



# OSCAR Standards for approval and provider guidelines

## Out of school care and recreation (OSCAR) programmes.

### Introduction

The OSCAR Standards for approval are used to determine whether out of school programmes comply with sections 25–27 of the Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004.

Out of school programmes provide care and recreation before school, after school, during school holidays and including camps.

Out of school programmes are for children aged from five to 13 where the duty of care is formally handed over from the parent to the programme.

The OSCAR Standards measure whether an out of school programme provides adequate care and a safe environment for children. The standards determine whether a programme is properly run.

These standards were developed after consultation with key OSCAR stakeholders and OSCAR providers.

### Structure

The six standards list the minimum requirements for OSCAR approval:

- Service environment
- Service operation
- Health and safety
- Child protection
- Supervision
- Management standard

After each standard, guidance information is provided and suggestions are provided as to how to meet the standards.

## Work and Income subsidies and grants

Parents may be able to receive an income-tested subsidy when their child attends an approved OSCAR programme. The subsidy is also available for children up to the age of 18 years who receive a Child Disability Allowance and attend an approved programme.

Approved programmes may be eligible for grants. For more information on subsidies or grants go to [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

### **The approval process**

This section gives an overview of the approval process from when you first decide to apply for approval through to the assessment decision.

### **If you need more information go to:**

[www.oscarnz.org.nz](http://www.oscarnz.org.nz). An advisor may be able to help you.

First you should make sure:

- your programme is able to operate in a way that meets all the standards
- policies and procedures described in the standards are in place.

Next you will need to send an application form and specified documents to the nearest approvals team. Go to [www.msd.govt.nz/approvals](http://www.msd.govt.nz/approvals)

An approvals assessor will go through your application and set up a visit. You can expect to have your site visit within six weeks of applying.

If your programme is already up and running you will need to demonstrate that your programme meets the standards:

- through your written policies and procedures and other organisation or programme documents
- through a site visit.

First the assessor will review your application, including the documents you provided. Then the assessor will do a site visit where they will talk to staff and observe how the programme runs. They will also look at facilities, equipment and other important documents (eg Warrant of Fitness).

The assessor will give you feedback at the time of the site visit. If you do have to improve your programme the assessor will talk to you about this and follow up with a letter about what changes are required and timeframes for getting back to the assessor about the changes.

If your programme has not started operating yet, the assessor will review the documents you provide showing how the programme will run to determine if your organisation has the potential and ability to run a safe programme and meet all the standards. The assessor will do a site visit and talk to any available staff.

When your programme is approved you will receive a letter confirming the approval (usually within four weeks of the site visit).

## **Reviews of approval**

Your approval is usually reviewed every two years. You will receive a letter about the review asking you to send the specified documents and outlining the site visit. During the visit the assessor will check that your programme is still running in accordance with the standards.

The approvals team may decide to extend your review period. This will be determined by previous performance against the standards, and an assessment of how your organisation is likely to perform against the standards in the future.

Further information is available on gaining a longer review period from your approvals assessor.

The approvals team may initiate a review if they become aware that your programme may not be complying with the standards.

## **Ceasing to operate an OSCAR programme**

You may decide that you don't want to keep providing your OSCAR programme. If so, let the approvals team know so that they can keep their records up-to-date and contact Work and Income about subsidies and grants so that you do not incur a debt. You will then relinquish your approval.

## **Suspending and/or revoking an approval**

If an approved programme is no longer meeting the OSCAR Standards for approval and is not properly run your approval may be suspended and/or revoked, under Regulation 26 of the Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004.

If serious concerns arise that the standards are not being met and the programme is not adequate, your approval may be suspended while these concerns are being investigated.

The existence of ongoing concerns could result in your approval being revoked. The programme provider is able to make submissions to Ministry of Social Development before a final decision is made. The final decision would then be given in writing. The provider may be able to apply at a later date for approval when appropriate changes have been made.

# Definitions

## **Staff**

In most places the guidelines make no distinction between paid, unpaid, voluntary and casual personnel, referring to them all as staff.

Both the Standards and the guidelines describe requirements about the ages and responsibilities of younger staff, including when they can be included in a child: adult ratio and at what point they can be left in a position of responsibility for a programme or venue.

