

Kiwibots Child Protection Policy

Last reviewed September 2020

Here at Kiwibots, we pride ourselves on being able to put on world-class robotics events and programmes for young Kiwi kids. As a Charitable Trust, our success is largely due to the incredible support of volunteers who come on board to make every scrimmage, tournament, holiday programme, event and workshop as amazing as it is.

We want to enable volunteers from all over NZ to be able to help out while ensuring that we provide a safe environment that prioritises the wellbeing of children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.

CONTENTS

Purpose.....	2
Scope	2
Responsibilities and Expectations.....	2
Vetting Requirements	2
Procedures.....	3
Responding to incident or suspected abuse	4
Allegations made against members of staff	4
Safe Working Practices	4
Being alone with children and young people	5
Appropriate language to use in front of children and young people.....	5
Relationships and Communications with children and young people.....	5
Photography and Videos.....	5
Physical contact	6
Unauthorised people accessing children	6

Purpose

Our Child Protection Policy is a framework that covers the expectations and procedures to respond to potential child protection concerns.

This Policy applies to all staff including volunteers, and part-time or temporary roles. It is intended to protect all children that staff may encounter, including siblings, the children of adults participating, and any other children encountered by staff and volunteers when providing our service at an event or programme.

This Policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required with changes in legislation and relevant policies.

Scope

This policy covers all staff and volunteers of Kiwibots - The NZ Robotics Charitable Trust who have direct or indirect contact with children at Kiwibots events and programmes.

This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by Kiwibots, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children at or during any Kiwibots event or programme.

This policy covers the Trustees and their responsibilities in the safety and wellbeing of children.

Responsibilities and Expectations

We expect our staff and volunteers to be attentive to all persons at any Kiwibots event or programme, and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of inappropriate behaviour or suspected abuse immediately so that the concern can be reported and acted on appropriately.

Vetting Requirements

We are committed to ensuring that children and young people accessing our services and events are safe. Any individual who may deal directly or indirectly with children and young people and wishes to participate in an employment, mentoring, coaching, event support or other paid or voluntary role with Kiwibots must comply to a safety check by Kiwibots.

Independent teams participating in our robotics competitions who are not part of a NZ registered organisation (e.g. an independent family team or home school group team) should have their own Child Protection Policies and safety checks in place. Where a team does not have such policies or considerations, they can request for a NZ Police Vetting to be performed through Kiwibots and receive a copy of their report.

For our volunteers:

The safety check may include NZ Police Vetting, Risk and Safety Assessment (if volunteer is classed as Children's Worker under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014), or verification of references provided if required.

At a minimum, we will require our volunteers to consent to a NZ Police Vetting, where the results are kept in confidence and shared only with the volunteer.

Vetting results are valid for 3 years from date of receipt and approval.

Cases where our volunteers will *not* need to undergo a NZ Police Vetting include:

- Volunteer is a current registered NZ teacher
- Volunteer is a current volunteer, employee or member of NZ organisation that has a NZ Police Vetting in place (e.g. OSCAR provider) and can be verified
- Volunteer is under 16yrs old
- Volunteer is a current AND enrolled secondary student attending a listed NZ school
- Volunteer can provide a copy of their current NZ Police Vetting result to Kiwibots

For our staff

The safety check may include NZ Police Vetting, Risk and Safety Assessment (if volunteer is classed as Children's Worker under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014), Drug and Alcohol Testing, verification of references provided if required, verification of qualifications, personal reference checks, verification of identification, and a structured interview process.

At a minimum, we will require our candidates applying for employment to consent to a NZ Police Vetting, structured interview, personal reference checks and verification of identification.

Vetting results are valid for 3 years from date of receipt and approval.

Kiwibots will follow a robust decision-making process in responding to positive results from vetting and safety checking. We must be satisfied that any appointment would pose no undue risk to the safety of children and young people in its programmes or events.

All safety checks, assessments and decisions to employ will be signed off by the National Manager. Where these checks flag that there would be a heightened level of risk should a person be employed (in a paid or voluntary role), the National Manager will consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees before a decision is made.

We will not employ any staff member or take on any volunteer who has a conviction identified as a specified offence within Schedule 2 of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.

Procedures

Any concerns of potential, suspected, or alleged abuse or inappropriate behaviour must be brought to the attention of the National Manager of Kiwibots. If the National Manager is not available, this should be brought to the attention of the Trustees.

The concern will be reported and a decision will be made to seek further advice, or where appropriate, notify Oranga Tamariki.

The decisions taken will be recorded and kept securely by Kiwibots, accessible only to current Trustees and the National Manager, identifying the concern/incident and reasons behind decision made.

In line with the Principles of the Privacy Act 1993, information will be disclosed as necessary.

Family and whanau will be informed of any information that is shared and to which agency in this process. Sharing information with family and whanau to better protect children is not a breach in confidentiality.

Where a minor or young person makes a disclosure to staff member or volunteer, it is important that they take what the child has said seriously. The staff member or volunteer must not attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with the concern alone and must proceed with the response outlined below.

