



National Fire Brigades Cadet Programme

Youth and Child Protection Policy

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Review Date

June 2026

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National Fire Brigades Cadet Programme

Youth and Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

The National Fire Brigades Cadet Programme is a youth development and community engagement programme.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This document forms part of the National Fire Brigades Cadet Programme (The Programme) Safeguarding Framework and should be read together with associated safeguarding policies, procedures and codes.
- 2.2. This Policy establishes the safeguarding and child protection framework for the National Fire Brigades Cadet Programme.
- 2.3. The Programme is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all children and young people participating in Programme activities.
- 2.4. The welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount in all decisions and actions.
- 2.5. This Policy supports compliance with the [Children's Act 2014](#) and accepted safeguarding standards in Aotearoa New Zealand
- 2.6. This Policy should be read together with:
 - The Cadet Programme Code of Conduct
 - The Cadet Programme Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
 - Relevant [Fire and Emergency New Zealand \(FENZ\)](#) policies and procedures.

3. Legislative and Best Practice Framework

3.1 This Policy is informed by relevant New Zealand legislation and safeguarding guidance, including:

- [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#)
- [Children's Act 2014](#)
- [Family Violence Act 2018](#)
- [Crimes Act 1961](#)
- [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1993](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
- [Health Information Privacy Code 2020](#)
- [Oranga Tamariki Practice Framework](#)
- [Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Raunui \(Sport Integrity New Zealand\)](#)
- [Ara Taiohi Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand.](#)

3.2 The Programme recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi and is committed to culturally safe and inclusive practice.

4. Scope

4.1 This Policy applies to:

- Cadets
- Cadet Leaders
- Volunteers
- Brigade personnel
- Contractors
- Parents and caregivers
- Visitors and supporters involved in Programme activities.

4.2 This Policy applies during:

- Training activities
- Camps and overnight activities
- Transportation
- Online communication
- Social media engagement
- Operational learning activities
- Any activity connected to the Programme.

5. Guiding Principles

5.1 All adults involved in the Cadet Programme have a duty of care to safeguard children and young people.

5.2 The Programme does not tolerate:

- Child abuse
- Neglect
- Grooming
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Violence
- Sexual misconduct
- Exploitation.

5.3 Safeguarding responses will:

- Be child-centred
- Be culturally responsive
- Respect privacy and confidentiality

- Promote emotional and physical safety
- Take all concerns seriously
- Support timely reporting and intervention.

5.4 The Programme values whānau involvement and recognises the importance of identity, culture and belonging.

6. Recruitment, Vetting and Training

6.1 All adults working with cadets must undergo:

- New Zealand Police Vetting
- Appropriate reference and suitability checks.

6.2 Adults awaiting vetting clearance must not have unsupervised contact with cadets.

6.3 All personnel working with cadets must complete safeguarding and child protection training.

6.4 Safeguarding training must be refreshed regularly and recorded appropriately.

6.5 The Cadet Programme will maintain appropriate recruitment, supervision and risk management practices.

7. Professional Boundaries and Safe Conduct

7.1 All adults involved in the Cadet Programme must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with cadets at all times.

7.2 Personal, romantic or sexual relationships between Cadet Leaders and Cadets are prohibited.

7.3 Inappropriate physical contact, favouritism, intimidation, grooming behaviour or abusive conduct is prohibited.

7.4 One-to-one situations with cadets should be avoided wherever possible and managed in accordance with the Programme SOPs.

7.5 All participants must comply with the Cadet Programme Code of Conduct.

8. Digital Safety and Communication

8.1 All digital communication with cadets must remain professional, transparent and appropriate.

8.2 Secretive or inappropriate online communication with cadets is prohibited.

8.3 Approved communication platforms should be used wherever possible.

8.4 Appropriate consent must be obtained via a completed 'Consent Form' before sharing photographs, videos or identifying information relating to cadets.

8.5 Cyberbullying, harassment and inappropriate online conduct will not be tolerated.

9. Responding to Child Protection Concerns

9.1 All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously.

9.2 Personnel must:

- Recognise signs of abuse or harm
- Respond calmly and supportively
- Record concerns accurately
- Report concerns promptly.

9.3 Personnel must not investigate allegations themselves.

9.4 Concerns must be reported immediately to Cadet Programme leadership and escalated to [Oranga Tamariki](#) or Police where appropriate.

9.5 If a child or young person is in immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted via 111.

9.6 Confidential safeguarding records must be securely maintained.

10. Reporting and Information Sharing

10.1 Information relating to safeguarding concerns must be shared only with those directly responsible for responding to the concern.

10.2 Information sharing must comply with:

- [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- [Children's Act 2014](#)
- Relevant safeguarding obligations.

10.3 Parents or caregivers will usually be informed of significant safeguarding or wellbeing concerns unless doing so may place the child or another person at greater risk.

10.4 The Cadet Programme encourages active consultation with [Oranga Tamariki](#) and New Zealand Police regarding child protection concerns.

11. Bullying, Harassment and Abuse

11.1 Bullying, harassment and abusive behaviour are unacceptable.

11.2 All adults are expected to model respectful behaviour and intervene appropriately when harmful behaviour occurs.

11.3 Concerns relating to bullying or harmful behaviour must be managed in accordance with Cadet Programme procedures and the SOPs.

12. Allegations Against Personnel

12.1 All allegations involving Cadet Programme personnel must be treated seriously and managed promptly, fairly and confidentially.

12.2 The Cadet Programme will cooperate fully with Police, [Oranga Tamariki](#) and Fire and Emergency New Zealand where required.

12.3 Personnel who are the subject of investigation may be removed from duties involving cadets pending investigation outcomes.

12.4 Resignation during an investigation will not prevent the investigation continuing where appropriate.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 Cadet Leaders and Programme personnel are responsible for:

- Safeguarding cadets
- Following this Policy, the Code of Conduct and SOPs
- Reporting concerns promptly
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Participating in safeguarding training.
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding systems are maintained
- Supporting personnel responding to safeguarding concerns
- Monitoring compliance with safeguarding requirements
- Maintaining appropriate records and oversight.

13.3 The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for:

- Receiving and managing safeguarding concerns
- Liaising with statutory agencies where required
- Maintaining confidential safeguarding records
- Supporting safeguarding training and compliance.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if:

- Legislation changes
- Safeguarding standards change
- Serious incidents occur
- Operational needs require review.

14.2 Compliance with this Policy and associated safeguarding procedures will be monitored by Brigade leadership.

15. Associated Documents

15.1 This Policy should be read alongside:

- National Fire Brigade Cadet Programme Code of Conduct
- National Fire Brigade Cadet Programme SOPs
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand policies and procedures
- Relevant safeguarding guidance issued by [Oranga Tamariki](#) and Sport Integrity New Zealand.

16. Definitions

Definitions used within this Policy should be read together with Attachment A of the Cadet Programme Code of Conduct.

Child / Young Person: Any person under the age of 18 years.

Safeguarding: Actions taken to protect children and young people from abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation.

Grooming: Behaviour intended to build trust or emotional connection with a child for an inappropriate or abusive purpose.

Professional Boundaries: Appropriate limits maintained by adults in their relationships and interactions with cadets.

Reportable Concern: Any concern, allegation, disclosure or observation relating to child safety, misconduct or breach of safeguarding requirements.