## **Parents**

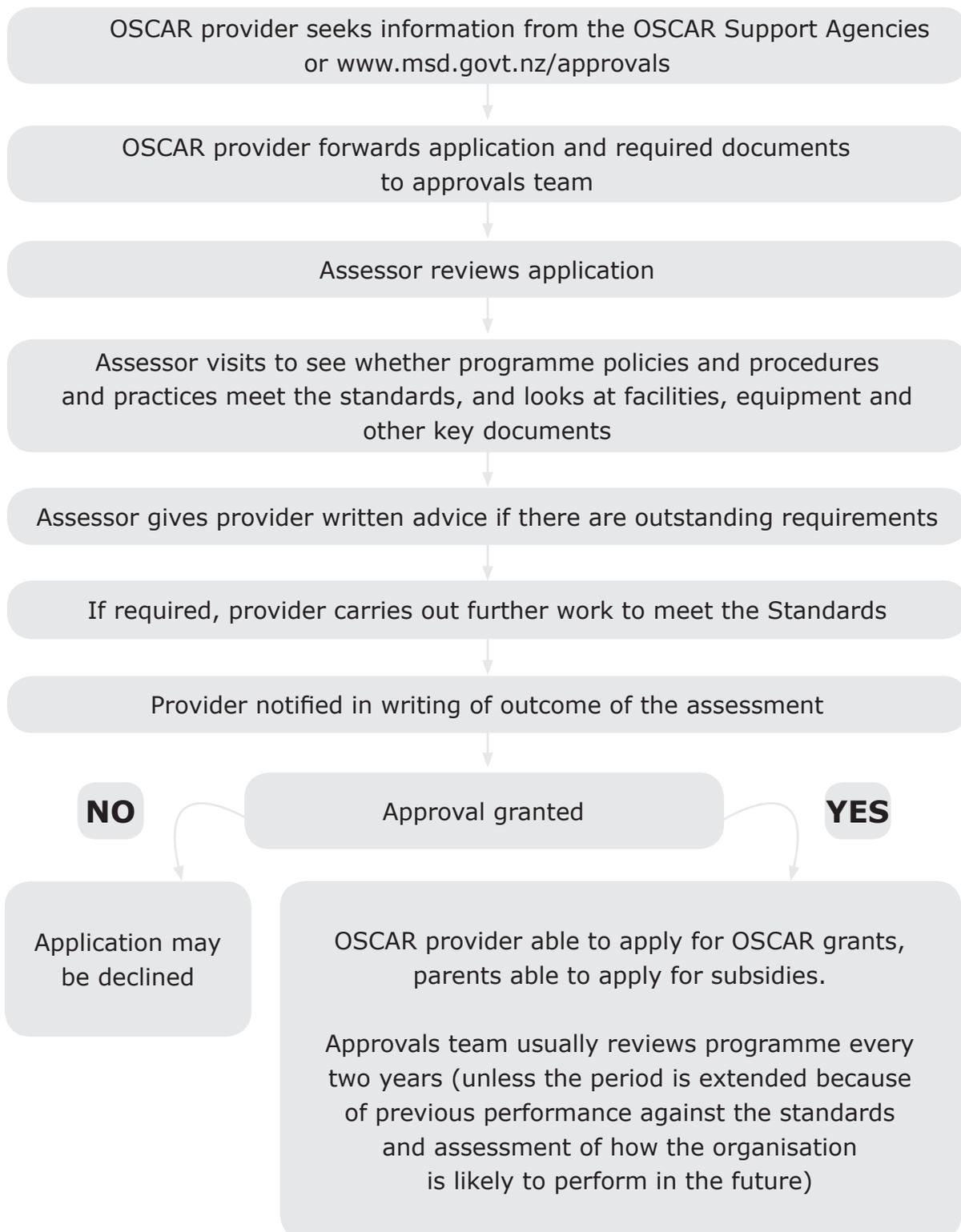
The Standards refer to parents, guardians and caregivers. There may be cases where guardians and caregivers take on the role of parents when enrolling children and using an OSCAR service.

