals.

Introduction

Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust complies with the New Zealand Privacy Act 2020 (the Act) when dealing with personal information. Personal information is information about an identifiable individual (a natural person).

This policy sets out how we will collect, use, disclose and protect your personal information. This policy does not limit or exclude any of your rights under the Act. If you wish to seek further information on the Act, see www.privacy.org.nz.

Changes to this statement

We may change this policy by uploading a revised policy onto the website. The change will apply from the date that we upload the revised policy. This statement was last updated in September 2022.

Who do we collect your personal information from

We collect personal information about you from:

- you, when you provide that personal information to us, including via the website and any related service, through any registration or subscription process, through any contact with us (e.g., telephone call or email), or when you buy or use our services and products
- third parties where you have authorised this or the information is publicly available.

If possible, we will collect personal information from you directly.

How we use your personal information

We will use your personal information:

- to verify your identity
- to provide services and products to you
- to market our services and products to you, including contacting you electronically (e.g., by text or email for this purpose)
- to improve the services and products that we provide to you
- to bill you and to collect money that you owe us, including authorising and processing credit card transactions
- to respond to communications from you, including a complaint
- to conduct research and statistical analysis (on an anonymised basis)
- to protect and/or enforce our legal rights and interests, including defending any claim for any other purpose authorised by you or the Act.

Disclosing your personal information

We do not sell, trade, or otherwise transfer to outside parties your personally identifiable information

However, we may disclose your personal information to:

- Another entity within our group
- any business that supports our services and products, including any person that hosts or maintains any underlying IT system or data centre that we use to provide the website or other services and products
- other third parties (for anonymised statistical information)
- a person who can require us to supply your personal information (e.g., a regulatory authority)
- any other person authorised by the Act or another law (e.g., a law enforcement agency)
- any other person authorised by you.
- A business that supports our services and products may be located outside New Zealand (for example, IT and cloud services). This may mean your personal information is held and processed outside New Zealand.

Protecting your personal information

We will take reasonable steps to keep your personal information safe from loss, unauthorised activity, or other misuse.

Accessing and correcting your personal information

Subject to certain grounds for refusal set out in the Act, you have the right to access your readily retrievable personal information that we hold and to request a correction to your personal information. Before you exercise this right, we will need evidence to confirm that you are the individual to whom the personal information relates.

In respect of a request for correction, if we think the correction is reasonable and we are reasonably able to change the personal information, we will make the correction. If we do not

make the correction, we will take reasonable steps to note on the personal information that you requested the correction.

If you want to exercise either of the above rights, email us at privacy@whitebaitconnection.co.nz. Your email should provide evidence of who you are and set out the details of your request (e.g., the personal information, or the correction, that you are requesting).

We may charge you our reasonable costs of providing to you copies of your personal information or correcting that information.

Internet use

- While we take reasonable steps to maintain secure internet connections, if you provide us with personal information over the internet, the provision of that information is at your own risk
- If you post your personal information on the website's (message board/chat room), you acknowledge and agree that the information you post is publicly available.
- If you follow a link on our website to another site, the owner of that site will have its own privacy policy relating to your personal information. We suggest you review that site's privacy policy before you provide personal information.

Cookie policy

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Police Vetting Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|--|
| MTSCT Governance | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust Police Vetting Policy

Definition

The New Zealand Police Vetting Service provides criminal history checks and other relevant information on potential and current employees, volunteers and vocational trainees to Approved Agencies that provide care to children and vulnerable members of society.

Purpose

To provide an informative policy for the undertaking of police vetting the volunteers and staff of Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT). The creation of such policies enable MTSCT to remain consistent with the most recent Child Protection Policy for the Ministry of Education. This policy is consistent with our Child Protection Policy (see appendix of SMP)

Background

As an organisation frequently contracted to schools, all endorsed coordinators are required to undertake the New Zealand Police Vetting process under the requirements of the Child Protection Policy for the Ministry of Education. By undertaking this process, schools and parents/caregivers can be assured that MTSCT staff will take all appropriate action to provide a safe learning environment where all children are protected from any abuse, harm or neglect.

There may be cases where volunteers of MTSCT may be the sole supervisors of children, such as when providing transport of children to and from a field trip. Such circumstances will require the volunteer to undertake the New Zealand Police Vetting process to provide assurance that the children are in safe hands. This is ultimately the decision of the school as to what their policy is but it is important for MTSCT to be aware that the question needs to be asked.

Guidelines

All new MTSCT staff (coordinators not volunteers), whether permanent or seasonal (coordinators and Regional Coordinators in the role of delivering our programmes to schools and communities), who are likely to interact with children and young people are required to

undergo successful police vetting and safety checks prior to confirmation of their appointment. This is in accordance with our Child Protection Policy 2022.

Trustees of MTSCCT are to be satisfactory police vetted.

Volunteers are not required to be vetted unless, MTSCCT makes a risk assessment on the event/programme and MTSCCT has identified it would be best practice to do so. This might be when volunteers may be the sole supervisors of children or for an overnight camp hosted by MTSCCT or when the school/group requires it.

Strict procedures are in place to protect the privacy of those being vetted to avoid inappropriate information being released; vetting results (not the person in question) will be discussed at MTSCCT meetings.

Which offences are relevant? Violent or sexual offences are not acceptable. In terms of other offences, the factors to be considered are:

- When the offence occurred, age of offending, severity, pattern of offending;
- Rights of the applicant.

Police Vetting Process

- Prior planning is essential as the vetting process is approximately one month. The New Zealand Police Vetting form will be made available ASAP to be completed and returned to the manager as soon as possible for further action.
- The resultant vetting record will then be sent to the relevant Co-Director who will advise the volunteer whether or not their vetting record is satisfactory. Information regarding the results of the police vet will be treated in accordance with our Approved Agency Agreement
- The Co-Directors will undertake the vetting via the police website (we are an approved agency with the NZ Police).
- If a vet receives a police stamp indicating that adverse information is held about that person, then The Trust must not act until the person has had an opportunity to validate the information.
- All information shall be confidential.
- Vetting is compulsory, but consent forms need to be signed.
- A record of the vet having taken place must be kept.
- If the vet does not reveal any criminal offence or concerns by the police, the vet should be destroyed and a record of its destruction kept by The Trust.
- If the vet reveals offences or concerns by the police then consideration needs to be given as to whether the information should affect the position using the considerations established by The Trustees.