Responding to incident or suspected abuse

1. Incident is occurring/ suspected abuse happens or is disclosed. Ensure that the child/young person is safe from immediate harm and removed from any dangerous situation.
2. Carefully document in writing anything said by the child or person sharing the information about the abuse/incident. Include the date, time, and persons present at the incident.
If the person sharing this information is the person documenting an observation (e.g. a volunteer suspects inappropriate behaviour between a spectator and a child), they should make sure they document any verbal, physical and behavioural observations.
3. Immediately contact the person in charge of the event (a Kiwibots Regional Coordinator) and the National Manager, or an alternative Kiwibots Regional Coordinator if the allegation concerns the person in charge of the event.
4. The Chairman of the Board of NZ Robotics Charitable Trust will be advised.
5. Trustees of the Board, the National Manager, and the Regional Coordinator in charge of the event where the incident took place will discuss to review and make a decision.
Where required, either the Regional Coordinator or the National Manager will submit a notification to Oranga Tamariki and/or the NZ Police.

Allegations made against members of staff

Allegations, suspicions or complaints of abuse against staff, volunteers or representatives of other agencies must be taken seriously and reported to the National Manager who will deal with them immediately, sensitively and expediently within the procedures outlined.
It is NOT the responsibility of staff or volunteers to investigate allegations of child abuse.

Contact Details for National Manager - Janet Van: +64 (0)9 215 1874 or j.van@kiwibots.co.nz

Safe Working Practices

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is a potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

All staff and volunteers are expected to behave in manners that maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others. Below are outlines that can help create a safe environment for all.

Being alone with children and young people

To minimise risks of being isolated or alone with children and young people, staff and volunteers should examine situations where this may occur. Wherever possible, an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets). Staff and volunteers should be aware of compromising situations and ensure that strategies are in place to help them deal safely with these situations (for example, calling up another staff member and putting them on loudspeaker or facetimeing a friend or family member to minimise isolation if a situation is unavoidable).

We will generally design the events so that there are minimal situations where isolation would take place, as two adults will need to be present to run something (e.g. Judge Interviews at National Championships) or things are all in a group setting in a communal hall.

Staff and volunteers should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless emergency requires it. The exception to this is groups travelling with express consent from the child's parents or guardian for a designated adult, e.g. a team coach who is volunteering at the event and is responsible for transport of a whole team and parents are all aware and consenting of this.

Appropriate language to use in front of children and young people

All language used must be to provide positive guidance to children and young people. We actively promote appropriate behaviour using praise and encouragement and create a safe environment.

We do not use blaming, harsh, belittling or degrading language. We strongly discourage language that assumes stereotypes (e.g. you run like a girl), or is ableist, racist, sexist or discriminatory.

Relationships and Communications with children and young people

With the exception of relationships that already exist between a child/young person and their family, we strongly discourage our volunteers from forming external friendships between adult and child (classed as 12yrs and under). It may be appropriate to have a relationship with the child's parent or guardian, and by extension be involved in other events that may involve the child.

For young persons (aged 12 and above), we recognise that they may want to begin networking, particularly amongst the tech community. It is appropriate for a volunteer to introduce this young person to relevant events of interest to them that are age appropriate, though we advise it is best to inform the young person's parent or legal guardian of the intentions of this meeting and that it is cleared.

Photography and Videos

As part of the Kiwibots Event Participation Forms and VEX & RECF Waivers, all participants at our events have signed a photography waiver and we can use their likeness in any and all future promotion of our service.

The exception to this rule is when a participant has actively informed us that they are not to be seen in public or photographed by our crew. In these cases, we make a special effort to have them easily identified (different colour band or lanyard) and we inform any key photographers at the event that the child is not to be photographed or videoed.

Physical contact

Parents and guardians should be advised if there is any requirement for one to one physical contact to take place. The nature of our events should not require this.

Physical contact should be limited to momentary contacts, such as high-fives, fist bumps, handshaking etc.. Where a child or young person is being comforted, we advise that contact is limited to the arm and shoulder.

It is generally not appropriate for hugging to take place between a child/young person and a volunteer or staff member where there is no existing relationship - i.e. this does not apply to family members or close friends and family friends.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff and volunteers are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance, including medical aid.

Unauthorised people accessing children

As many of our events are public, spectators may join after signing into the event. Staff and volunteers should be aware and attentive of these spectators, visitors, and supporting members. If there is an incident or suspected inappropriate behaviour by a spectator, please observe closely, notify the Regional Coordinator in charge of the event to help you monitor, and proceed with the response outlined in this policy if the suspected behaviour is inappropriate, e.g. a spectator with no team affiliation is attending to watch and has tried to create a circumstance they will be alone with a child or young person from a team.

As all of our attendees (including spectators) are expected to sign in their attendance at an event, it is appropriate to ask for their name to document if there is suspected inappropriate behaviour.

Contact Details

Current **National Manager, Janet Van**, can be contacted on j.van@kiwibots.co.nz or in more urgent scenarios, called at **+64 (0)9 215 1874** (this number is also attended after hours). Regional Coordinators can be identified at the event in Kiwibots' branded attire and should be clearly identifiable to attendees.

As per procedures above, for any incidents happening in real time, first point of contact should be the Regional Coordinator on site who will contact the National Manager. In an emergency, the NZ Police should be called on 111.

If the incident concerns a member of staff, please contact the National Manager.

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Mike Hearn, can be reached where necessary at mike@amcham.co.nz.