## **Management**

This is the person or body legally responsible for the programme. This may include management committees, governance bodies, private owners, boards of trustees and local government bodies.

## Overview of initial OSCAR approval process

**This flow chart summarises the approval process:**



## Service environment

### Standard

*The service has a suitable environment for the care and recreation needs of children participating.*

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following environmental requirements:

1. The service provides for a culturally-responsive, positive, child-focused environment.
2. There is a stimulating and varied programme of activities which is child focused, appropriate for the children's ages and development and allows for choice.
3. Premises are safe and comply with all relevant legislation as well as local city or district council requirements.
4. The premises include toilets, eating areas and phone services.
5. Phone services or other methods of communication must be available when children are off-site.
6. There is adequate and appropriate space for the children relative to the number of children present and the nature of the service provided.

# Guidance

## Standard

'Environment' is the social, emotional and physical aspects of the programme. Staff interactions with both children and parents are the key to achieving an environment of enrichment where everyone feels safe, secure and respected.

The importance of children's wellbeing should be reflected through policies, practices and all interactions with children and their families. A positive, child-focused and culturally-responsive environment will ensure that all children feel welcome, included and valued as individuals.

## Activities

Many OSCAR services have a high degree of free play where children choose from a range of activities. However, it is expected some activities are planned in advance and services consider how to:

- introduce children to new experiences and activities
- ensure there is a range of options and possibilities available to children
- capture ideas put forward by children
- ensure there are appropriate resources and equipment available
- communicate activities to parents, eg as a flyer, displayed on the wall, and as/or notes kept in a diary.

It is possible for programmes to have a particular focus, eg on sport, and still meet the standard.

## Safe premises

Premises must comply with local city or district council requirements and the Building Act 2004. Most buildings must have a warrant of fitness. This is issued annually from the relevant council.

A building warrant of fitness is required if the building has a compliance schedule. The building has a compliance schedule if it has a fire alarm or other systems that need to be maintained so that people in the building are kept safe. Services can check with their local council about whether a warrant of fitness is required.

Buildings that do not have a warrant of fitness must still comply with fire safety requirements. The local council can help services with this.

For more information on building warrants of fitness go to the Department of Building and Housing at [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz) or the local city or district council.

Health and safety processes must be used to identify and mitigate hazards on the premises, including:

- the proximity of roads, car parks or railway lines
- fencing of bodies of water including streams and drains
- the management of pets and animals.

Maintenance of the premises is usually the responsibility of the building owner, but there is an obligation on the service to inform the owner of any identified hazards, breakages or maintenance issues. Services must carry out regular safety checks, identify hazards and mitigate them. A checklist makes this easier to do.

## **Toilets**

All toilet facilities at the premises and off-site must be safe, clean and appropriate for children. The service must have written procedures to keep children safe when they are toileting, eg when public have access to toilets.

## **Eating areas**

The service must be able to demonstrate and provide:

- a clean and hygienic eating area that includes suitable seating for children
- clean and hygienic food storage, preparation and handling practices.

## **Phone services**

The service must have a phone that is available for emergencies and for staff and parents to communicate with each other.

On excursions, services are expected to take a mobile phone. Where there is no phone coverage, services must have a back-up plan to be able to contact emergency services. Parents must be notified about arrangements prior to the programme going off-site.

## **Space**

'Adequate space' ensures that there is room for children to play freely, including space for active recreation. 'Appropriate space' allows children to engage in a range of activities, including ones that are messy and noisy and quiet and calm. The venue layout must allow children to enjoy quiet activities where they are not interrupted by other noisier activities.

Services should consider:

- the type of programme that is being offered
- the size, layout and purpose of rooms
- how long the children will spend their time within the space
- furniture, its placement and use
- distance between indoor and outdoor spaces to allow supervision of children
- weather conditions or other instances when children cannot be outdoors
- the number of staff involved in the daily programme
- ensuring noise levels are not excessive
- the capacity for children to engage in a range of activities without intruding on each other
- materials and equipment storage, and easy accessibility.