- Unsatisfactory police vets (with regard to existing coordinators) will result in removal of Trust endorsement and the person in question may be removed from endorsed coordinator list.

More information on the police vetting process can be found here:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/vetting-process>

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|--|
| MTSCT Governance | 2021 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Introduction

This section outlines our management of drug and alcohol-related risks in our adventure activity. All endorsed contractors/coordinators of the MTSCT programmes: Experiencing Marine Reserves and Whitebait Connection are expected to complete a satisfactory police vet and safety check from September 2021 prior to commencement of delivery of the above programmes.

Policy

We will operate a workplace free of impairment from drugs and alcohol.

Risk Assessment

Snorkelling is determined as a safety sensitive task.

Activity Risk

- We've assessed our activity level of risk as low
 - We snorkel only
 - We snorkel in favourable conditions
 - We use body boards as floatation devices
 - We snorkel with safe ratios

Workforce risk

- We've assessed our workforce risk as low
 - We operate as a team, utilising the skills of our community to increase our supervision system
 - We vet all our contractors prior to commencement to determine any possible history of problems with drugs and alcohol.
 - Most of our team are volunteers before they become contractors, so are well known prior to appointment
 - MTSCT has been in operation for 20 years and has never had any alcohol or drug related incidents.
 - Surveillance and monitoring is in place, as our Programme Coordinators are under the constant scrutiny of teachers, parents and other team members
 - In the information provided to the schools/parents, we notify them that the school should provide adequate adult 'supervisors' to comply with EMR's ratio

requirements. These supervisors need appropriate skills to supervise a group of students in the water. Appropriate skills are defined in the snorkel guidelines as being able to assist and supervise the students in-water and are expected to be confident swimmers, fit and healthy and free from the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Assessment Conclusion

Impairment due to drugs and alcohol is a minor hazard in the organisation and its programmes.

Procedures & Staff Responsibilities

The MTSCT policy is to operate a workplace free of impairment from drugs and alcohol.

This will involve staff:

- Avoiding drugs and alcohol during working hours; (Note: With prior approval, staff may drink alcohol at social events in designated areas. Staff are responsible for remaining in a condition to be able to get home safely and for ensuring they're not in breach of this policy on their return to work).
- Carefully managing their alcohol consumption in evenings before working, particularly when scheduled to perform a safety-sensitive task, or when they could be required to do so at short notice;
- Disclosing any increase or potential increase in the drug and alcohol hazard to the Poutokomanawa – Co-Director marine lead or MTSCT Trust chairperson;
- Monitoring each other, particularly when taking medication and after drinking alcohol the previous evening;
- Bringing concerns to the attention of Poutokomanawa – Co-Director marine lead immediately;
- Standing down from safety-sensitive roles if there is doubt about the amount of drugs or alcohol consumed the previous evening;

Drug and Alcohol Testing

It is the responsibility of all contractors/coordinators to identify concerns about an individual's immediate ability to perform their job and take appropriate steps. Where necessary, they will advise the Co-Director who will investigate any staff member who is suspected of breaching this policy, pending investigation and a decision on appropriate consequences including potential disciplinary action.

Administration of the policy

If contractors/coordinators or any MTSCT member, or any person associated with that member, volunteers and any other person(s) engaged in work for the MTSCT programmes arrive at the workplace and you have reasonable cause to suspect that they are under the influence of

alcohol or drugs, the Co-Director shall immediately remove him/her from the safety sensitive activity of snorkelling to a shore-based role. If there is any doubt about whether they are, or are not impaired, we will err on the side of caution and remove him/her from any safety sensitive role.

Unexpected circumstances can arise when an off-duty contractor/coordinator is requested to work. It is the contractor/coordinator responsibility to refuse the request and ask that the request be directed to another person if the member feels unfit due to the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Contractors/coordinators who are prescribed medication are expected to ask their doctor if the medication will have any potential negative effect on job performance. They are required to report to the Co-Directors if there is any potential risk, limitation or restriction for whatever reason that may require modification of duties or temporary reassignment, and provide appropriate medical verification on any restrictions in performance of their duties.

If a contractor/coordinator believes the Co-Directors or other senior MTSCT member is in violation of this policy, they are encouraged to get a second opinion where possible. They are also expected to notify the MTSCT chairperson.

In support of those who may have developed or are developing chemical dependence, all contractors/coordinators or any MTSCT member, or any person associated with that member, volunteers and any other person(s) engaged in work for the MTSCT programmes, are required to document and report any violations of this policy. Any contractor/coordinator not complying with this is enabling the dependence. Enabling behaviour leads to ongoing health and safety concerns for an addicted individual and those around him or her.

We communicate well with each other and expect our policy to be easy to enact without further documented procedures.

Managing the drug and alcohol hazard with clients

We will not permit a person to participate in snorkelling if we believe the person is affected by drugs or alcohol such that they may be a hazard to themselves or others.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary procedure will follow a four step progression:

1. Investigate suspicion or complaint
2. Removal from safety sensitive tasks
3. Warning with 1 week suspension
4. Termination on contract

Reviewing our policy

The MTSCT policy is to review our hazard assessment annually as part of H & S review. If the drug and alcohol hazard has increased in significance, we will revise our policy to ensure that the hazard is managed.

Difficult People Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|--|
| MTSCT Governance | 2021 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

It is the purpose of this policy to ensure our events are a positive experience for all participants. In acknowledgement that a range of people engage in our events, the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) will ensure a positive culture is set for the event and clear expectations of the day are in place.

To this end MTSCT will

- Refuse people who do not follow instructions or comply with our Safety Management Systems (SMS)
- Refuse people at events requiring registration who have done a 'no show' in the past
- Give coordinators the authority to deny participation in any activity if participants :
 - cause unnecessary stress to the organiser
 - behave inappropriately
 - are under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - carry out online bullying
 - fail to comply with instructions
 - fail to comply with our SMS

Participants who are refused participation and wish to complain or participants who have been affected by the behaviour of others, will be advised of the MTSCT complaints process

Complaints/feedback

Our complaints procedure is on our website, and can be found here

 [2024 MTSCT Complaints Policy.pdf](#)

MTSCT also has an on-line safety complaints/feedback link to trigger review of SMS www.mountaintosea.org.nz/health-and-safety

Participant complaints are received via our programme websites, participant evaluation forms and any other way of communication to the programme/regional coordinator or co-directors or

direct to the Chairperson. Staff complaints are received via programme reports, communications or direct to the Chairperson (refer to complaint policy on websites)

The complaints procedure is also advised on the volunteer form. Complaints may trigger the review of the Safety Management Plan (SMP) or relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Child Protection Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|----------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operational | 2022 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - National Child Protection Officer - Samara Nicholas |

Purpose

The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) www.mountianstosea.org.nz and its programmes 'Experiencing Marine Reserves' www.emr.org.nz and the Whitebait Connection www.whitebaitconnection.co.nz are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. This policy applies to all contractors/coordinators, defined as any MTSCT member, or any person associated with that member, volunteers and any other person(s) engaged in work for or delivery of the MTSCT programmes, referred to here on as 'our team'. When working with schools, our Child protection Policy is implemented in conjunction with the schools policy.

