



**Taieri Christian Care Trust/Mosgiel Community Foodbank**

# **Working with Vulnerable People Policy**

## **Our Commitment**

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults is our highest priority.

The right to enjoy a safe environment free from threats, harm, abuse, mistreatment or exploitation is a core commitment to our volunteers, clients and the communities we serve.

We encourage our workforce (including volunteers) to be personally and professionally accountable for upholding this commitment. This means we expect every member of our team to hold themselves and others accountable, to be transparent and to learn from their experiences working with vulnerable people.

## **Policy Application**

This policy applies to all people engaged to work with the Foodbank, including paid employees and unpaid volunteers, students, contractors. This policy also applies to members of the Foodbank Board.

## **Who is Considered a Vulnerable Person?**

A vulnerable person means a child (an individual under the age of 18), or an adult (18 years and above) who may be unable to safeguard themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of illness, trauma, disability, or for any other reason. A vulnerable adult is unable, rather than unwilling, to learn or properly maintain some aspects of basic living skills and self-protective behaviours.

Physical, economic, social and political factors determine a person's level of vulnerability and the extent of their capacity to resist, cope with, and recover from hazards. Factors that contribute to vulnerability include:

- o being a child or young person
- o lived experience of trauma
- o living with a disability
- o poor physical or mental health
- o being culturally and/or linguistically diverse
- o socio-economic disadvantage
- o being an immigrant or refugee
- o dependence on others
- o being aged, frail or lacking competence

# Policy Statement

All children, young people and vulnerable adults who interact with the Foodbank have a right to feel and to be safe.

Safeguarding vulnerable people is everybody's responsibility at the Foodbank, every day. To uphold this commitment, The Foodbank will:

- o create and maintain an environment that ensures all people involved in services act in the best interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes creating and maintaining a safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all individuals who work for, volunteer or access our services.
- o take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of clients, including encouragement of its workforce to act to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation.
- o obtain Police Checks on all of our staff and volunteers and anyone with a history of abuse of any sort will not be allowed to work or volunteer at the Foodbank.
- o ensure that all board members, paid staff and volunteers following the Foodbank Code of Conduct.

## What is Abuse?

Abuse occurs when one's rights are not respected.

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that causes them harm, endangers wellbeing or violates their dignity or rights. It includes physical, emotional and psychological ill-treatment and neglect (including self-neglect), financial or sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Abuse concerns the misuse of power, control and/or authority, and can be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

## Our Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of everyone at the Foodbank to support the organisation's commitment to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

It is the responsibility of the Foodbank Board and paid staff to ensure compliance to – and the effectiveness of – this policy.

It is the responsibility of all board members, staff and volunteers, to ensure they understand the importance of this policy, and receive training at induction. All people working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy.

Failure to report suspected harm or abuse to the Board may be regarded as colluding with the harm or abuse and be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

Inaction on safety issues around vulnerable people is not acceptable and may constitute serious misconduct.