## Service operation

### Standard

*Services have appropriate procedures about the way their organisation operates.*

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following operation requirements:

1. Has satisfactory written procedures in the following areas:
  - enrolment practices
  - attendance
  - collection and access to children
  - transporting children, which meet legal requirements
  - complaints
  - behaviour management
  - responding to cultural issues
  - children with special needs or disabilities.
2. These procedures are available to all staff and parents.
3. Providers are expected to keep accurate records. These would include current enrolments, attendance, complaints, health information and medication that is administered.
4. Information is gathered and kept in a way that complies with the Privacy Act 1993.

## Guidance

The procedures required in this standard guide the everyday operation of the programme. All procedures must be available to staff and parents. Staff must be trained in all policies and procedures.

### **Enrolment practices**

An enrolment form must be completed and signed by a parent before their child participates in the programme. If an electronic enrolment form is used the parent should sign the form when they collect their child on the first day.

The form will include parent contact information, and:

- at least two emergency contacts
- names of people authorised to collect the child from the programme. The form should make it clear if any person is not authorised to collect the child
- any health and/or medical conditions, including what treatment is required or whether the child is self-medicating, as with asthma
- a privacy statement that complies with the requirements of Principle 3 of the Privacy Act 1993, noting the purpose for collecting the information and who has access to it. The statement should make clear that the information gathered may be viewed by the Ministry of Social Development
- Enrolment information must be kept up-to-date.

### **Attendance**

Enrolment information includes the day of the week and the particular sessions when the child will attend the service.

A written procedure outlining the process to locate a child and confirm the child's safety must be in place, in case an expected child does not arrive at the programme. This includes:

- contacting the child's school for absence information
- searching the immediate area
- notifying parents
- phoning emergency contacts and/or people authorised to collect the child
- informing the overall manager or site supervisor
- contacting the police.

Accurate sign in/out sheets must be kept.

A list of all children and their contact details must be taken during an evacuation or excursion.

## **Collection of children**

- Children will only be released to people authorised on the enrolment form or as notified by parents.
- Staff need to have a written procedure for preventing an unauthorised person from collecting a child.
- If one parent is not authorised to collect a child, the reason must be significant and evidence provided, eg custody, access or protection order.
- Parents must provide written consent for the child to leave a service unaccompanied. Usually this consent is given during enrolment. In one-off situations the parent can give consent by phone or text and a record should be kept of this communication.
- Children must be signed-out of the programme before leaving the premises.
- Staff must remain with children until they are collected.
- A procedure must be in place for children not collected from the programme.

## **Transporting children**

- Services should be aware of how children get to the programme, eg from vans, taxis or buses and consider this.
- Where cars are used to transport children, eg collecting children, relevant legislation applies.

For information about legal requirements go to:

The NZ Transport Agency [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz) or phone 0800 699 000. The NZ Transport Agency also has offices in 10 locations around New Zealand.

- Parents must be informed and have given consent to any travel arrangements.
- Drivers must have mobile phones or radio.
- Services must plan for what to do if an accident or breakdown occurs.

## **Complaints**

The complaints procedure should be available to parents and must include:

- first point of contact, the process for resolving the complaint, who will make the final decision and who will communicate outcomes to the involved parties
- the timeframe for investigating and resolving complaints if the complaint has not been resolved with the service. The parent has the opportunity to refer the complaint to the Department of Labour or a Ministry of Social Development Approvals Regional Manager.

Complaints are recorded and kept on file, with each party receiving a copy.

## **Behaviour management**

The programme must have a written procedure demonstrating how behaviour will be managed in a positive way that enhances children's development and self esteem. Children are not to be physically punished, disciplined or treated in a way that is degrading, humiliating, or causes them fear or anxiety.

Points to consider include:

- how appropriate behaviour will be encouraged and maintained
- what strategies will be used to help children modify inappropriate behaviour
- how ongoing inappropriate behaviour will be managed
- what the process will be if a child needs to be withdrawn from the programme.

## **Responding to cultural issues**

Procedures must show how a service will identify and meet cultural needs. Cultural needs may be of an ethnic, social and/or religious nature.

Points to consider include how:

- the programme will identify the cultural needs of children and their families, including giving opportunity for input and consultation
- to ensure that staffing, communication and the nature of the programme meets these needs
- the programme's unique character, eg religious content, specific ethnic focus, is communicated to parents.