We do not define ourselves as a children's worker. A children's worker works in, or provides a regulated service and their work involves regular or overnight contact with a child or children. However, we do regularly engage with children during our school delivery and public community engagement events and have developed this policy as a result of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

This policy recognises 'our teams' responsibility to promote safe practices and well-being as well as to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in or associated with MTSCT operations and activities. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect all children and young people, whatever their culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socioeconomic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity, from all forms of harm.
- Respect and promote the rights and feelings of children and young people.
- Raise awareness of the importance of our role in maintaining the safety, welfare, and interests of any child and young person that staff or volunteers come into contact with, through their work.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and young people and protect them from abuse.
- Provide guidelines, training, support and supervision to staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.

- Identify procedures for staff and volunteers to follow, should a suspected case arise or an accusation be made about inappropriate behaviour by any person, by providing training, support, and guidance to staff and volunteers.
- Work in partnership with children and young people and parents/caregivers along with other organisations and agencies to promote the welfare, health and development of children and young people.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and procedures.

INTRODUCTION

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people and families in their work, including those who do not have a specific role in relation to safeguarding children and young people, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers must comply with this policy and the attached Appendices

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this policy

- Child – any child or young person aged under 17 years, and who is not married or in a civil union.
- Child Abuse - the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. Forms of Child Abuse
Emotional abuse occurs when a child or young person’s emotional, psychological, or social wellbeing and sense of worth is continually battered. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning or development. Physical abuse can be caused from punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning, or throwing the child or young person. It can also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family. Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older, or more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose.
- Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children and young people are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse or neglect.
- Oranga Tamariki - also known as the Ministry for Children is the government department responsible for the well-being of children and young people, specifically children and young people at risk of harm, youth offenders and children and young people of the State.
- Safeguarding - the action that is taken to promote the welfare of young people and protect them from harm as well as help manage the risk of unsuitable persons entering the children and young people’s workforce.
- Safety check - means verifying identity and gathering information through application forms, face to face conversations, police vetting, and reference checks.

- Whistleblowing – is the term used when a person passes on information concerning wrongdoing via an open, transparent and safe working environment where people feel able to speak up.
- Vetting - means the formal process of obtaining checks from another agency, e.g., the Police vetting service, criminal record checks.

Defining child abuse

Child Abuse

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person". The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse and these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a checklist.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child 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. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations. It also includes seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, kissing, touching, masturbation, molesting, sexual assault) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in looking at or production of images of sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: of action, emotion or basic needs.

RELATED DOCUMENT, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Children's Act 2014 Crimes Act 1961 (Section 195A)

- Crimes Amendment Act (No 3) 2011 Films, Videos, and Publications Classifications Act 1993 Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Privacy Act 1993
- POLICY Recruitment and Training

All new MTSC staff (coordinators not volunteers), whether permanent or seasonal (coordinators and Regional Coordinators in the role of delivering our programmes to schools and communities), who are likely to interact with children and young people are required to undergo police vetting and safety checks prior to confirmation of their appointment. Refer to appendix 1. Existing MTSC are to be re-checked every 3 years (including police vet). Samara Nicholas is the national child protection officer.

We require all our Regional Providers organisations to identify who their Regional Child Protection Lead (CPL) is. A Child Protection Lead (CPL) needs to be able to observe programme delivery on the ground. All CPL's need some baseline training to upskill and check their own systems are sufficient (ideally you will have a CPL that is involved in both EMR and WBC delivery or you might have to have separate CPL representing a programme each). All WBC/EMR staff are required to sign (via your annual Health and safety mandatory quiz or signing the document direct) a 'Code of Conduct' and be rechecked including police vet every three years.

We require all identified CPL's register for a FREE online 'Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport'

<https://sporttutor.nz/pages/description.jsf?menuId=1104#/users/@self/catalogues/1834747/courses/1890609/description?menuId=1104&locale=en-GB#/?dashboardId=1815579> as a minimum requirement or there is a slightly higher level webinar with Safeguarding Children direct called Recognising & Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect for a fee. We strongly recommend the 1.5 hours long 'Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport' online course for all EMR and WBC Coordinators.

CPL's meet once every six months and keep any concerns in a central location (MTSC Restricted Access Google Drive).

We strongly recommend the 1.5 hours long 'Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport' online course for all EMR and WBC Coordinators. It's free and can be done at any time. All Regional Coordinators will receive child or young person protection training appropriate for their role and operational level.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers

Our team is aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes any inappropriate contact with children. When working with schools our team also agrees to adhere to the schools 'Child Protection Policy'. The overall supervision of students getting changed into their wetsuits and or other equipment is the responsibility of the school. The school is responsible for making sure any of our activities (snorkelling or stream investigation for example) are not in breach with the schools Child Protection Policy.

Volunteers are not required to be vetted unless, MTSCCT makes a risk assessment on the event/programme and MTSCCT has identified it would be best practise to do so (Poor Knight Annual Trip).

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse, and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.

Allegations and Complaints

Any allegation or concern that a child or young person may have been harmed or abused must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

Any allegation or concern that a staff member or volunteer may have behaved in a manner that has harmed or abused a child or young person must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

In situations where a staff member or volunteer is alleged to have caused harm or abuse to a child or young person, and where an investigation is initiated, or likely to be initiated by the NZ Police and/or Oranga Tamariki, the staff member or volunteer will be temporarily suspended until an outcome has been achieved. Suspension is not punitive but a safety measure for both the staff member or volunteer and the child or young person.

In the case of an allegation where the NZ Police and/or Oranga Tamariki are not involved, the staff member or volunteer may be required to undertake alternative duties to avoid direct contact with children and young people until an outcome has been achieved.

PROCEDURES Recruitment and Training

When working with school groups, if our team have concerns of abuse, they are to inform the teacher or Designated Person(s) for Child Protection in charge on behalf of the school/group, so the issue can be dealt with in conjunction with the schools 'Child Protection Policy'. We will regularly discuss this policy at our annual training wananga and will review our policy every three years.

The process of filling staff and positions requiring contact or interaction with children and young people should include:

- a. having written role descriptions
- b. following up on referees
- c. interviewing preferred candidate/s
- d. undertaking safety checks of the preferred candidate/s

In addition to the pre-selection safety checks, the child or young person protection process must include subsequent monitoring and training of staff and volunteers in order to:

- a. ensure that staff and volunteers are working safely and effectively with children and young people
- b. identify and respond to any unacceptable behaviour or practices
- c. enable staff and volunteers to analyse their own behaviour and practices against MTSCT Safeguarding
- d. respond in a positive way to concerns raised about any staff or volunteer behaviour, e.g., via training to improve practices.

RESPOND - RECORD - CONSULT - REPORT/MONITOR approach

Should be implemented at all times.

Respond

If there is an immediate risk of harm to the child or young person, emergency medical treatment is needed, or a crime against a child or young person has been committed, staff or volunteers should call 111 and inform MTSCT Co-Directors. If an allegation is against a MTSCT Co-Director, inform the MTSCT chairperson.

If a child or young person makes a disclosure, react calmly and show that you are listening and concerned.

Take what the child or young person has said seriously and allow the child or young person to continue at their own pace, without interrupting.

Do not give assurances of confidentiality but explain that the information will need to be passed on to those that need to know. Tell the child or young person what will happen next and offer reassurance that the issue will be taken seriously.

Keep questions to an absolute minimum, only to establish and clarify what the child or young person is saying and not to investigate; this is the role of the NZ Police and/or Oranga Tamariki.

MTSCT supports 'whistleblowing' for the protection of a child or young person. MTSCT will support staff or volunteers who report any behaviour or practice that may contravene this policy and/or pose a possible risk to children or young people.

Record

When allegations or disclosures occur, make a comprehensive record of what was said and done. The record should include the following:

- a. a verbatim record of the child or young person's account of what occurred, in their own words, which should not include the assumptions or opinions of others. This record could be used later in a criminal trial and needs to be as accurate as possible.
- b. a description of any visible injury.
- c. the date, time, and place of the alleged incident, of the conversation, and any other potentially useful information.

Transfer all notes to Report Form keeping all original notes attached to the form, as they may be needed as evidence.

Following an allegation or disclosure, MTSCT National Child Protection Officer must be informed as soon as practicable, detailing what has happened and what (if any) actions have been taken in response to the incident.

Never work alone, nor investigate, nor question an alleged offender or contact the child or young person's family without prior approval from Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police, and only in consultation with MTSCT's National Child Protection Officer.

Report/Monitor

Once an Incident Report Form has been submitted to the National Child Protection Officer, they will assess whether a Report of Concern should be made to Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police. The National Child Protection Officer will seek guidance from Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police as to what further actions MTSCT and/or the club are permitted to take, if any.

Where permitted, the National Child Protection Officer will advise all parties of the process and progress, which may include one or more of the following:

- a. informing parents, staff, volunteers and any organisation responsible for the child or young person.
- b. talking to the child or young person.
- c. contacting the alleged offender.

MTSCT will not enter into any settlement agreement where a child or young person's safety and/or protection is a concern, i.e., where a settlement agreement contradicts a culture of safeguarding and child protection.

In the instance a child, young person and/or the alleged party leaves MTSCT, while a complaint is in progress or where a complaint arises after their departure, the National Child Protection Officer in consultation with the trustees and relevant authorities shall determine what actions will be taken to uphold the intent of this policy.

MTSCT's SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

MTSCT and its staff recognise that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and will ensure that staff and volunteers;

1. Are familiar with, and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
2. Promote best safeguarding practices for staff, volunteers, children and young people.
3. Are supported to meet MTSCT's safeguarding expectations.
4. Adopt and demonstrate safeguarding as a shared responsibility.
5. Are responsible for their own actions and behaviours, to ensure safe practices at all times.
6. Practices and behaviours are in accordance with MTSCT's safeguarding policies and procedures, making certain any breaches are openly recorded and reported.
7. Are supported by having a code for children and young people. This is their version of their responsibilities and behaviour towards staff, volunteers and other children or young people.
8. Are supported by having a code for parents/caregivers. Refer Appendix D. This is their version of their responsibilities and behaviour towards staff and volunteers, as well as children or young people in their care.
9. Recognise that this Code of Conduct relates to every child and young person, and applies to every staff member or volunteer no matter their position or seniority.

Staff and Volunteers must:

1. Staff only commence MTSCT duties upon completion of all safer recruitment elements including police vetting.
2. Immediately notify the National Child Protection Officer, as soon as practicable, of any changes relating to known or possible criminal charges/convictions during their employment.
3. Recognise that safeguarding is both an individual and shared responsibility amongst all staff and volunteers to uphold practices and behaviours befitting of their role/s as trusted providers of MTSCT services, including but not limited to;
 - a. Always operate in the best interests of children and young people.

- b. Carry out a risk assessment to identify any potential risk to children, young people and staff, and identify appropriate control measures to mitigate the risks.
 - c. Promote an inclusive culture across all areas of diversity.
 - d. Represent the MTSCT programme brands, uniforms and branded equipment
 - e. Complete the required Safeguarding training appropriate for their role.
 - f. Ensure that all communication, behaviour and actions with or around children and young people is positive, and appropriate to their age level of development.
4. Operate in the line of sight and sound of others at all times.
 5. Comply with all statutory regulations and MTSCT policies, procedures and practices in regards to reporting any concerns or noncompliance issues, in a timely manner.
 6. Obtain written parental or caregiver consent prior to:
Overnight stays and/or sleeping arrangements.