For further information contact an agency such as:

- Te Puni Kōkiri – [www.tpk.govt.nz](http://www.tpk.govt.nz) or phone 04 819 6000
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs – [www.minpac.govt.nz](http://www.minpac.govt.nz) or phone 04 473 4493
- Refugee and Migrant information – [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz), [www.refugeeservices.org.nz](http://www.refugeeservices.org.nz)
- your local regional office or look in your local phone book.

## **Children with special needs or disabilities**

It may be a breach of the Human Rights Act to deny a child entry to a programme solely because they have a disability.

Children with special needs have a wide range of needs and abilities.

Programmes should have procedures which describe:

- how the special needs of a child will be determined
- how consultation with the family occurs to determine the nature of the child's needs and the ability of the programme to meet those needs
- how children with special needs may be accommodated by the service, considering staffing, training, diet, medication, equipment, modified activities, or modifications to the facilities.

For further information go to:

- The Health and Disability Commissioner - [www.hdc.org.nz](http://www.hdc.org.nz) or phone 0800 112 233
- The Human Rights Commission - [www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz) or phone 0800 496 877.

## **Record keeping**

Accurate, current and easily accessible records must be kept. Records include but are not limited to the following:

- enrolment information
- attendance
- complaints
- health information
- parental consent for any treatment and/or medication administered.

Information about children, families and staff must be gathered and kept in a way that complies with the Privacy Act 1993.

For more information on the Privacy Act 1993 go to:  
[www.privacy.org.nz](http://www.privacy.org.nz)

Information must be stored securely and made available to the individuals concerned when requested. Information will not be shared without the consent of the person whom the information is about, unless required by legislation. A privacy statement should be included in staff files noting the purpose for collecting the information, who will have access to it and that Ministry of Social Development assessors will look at the files and vetting documents.

## Health and safety

### Standard

Services provide adequately for the:

- health and safety of participating children
- health and safety of staff (including volunteers) and visitors.

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following health and safety requirements:

1. Providers comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and have a written policy to promote healthy and safe environments for children, staff and visitors.
2. Services have an effective safety management system, including training for staff, to minimise or remove risks to the health and safety of children, staff and volunteers.
3. Where the safety management system identifies that a particular physical hazard, activity or excursion is high risk, programmes must ensure there has been an additional written risk assessment.
4. Services have a process for responding to accidents and incidents, and maintain an accident and incident register.
5. The premises and grounds comply with local city or district council requirements (as appropriate). Equipment and furnishings are kept safe, clean and in good repair.
6. Services have a policy for managing unwell children, including in relation to providing any required treatment and gaining written parental consent for treatment.
7. There is at least one staff member present who has a current first aid qualification.

### Emergency planning

1. Services have planned for and have written policies and procedures for fire, earthquake and other emergencies. Where required, they have met any applicable legislative requirements.
2. Staff and volunteers are trained in procedures and regular drills take place with children.
3. Emergency procedures are displayed clearly and there are safe assembly areas.

# Guidance

## **Health and safety legislation**

Health and safety legislation promotes the health and safety of everyone at work, and of other people in and around the workplace. The legislation also recognises that employees have a valuable contribution in making workplaces safe.

The service must have a written policy to ensure that programmes are safe for everyone who is on-site or participating in the programme. This includes children, staff, parents and visitors.

For wide-ranging health and safety and emergency information contact: OSH (the Department of Labour's Health and Safety division) at [www.osh.govt.nz](http://www.osh.govt.nz) or phone 0800 209 020.

Also contact ACC at [www.acc.govt.nz/preventing-injuries](http://www.acc.govt.nz/preventing-injuries) or phone 0800 222 776.

## **Safety management system**

Services must have an up-to-date safety management system. This is a system to identify hazards and mitigate them. Hazards include but are not limited to:

- risks associated with programme activities
- equipment faults
- poisons, eg cleaning agents and medicines
- environmental issues, eg sun safety.

Staff must be actively involved in managing hazards. Staff should be encouraged to look out for hazards and take practical steps to manage them.

Staff must be trained on how to do their job safely.

## **Risk assessment**

A service must undertake an additional risk assessment of any activity which poses a high level of risk, eg swimming, and off-site visits, excursions and camp activities.

The risk assessment identifies the additional risks involved, what controls are in place to minimise these, how effective these controls are, and what to do if an accident occurs.

Services must document the risk assessment. Services must use a RAMS (Risk Analysis and Management Systems) form or a SAP (Safety Action Plan).

## **Accidents and incidents**

Services must have a written process for responding to accidents and incidents. This will include what action is taken if there is an injury to a child, staff member or visitor, eg notification of parents or emergency contacts, calling an ambulance or transporting the child/staff member to a medical facility if necessary.

A record must be kept of accidents and near-misses to children, staff and visitors. A near-miss is an incident that could have caused serious harm. These records will help the service to take steps to prevent an accident happening in the future.

A record should include:

- name of person injured
- time and date of the accident/incident
- a description of where and how the accident/incident happened
- the nature of the injury and how it was treated
- name and signature of the staff member managing the accident/incident
- signature of parent.

If 'serious harm' occurs, the service must notify the Department of Labour as soon as possible.

For more information go to:

[www.osh.govt.nz](http://www.osh.govt.nz) and search for 'serious harm definition'.

## **Equipment and furnishing**

Programmes must carry out regular safety checks of the programme equipment, furnishings and environment. Food areas, equipment, surfaces and furnishings should be cleaned regularly.

See the Service Environment section for more information.

## **Unwell children**

The service must have a written policy for managing unwell children and have procedures in place including:

- informing parents of responsibilities for sick children
- contacting parents if a child is unwell
- actions to care for an unwell child, eg a quiet space and somewhere to lie down
- records of treatment administered. Parents must give written consent to treatment.

Programmes must have a well-equipped first aid kit that is regularly checked and updated and is easily accessible both on- and off-site. It is a good idea to have a checklist of everything in the first aid kit.

At least one staff member with a current first aid qualification must be present. Staff training certificates should be kept on-site.

## **Emergencies**

It is vital that everyone at the service knows exactly what to do in the case of an emergency. Emergency procedures address what action a service will take in an emergency. Emergency drills enable staff and children to become familiar with what to do.

Services must ensure:

- there are written procedures for relevant types of emergency, eg fire, earthquake, tsunami, flood and snow
- there is an evacuation procedure. (The building owner is responsible for developing the evacuation procedure or scheme. This must be in place.)
- all staff are trained in emergency and evacuation procedures
- emergency drills occur at least once a term for before and after school programmes, and every fortnight for a holiday programme, and a record of each drill is kept.

The emergency procedures and evacuation procedure must be clearly displayed at the venue. Exits must be clearly marked and there are safe assembly areas.

The procedures need to include:

- what the signal for the emergency will be and how to evacuate the building
- where to assemble
- what staff responsibilities will be, eg who will contact the appropriate emergency service, who will check the facility for children, and who will supervise the children
- how children will be accounted for
- what to do when the emergency is over.

For more information phone your local fire region office.

## Child protection

### Standard

*Services are committed to recognition and prevention of abuse of children and young people.*

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following child protection requirements:

1. Visitors<sup>1</sup> are visible to staff when interacting with children.
2. Services have strategies to prevent and recognise child abuse and processes for dealing with allegations of abuse or situations that raise concern about the safety of a child.

The process includes guidance on how to report under Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

Section 15: Reporting of ill-treatment or neglect of child or young person –  
“Any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a social worker<sup>2</sup> or a constable.”

3. Training in recognising and responding to suspected child abuse is provided to all staff.
4. Staff will act on all suspicions of child abuse in the following way:
  - all incidents and observations will be recorded
  - any suspicion that abuse is occurring will be reported to the senior staff person and/or management.
5. Written expectations for behaviour are developed for staff.

---

<sup>1</sup> This requirement does not apply to volunteers who are a regular part of the service and have been police vetted.

<sup>2</sup> In the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 “social worker” means a Child, Youth and Family Social Worker.

## Guidance

Programmes must be able to demonstrate policies and robust procedures in relation to preventing child abuse and recognising warning signs of child abuse and neglect. There must also be a robust written procedure for reporting concerns to the appropriate statutory agencies.