Staff and Volunteers must not:

1. Leave children and young people unattended or alone with unauthorised adults.
2. Use their position of trust for any purpose that would be of detriment to a child or young person or their family.
3. Undertake any form of sexual engagement or behaviour in the presence of, between or with any person, particularly those under 18, while accessing or providing MTSCT services, including contact and/or non-contact behaviours.
4. Perform any conduct that may question motivation and/or intentions or be open to perceptions of grooming. This includes but is not exclusive to:
 - a. Giving of personal gifts.
 - b. Encouraging out-of-service/social contact and/or taking a child or young person to out-of-service facilities, e.g., personal home, etc.
 - c. Being secretive or encouraging secrecy amongst others.
 - d. Demonstrating favouritism or exclusion towards children and young people.
5. Initiate or participate in any unnecessary, unwanted or inappropriate physical contact, e.g., boisterous games, personal care (when the person is capable of self-care), unnecessary affection, etc.
6. Use behaviour management outside of organisational requirements, including but not exclusive to:
 - a. Any form of physical punishment/discipline or degrading treatment.
 - b. Any form of emotional abuse including threats, references to diversity differences, withdrawal of care and/or necessities, etc.
7. Attend work in the possession of/under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

MTSCT 's CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

MTSCT recognises that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and will ensure that staff and volunteers encourage children and young people to:

1. Value each other, parents, caregivers, staff and volunteers, and advise them that they may be asked for their views and feedback.
2. Include all children and young people and encourage them to value and embrace differences throughout the MTS activities they are involved in.
3. Abide by the rules to keep them safe, such as keeping out of prohibited areas, not leaving the site or programme without staff permission, adhering to restricted access to certain areas, e.g., bathrooms, changing rooms, etc.
4. Behave appropriately towards each other, staff, volunteers, parents and caregivers.
5. Expect that behaviour falling outside of expectations will be addressed and what this may look like, e.g., time out, phoning parents or caregivers.
6. Take care of themselves and others. Be safe.
7. Tell someone if they or someone else is being treated unfairly or differently and/or if they are worried about someone.

MTSCT'S PARENT & CAREGIVERS SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

MTSCT recognise that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and will ensure that staff and/or volunteers inform parent and caregivers that they:

1. And their child's voice is valued, and they may be asked for their views and/or feedback.
2. Must be contactable or nominate an emergency contact who will be available at all times while their child or young person is involved in MTSCT operations or activities.
3. Should tell someone if they or someone else is being treated differently to this or other MTSCT Codes of Conduct, and/or if they are worried about someone.
4. Are expected to behave in accordance with MTSCT's Code of Conduct at all times.
5. Are expected to behave appropriately and compassionately towards others, including should they be dissatisfied, e.g., a. Remembering staff and volunteers are people too, and some may be young staff or volunteers. b. Not raising voices/using inappropriate language towards staff or volunteers, particularly in the vicinity of children and young people. c. Knowing that any conduct that is or perceived as being, abusive, racist, sexist, bullying, harassing, threatening, etc. is not permitted and may result in service exclusion.
6. Along with MTSCT, are expected to promote inclusivity and will undertake all reasonable steps to accommodate any special needs where practicable and where resources permit.
7. Are encouraged to support the actions taken by staff or volunteers to address inappropriate behaviours that may breach MTSCT's Code of Conduct and also how they may be managed, e.g., a. For children and young people: immediate strategies such as time out, etc. as well as Behavioural Management Plans that incorporate parent or caregivers' involvement and agreement. b. For children and young people and adults:

serious concerns (e.g., illegal behaviour, danger, harm towards self or others, persistent failings to comply, etc.) may result in temporary and/or permanent exclusion.

8. Are required to abide by MTSCT's operational and/or activity requirements
9. Are required to abide by all MTSCT's policies, procedures and practices at all times, including refraining taking, sharing or storing images of children and young people, other than their own, noting:
 - a. MTSCT will create opportunities for imagery to be taken safely.
 - b. How breaching imagery requirements may place others at risk, e.g., from family violence, etc.
10. Remember that safeguarding is a shared responsibility

Contacts

If you, or a child or young person you know is in immediate danger call:
POLICE ON 111

Need to talk? We're here for you. Call freephone:

Ministry for Vulnerable Children 0508 326 459 Lines open 24/7, or email us at contact@mvcot.govt.nz

After 5pm and on weekends social workers are only available for emergency situations, but we still urge you to call so we can assess your needs.

Checks required for new children's workers (recorded on staff personnel file)

- identity verification
- interview
- police vetting
- reference checks
- employment verification check
- seeking information from relevant professional organisations
- a risk assessment that considers the specific child safety related risk.

Recheck every 3 years (recorded on staff personnel file)

- Identity - any names changes
- seeking information
- police vet
- assess risk

Complaints Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|--|
| MTSCT Governance | 2020 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Trustees: Olly Ball, Vince Kerr, Geoff Butturini, Eden Hakaraia, Manuel Springford, Matt Keen, Hilton Leith. |

Policy for complaint handling

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an avenue through which staff, participants and volunteers, and their managers, can resolve work-related complaints as they arise.

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently, effectively and in keeping with our organisational principles.

This policy also provides guidance to our staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

Policy

This policy applies to all staff (paid and volunteer), contractors and our governing body, receiving or managing complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our products, services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust will establish mechanisms to promote fast and efficient resolution of workplace issues.

Staff and volunteers should feel comfortable discussing issues with their manager or contract supervisor in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

All formal avenues for handling grievances will be fully documented and the staff/volunteer's wishes will be taken into account in determining the appropriate steps and actions.

No staff will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this Policy to resolve an issue.

This Policy applies to paid contractors and to volunteer workers.

Organisational commitment

This organisation expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented:

| Who | Commitment | How |
|---|--|--|
| Poutokomanawa/ Co-Director (senior management) or chair | Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution | Report to the governing body on our complaint handling. Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints. Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints. Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly. Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements. Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data. |
| Programme/Regional Managers (may include Poutokomanawa/ Co-Director or chair) | Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices | They identify, prevent and address potential problems before they become formal grievances Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints. Assist people to make a complaint, if needed. Comply with our policy and associated procedures. Provide regular feedback to management and/or the governing body on issues arising from complaints. Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve our complaints management system. Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management. |

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| All staff | Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices. | <p>They attempt to resolve any issues through their immediate supervisor and/or senior management (Poutokomanawa/Co-Directors) through internal processes at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access our complaints process.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly.</p> |
|-----------|--|---|

Terms and Definitions

Complaint

- An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
- As well as complaints being made directly to our organisation, remember that some complaints (or at least negative comments) may be made on social media.
- We also take complaints regarding Health and Safety through our programme websites

Complaint handling/management system.

- All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

Dispute

- An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

Feedback

- Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Grievance

- A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem.

Policy

- A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

Procedure.

- A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

Impartiality.

- The 'investigator' of the complaint is not the person/s being complained about. There is no predetermined result of enquiry or outcome.

Guiding principles & values

To be effective our complaint handling system is modelled on our principles and values of:

- fairness
- accessibility
- responsiveness
- efficiency
- integration into organisational culture
- least disruption to our commitment and responsibility to our participants and funders



Facilitate complaints

People focus

We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling.

Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process and how to access it
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.
- No detriment to people making complaints
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

Accessibility

We will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised, on our website (if available). We will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g., advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

Respond to complaints

Early resolution

Where possible, attempt to resolve any issues through their immediate supervisor and through internal processes at the earliest opportunity.

When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

Fairness and objectivity

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

Responding flexibly

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

Manage the parties to a complaint

Complaints involving multiple agencies

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated.

Where our services are contracted out, we expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. We take complaints not only about the actions of our staff but also the actions of our service providers.

Empowerment of staff

All staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

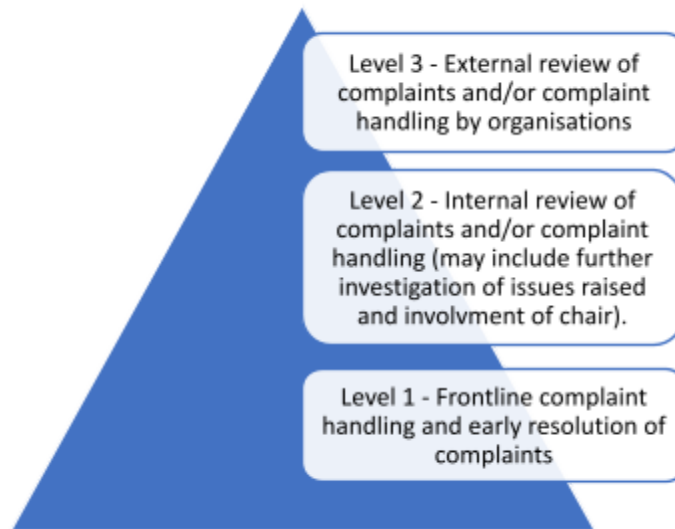
We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:
our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible the health, safety and security of our staff, and our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies).

The three levels of complaint handling



Level 1

We aim to resolve complaints at the first level, the frontline. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

Level 2

Where this is not possible, we may decide to escalate the complaint to senior management (Poutokomanawa/Co-Directors) and/or Chairperson within our organisation. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms: assessment and possible investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made, and/or facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties).

Level 3

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision

Accountability and learning

Analysis and evaluation of complaints

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and the governing trustee board.

We will run regular reports on:

- the number of complaints received

- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints
- systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling.

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to our Co-Directors, management and to our governing trustees, at least annually.

Monitoring of the complaint management system

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

Continuous improvement

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

Procedure for complaint handling

Introduction

When responding to complaints, staff (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with this complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below



1. Receive
 - a. Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information. We will also assign a unique identifier/number to the complaint file.
 - b. The record of the complaint will document:
 - i. Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
 - ii. Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
 - iii. Any other relevant information, and
 - iv. Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.
2. Acknowledge
 - a. We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.
 - b. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g., email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.
3. Assess and investigate

Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control.

Listen to the complainant. Obtain a chronology of events (who, what, why, when, how etc). We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.
- Provide the complainant with plenty of time to ask questions.

- If deemed necessary, provide the staff/volunteer with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken

Investigating the complaint

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

Close the complaint: document and analyse data

Document

We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes

Analyse data

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager, Co-Directors or the Chair.

The Importance of Impartiality (refer to our definition)

It is critical to ensure that the person responsible for carrying out an investigation is impartial. The investigator must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the matter. Staff will often consider that senior management is not sufficiently impartial because of their involvement and role in the workplace.

If such a concern is raised, it's important to consider:

- whether the use of an external investigator is necessary to ensure impartiality;
- whether any conflicts of interest need to be disclosed (e.g., if any individuals are friends outside the workplace); and
- whether the investigator has handled any previous disciplinary matters.

If there is the possibility that a person's contract will be terminated if the allegations are proven as part of an investigation, then you should consider the use of an external investigator to ensure that your investigation and the process followed will stand up in any potential court proceeding.

Kayaking Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | 2023 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Introduction

Mountains to Sea (MTS) kayaking activities usually fall into two different types, engagement events such as community kayak days and scientific investigations (where kayaks are used for saltwater wedge surveys and inanga surveys).

Community engagement activities are usually delivered in collaboration with a kayak provider and a MOU/ event plan in place to establish a clear understanding of how they are going to work together.

Bring your own (BYO) kayaks for engagement activities pose a risk of not being fit for purpose. Equipment failure could take attention away from the supervision structure of the group with provided kayaks. The recommendation is not to use BYO kayaks for participants. The exception might be a small scale event, where there is adequate time built into the event to check these and the kayak provider feels comfortable and can sign off the use of the particular vessel and life jacket as fit for purpose and can still provide safety ratio, this decision would be documented in event plan/pre-site assessment and must be agreed by the kayak provider. The default is no BYO kayaks.

When working with kayak providers that supply kayaks, the kayak provider undertakes the pre-site assessment and risk assessment paperwork. MTS holds the pre-event communication pathway, so communicates the kayak provider's H & S documentation to participants. MTS makes the event plan for the event, which the terms of the event are outlined.

The Mountains to Sea team uses kayaks for salt water wedge surveys etc . Coordinators conducting this work must have participated in a kayak safety workshop. Gear must be checked in the pre-site assessment as being fit for purpose. Any freshwater science investigations ensure adherence to the Flatwater Floating and paddling best practice guide and additional participants/community volunteers must sign the kayak liability waiver form.

Our science activities do not exceed 200m distance from shore and are in sheltered and enclosed areas, so these activities do not fall subject to the Health and Safety at Work (Adventure Activities) Regulations 2016 but must adhere to best practise.

Sometimes external participants who are not Mountains to Sea Coordinators may participate in Mountains to Sea led kayak activities for scientific investigations and surveys. These participants must read and sign the Mountains to Sea kayak safety and liability form before participating in the kayaking activity.

 2024 MTS Kayak Liability Waiver Form.pdf

Safety Guidelines

- Participants must wear a properly fitted personal flotation device (PFD/ lifejacket) at all times while kayaking. For information on PFD types refer to: <http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/lifejackets/lifejacket-types.asp>
- Follow the instructions of event controller/coordinators with regards to designated areas
- Do not consume alcohol or drugs before or during kayaking activities.
- Be aware of your surroundings, including other watercraft, wildlife, and natural hazards
- BYO kayaks and equipment are not under the responsibility of MTSC and we cannot confirm their safety.