### **Staff training**

The provider must be able to demonstrate that all staff have received training on policy and procedures, including abuse prevention, for recognising indicators of abuse and procedures for reporting concerns about abuse. Staff must also be trained in expectations of behaviour and their duty of care. Training should be held once a year.

### **Prevention**

Staff will take practical steps to protect children while they are in the programme. Staff will be aware of where children are and what they are doing, and will be similarly aware of what other staff are doing.

Sound supervision procedures will be in place to protect children.

These include ensuring that:

- children are in designated areas where supervision can easily occur
- one-to-one contact or discussion with a child does not occur behind closed doors.

In addition visitors will be monitored and will not have unsupervised interaction with children. Services will be aware of how visitors come on to the site and when they are likely to interact with children.

In situations where members of the public or staff employed by other agencies are also on-site, staff ratios must be able to ensure children are within sight of a staff member at all times.

### **Early intervention**

Staff must understand early warning signs for abuse or neglect, and will be encouraged to listen to children carefully about their concerns. All staff need to be encouraged to discuss any concerns with other senior staff or management who will determine:

- if advice will be sought from Child, Youth and Family
- if a report of concern will be made to Child, Youth and Family or the Police
- if any other action will be taken.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, or a child discloses abuse, staff will record incidents, observations and/or what the child says.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, or a child discloses abuse, a report of concern should be made to Child, Youth and Family or the Police. Clear policies and procedures should be in place to guide reporting.

## **Reporting concerns to a statutory agency**

Services must give guidance to staff on how to report under Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

As a member of the public any staff member has the right to report abuse directly to the police or Child, Youth and Family, in accordance with Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

The wellbeing and safety of the child will be the primary concern when any decision or action is taken regarding concerns about a child's wellbeing. Staff and the programme do not need parental permission to report their concerns.

Staff will usually advise a senior staff member or management of their concerns so decisions can be made as to who will seek advice from Child, Youth and Family or the Police to find out what steps should be taken.

For further information about child protection matters go to:

[www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others](http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others) or phone 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459).

## **Responding to suspicions and allegations against a staff member**

There must be written procedures in place which include:

- the process to be followed if staff suspect another staff member has abused or has an inappropriate relationship with a child
- that staff and management always act in the best interest of the child concerned and are not acting to protect the organisation
- how staff will be treated and supported so that they feel safe to raise concerns about child abuse
- that staff will be advised of their rights to seek independent legal advice
- how confidentiality of all parties will apply at different stages of the process.

## **Staff behaviour**

There is a written code of behaviour that is seen and signed by all staff, that includes:

- expectations for communication between staff and conflict resolution
- how staff will communicate their whereabouts and actions to each other, noting that they should not be alone with an individual child
- that staff maintain a professional relationship with a child or young person and that boundaries do not become blurred, eg by cultivating a relationship with a particular child, young person or family outside the programme
- awareness of all policies and procedures
- the 'duty of care' responsibilities of all staff.

## **Duty of care**

Staff in OSCAR programmes have a duty of care in respect to the children enrolled in the programme. This means they have a duty to use due care towards others in order to protect them from unnecessary risk of harm. All possible care must be taken to ensure children's wellbeing and safety and to act without negligence.

# Supervision

## Standard

*Children receive competent supervision.*

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following supervision requirements:

1. Every child must be adequately supervised at all times.
2. Services have staff with appropriate maturity, experience and training.
3. Overall management and site supervision must be carried out by an adult of at least 20 years of age.
4. All adults counted towards supervision ratios must be 16 years or over.
5. Children are supervised by a minimum of two staff. An exemption to this requirement may be possible where risks for child and adult safety are appropriately managed. Services must document the reasons for this exception and how risks will be managed.
6. Services must maintain staff-to-child ratios of one staff member to no more than 10 children.
7. For excursions, staff-to-child ratios should reflect the nature of the activity and be one staff to no more than eight children. For high-risk activities including water-based activities, there should be fewer children per adult, in accordance with the risk assessment.
8. When children stay overnight at a centre-based programme or camp, minimum supervision involves gender appropriate staff of either:
  - two staff members sleeping in the facility or
  - two staff members monitoring the sleeping areas.