Participants need to bring to the activity

- Clothing and footwear appropriate for the activity and location e.g. swimwear such as rash tops and/or wetsuits, footwear that can easily be removed or drained free of water, no cotton clothing or clothing likely to become heavy or limit movement when wet.
- Sunhat, sunscreen, warm hat - depending on the time of year and weather conditions.
- Any personal medication that could be needed during the activity i.e. EpiPen, asthma inhaler.
- Clothing for after the activity.

Cancellation Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

WBC coordinators reserve the right to cancel any activity if participants have not met their obligations, as prior outlined, or if Health & Safety is being compromised on the day.

On some occasions, events may need to be cancelled or postponed at the last minute, due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Always have on hand the mobile phone number of the teacher/group leader and any other parties (e.g. volunteers) that you are working with (best to get these at initial planning meetings). Ensure that any cancellations or postponement messages are made directly to the teacher/group leader responsible for communicating the message to the wider group so that you can be sure they have received the message.

If they don't pick up the phone, leave a message explaining the decision with a request that they answer back via text or phone by a specified time (prior to when the event was supposed to start) to confirm they have received the message. A follow up phone call should be made if they do not ring back within the specified time and contact efforts should be continued until confirmation is received – this avoids messages not getting through and people getting very upset and let down!

Dangerous Land Animal Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

If an uncontrolled animal is encountered, the MTS leader should immediately assess whether the animal poses a potential risk to the coordinator or group. Examples of dangerous animals include uncontrolled dogs off-leash, cattle, horses, wild pigs or swans.

If the animal poses a potential risk and the risk can not be mitigated or eliminated (f.ex. by walking around a paddock where stock is present), the MTS activity has to be terminated or halted until the situation is resolved. If the animal encountered is acting in a threatening way, and cannot be immediately removed or contained, all children should be gathered together with adults on the outside protecting them whilst moving slowly towards a safe area e.g. bus.

If the dog owner is present, they can be asked if the dog is a threat (temperament) and asked to put on the lead if in a public area where dogs must be on a lead. If the owner is not present, or is not being helpful, and the dog is a threat, local animal control services should be rung immediately. For an aggressive unsupervised dog, Adopt STOP- STAND- LEAVE for an alternative site. Return to vehicles or bus, call dog management

Potential hazardous animals should be recorded on the pre-site assessment. Site selection for field trips should always be sensible.

Dangerous People Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Schools have their own policies on how to deal with dangerous people, bullying, abuse etc. based on [NZ Police guidelines](#). However, if a dangerous person arrives on a site where a WBC leader is leading an outdoor experience, the school may look to the WBC leader for guidance. If a person is acting in an inappropriate or threatening way, will not leave and cannot be immediately removed or contained, all children should be gathered together with adults on the outside protecting them whilst moving slowly towards a safe area e.g. bus, and WBC leader phones the police.

Gazebo Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | 2018 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

In response to a series of gazebo related incidents we have created the following Gazebo policy.

- Gazebos supplied by MTSCT - WBC or EMR MUST be pegged down no matter what the wind conditions
- During windy conditions we MUST peg and tie down the gazebo (to cars, trailers or water filled containers)
- Erected gazebos MUST not be left unmanned at any time

Site Recce and Working Alone in the Field Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operations | | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine |

Definition

A site recce is described by MTSCT as “when a site is visited and assessed by a coordinator for its suitability for a group experience/field trip”. ‘Recce’ is the informal term for ‘reconnaissance’.

Purpose

To provide informative safe operating procedures and important Health & Safety considerations that local, regional and national WBC programme coordinators need to consider when undertaking any WBC site recce’s or activities that don’t have a researched Health & Safety Risk Assessment Form (RAF), such as; a site recce, collecting samples for a classroom session, or setting fish traps in preparation of a field trip.

Background

Undertaking any WBC activity that isn’t a group activity with a RAF could include; performing a site recce, collecting samples for a classroom session, or setting fish traps in preparation of a field trip. In this case, the coordinator must fill in a Field Intentions Form (FIF) (unless using a location sharing app) prior to conducting the site visit. Ideally, a coordinator should not undertake any of these activities on their own. However, there may be times when a coordinator must do so. In this case, there are a number of factors which should be considered before heading out and undertaking any WBC activity on their own.

Preparation

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure the Health & Safety of all persons when undertaking any WBC activity on their own.

Prior to doing so

- Ensure you have obtained permission from the appropriate person to enter the site, whether it be privately or publicly owned.
- Ensure you inform a colleague of your whereabouts (use a buddy system or Find my Friends App).
- Check the forecast for any potential adverse weather.
- Try to research the site first to gain prior knowledge.

- Ensure you inform the school and/or manager of the planned schedule, and when you expect to return.
- Construct a robust communication plan and itinerary and stick to it, within reason.
- Always plan your route of entry and exit.
- The [Field Intentions Form](#) will guide you through this process in the form of a checklist.

Safe Operating Procedure

There are a variety of risks associated for a coordinator when undertaking any WBC activity on their own. These include getting lost, injury, drowning, hypothermia, and in the worst possible case, death. The following control measures should be considered to reduce and mitigate these risks.

Communication

In the event of a coordinator undertaking any WBC activity that isn't a group activity, and not having another person with them, they **must have a fully charged cellphone and/or VHF (communication device)** with them.

The buddy system is recommended whereby a nominated person (colleague) should be informed of all planned activities. This will be done via face-to-face conversation, cell phone call, text message or email. The information must be confirmed as received and understood before the coordinator departs. A FIF should be completed when going to remote areas or potentially dangerous areas, even if there are more than one of you in case of getting lost or injured.

All Field Intention Forms (FIF's) made should include

1. Proposed time of departure and where
2. The planned destination or area of operation
3. The expected time of arrival (ETA) and next communication and/or expected time of return (ETR)
4. The total number of people involved

It is recommended that a map is shared with your nominated person which details your planned destination and/or area of operation, proposed entry and exit points, and proposed route. This can be marked on a google map or by using the Find Friends app (Iphone only) or something similar.

Subsequent communications must be made no later than the original planned time and substantial changes to the coordinator plans must be communicated before departing from the original plan.

The information above may also be provided to the Coastguard or Maritime Radio using VHF radio if deemed necessary (e.g. if doing a tidal river survey by boat or kayak). Changes to planned movements after departure **MUST** be notified to the WBC National Coordinator, Coastguard or Maritime Radio, should attempts to contact the nominated person ashore be unsuccessful.

All planned communications must be made at or before the agreed time and all trip reports to the nominated person ashore and Coastguard or Maritime Radio must be closed when/if appropriate.

If the coordinator is overdue and misses a scheduled call in time, the nominated person ashore will do the following:

1. If more than 15 minutes late, try to contact the coordinator by mobile telephone.
2. If there is no answer then, try again in 5 minutes.
3. If there is still no answer, attempt to make contact via other means such as through other operators known to be in the area, the marina office or harbour master.
4. If there is still no contact with the coordinator, call the Coastguard and/or Maritime Radio. Check with them to see if updates have been made or if the vessel can be contacted via VHF. If unable to raise Coastguard or Maritime Radio, go to step 5.
5. If concerns for the safety of the coordinator still exist, call 111 and ask for the Police. Advise them of the situation and follow their instructions.

Record Keeping Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|------------------|------|--|
| MTSCT Governance | 2022 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Trustees |

Introduction

This document provides guidelines for the retention and destruction of data by staff of the Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT).

We recommend that provider organisations adopt these policies, in absence of their own policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that MTSCT maintains its official records in accordance with the requirements of all applicable laws and that official records no longer required are destroyed in a timely manner. This policy provides guidelines for the retention of official documents under ordinary circumstances. It is also for the purpose of aiding staff in understanding their obligations in retaining electronic documents, including emails, PDF documents and all office suited or other formatted files.

Policy

This policy represents the MTSCT's policy regarding the retention and disposal of records and the retention and disposal of electronic documents. The intent of this policy is that records should be retained only as long as is necessary to meet legislative, fiscal, contractual, administrative and operational requirements. Legal requirements may be set out by legislation such as the Companies Act 1993, the Trust Act 2019, the Tax Administration Act 1994, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Employment Relations Act 2000 and the Privacy Act 2020.

Staff must ensure that documents for which they are responsible are accurate, complete, and are retained for the periods of time indicated in the schedule in Appendix A, and then disposed of in accordance with this policy.

Documents must be managed and disposed of in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of the information they contain. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that this policy is complied with when maintaining and disposing of records. When a document is destroyed (as defined in the policy below), care must be taken to ensure that all personal and confidential information contained therein is permanently and securely destroyed.

Covered Records

This policy applies to all official records generated in the course of MTSCT's operations, including but not limited to:

- Typed or printed hardcopy documents such as contracts (i.e. school agreements, funding contracts) and registration forms
- Electronic records and documents such as, web files, text files, pdf files.
- Video or digital images.
- Electronically stored information contained on network servers and/or document management systems (such as the Google Drive)

This policy applies to all trustees, employees and contractors of the MTSCT.

Applicability

This policy applies to all physical records generated in the course of MTSCT's operation, including both original documents and reproductions. It also applies to electronic documents as described above.

Record Retention Schedule

1. The formal records of the Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust, such as trust deed, agendas, minutes, resolutions and annual reports shall be kept for the lifetime of the trust.
2. Financial records will be kept for 7 years in accordance with IRD guidelines.
3. Other records of the trust will be kept according to the schedule recommended by the Community Toolkit (<http://communitytoolkit.org.nz/good-governance/keeping-records/>) and this policy and/or guidelines (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17xij7kY55a4Oy77pVQeJe-avgfYmSeaoDcRnmlUczFw/edit>).
4. Consideration should also be given as to whether records are subject to the Privacy Act 2020, the MTSCT Privacy Statement and the Privacy Guidelines for Coordinators.

Water Quality Assessment Policy

| Policy type | Year | Approved by |
|----------------------|------|---|
| MTSCT Operational | 2023 | Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Directors/Poutokomanawa |

For all MTS programmes

The purpose of this policy is to give clear direction for water quality decision making following the recent unprecedented rain and weather events around Aotearoa.

Background

The hazard of human infection for those exposed to the water has been known for a long time, but the public is becoming more aware of it as new evidence of the oceans and freshwater environments rapidly deteriorating health emerges. Even the most pristine waters are inhabited by large numbers of microbes. The sheer volume of fresh and seawater and its constant movement usually dilute foreign microbes below concentrations necessary for human infection.

Risk of direct infection by microbes from freshwater and seawater is very small. However, the risk increases significantly in warm, brackish waters, in waters proximate to sewage and run-off inlets, at places of animal access, at populated beaches and after extreme weather events (heavy and prolonged rain). Microbes generally infect humans through ingestion, inhalation or mucous-membrane exposure (naturally occurring or in wounds) Also refer to EMR sanitisation policy.

This policy covers both marine and freshwater

Water quality checklist

Making your weather assessment will lead to your water quality assessment call.

- Weather assessment calls are made via internet search such as Met Service, Windy and swell maps appropriate to the site to determine information on wind direction, wind speed, rain, temperature, visibility and swell. Weather assessment MUST be recorded on pre-site assessment form.
- Staff are to avoid contact and taking others into contact with water within 2 days of heavy or prolonged rain. If in doubt, stay out!
- Check 'Can I swim here?' on the LAWA website for the latest information lawa.org.nz/swim LAWA is the standard national website for our team to check to help make 'in office' water quality assessment calls.

- Water quality assessment calls MUST be recorded on pre-site assessment forms.
- In the absence of adequate site information to make a call, perform our own MTS testing
- Following heavy and prolonged rain, check access to your site is safe.
- Use local Facebook community pages and/or local contacts to help with visual assessments on the morning of field trip to avoid unnecessary travel if unsure.
- Follow the advice of any safety and warning signs from authorities.
- Once on site, Use senses - smell, sight, signage.
- Don't enter the stream/ocean if you notice potentially toxic algae in the river or lake, or if the water is murky/smells unpleasant.
- Avoid activities near potential contamination sources such as pipes, culverts, and flocks of birds
- Check for dynamic hazards such as blockages, underwater objects, stinging jellyfish and potentially toxic algae.
- Recommend frequent washing of hands/or hand sanitiser (before entering and on completion of the activity)
- Avoid wounds having contact with the water following recent heavy or prolonged rain events.

Regional and national coordinators train coordinators on how to make water quality assessments as part of their endorsement training (local conditions knowledge).

Document ALL decisions regarding weather or water quality on pre site assessment form.

This policy overrides any other existing policy in the EMR and WBC 2022 SOP manuals
Operational Policy - Water Quality - 28th February 2023 onwards