# Guidance

## **Adequate supervision**

Staff should be familiar with the children and know where the children are and who is supervising them.

Services should be able to demonstrate and explain how they supervise the children, including:

- staff position so they have a wide view and are at a reasonable distance so they can assist or intervene if necessary
- having adequate numbers of staff to maintain the required ratio for the activity
- how they ensure children remain on-site.

## **Staff skills**

Services must have staff with appropriate maturity, experience and training. This includes being supportive, positive and using appropriate behaviour management techniques.

## **Management and site supervision**

The overall manager or site supervisor, who must be 20 years of age or older, must be on-site during all programme operating hours and be available to children, staff and visitors.

## **Staff-to-child ratios**

No person under the age of 16 years may be counted toward the staff component of the staff-to-child ratio.

There is a minimum of two staff supervising children at all times. For small services (with no more than 10 children) one staff member may be adequate. In this instance, the service must apply in writing for an exemption. Services must document the reasons for this application, identify the risks and how they will be managed.

The minimum ratio of staff-to-children is one staff member to 10 children on-site and one staff member to eight children off-site.

At all times services need to consider the nature of the programme activities, the level of risk and adequate staffing to ensure the safety of the children.

There are activities that are high risk and consequently need a greater number of staff and/or other specialist staff. Services must have up-to-date risk assessments for high-risk activities. See the Health and Safety section for more information on risk assessments.

## **Overnight stays**

Services must be able to demonstrate:

- the nature of the sleeping facilities
- who will be supervising the children and how this is managed, including ratios and gender-appropriate supervision
- procedure for children to contact a staff member in case of emergency, sickness or other needs.

# Management

## Standard

*Services have a sufficient body of trained and competent staff to deliver and support the service. Services are managed competently (including competent financial management).*

An approved provider demonstrates that the service meets the following management requirements:

1. There are a written employment agreements for each employee.
2. The service has effective processes to manage, support and train staff.
3. Staff are reference-checked for suitability prior to appointment.
4. All staff and managers (who have direct access to children or information about children) aged 17 years and over must be police-vetted prior to confirmation of appointment.
5. Police vetting is repeated at three-yearly intervals.
6. The service does not employ any person in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those in management positions, who has a conviction for sexual crimes or for any offence involving the harm or exploitation of children.
7. Providers meet employment related legislative requirements.
8. Services have processes to manage finances competently, and comply with legislated requirements for taxation and financial reporting.

## Guidance

For information on employment relations and health and safety:  
[www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials](http://www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials) or call 0800 209 020.

### **Employment agreement**

All employees must have an employment agreement. An employment agreement is negotiated by both parties, employees must be informed that they can seek independent advice on the agreement, and the employer must consider any issues raised by the employee. The agreement must be signed by both parties with each retaining a copy.

For information on what must be included in an employment agreement go to:  
[www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials](http://www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials) or call 0800 209 020.

Employees should have a job description describing their roles and responsibilities.

Volunteers should have an agreement of service describing their roles and responsibilities.

### **Effective processes to manage, support and train staff**

Services must be able to explain their processes to manage and support staff. There will be a performance management process (usually called a staff review or appraisal) to help staff have a clear understanding of expectations and receive regular feedback about their performance. This process will help identify areas for further development or training, if necessary.

Services must be able to explain how they train staff in policies and procedures. This includes induction and ongoing training in how staff will work with the children and contribute to a safe environment. A dated record of training is to be kept on file.

### **Reference checks**

Reference checks must be carried out prior to employment and kept on file. Services must complete at least two reference checks to consider the maturity, experience and training of the person being employed.

## **Police vetting**

For the purpose of OSCAR approval, Police vetting must only be carried out by the Police Licensing and Vetting Service Centre.

Police vetting is required for all staff and managers directly employed in the OSCAR programme or employed by the provider in any capacity, who have access to the children or the children's information. This includes staff on the site such as caretakers, gardeners, cooks and administration staff.

Compliance with the standards precludes the employment of any person in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those in management positions, who has a conviction for sexual crimes or for any offence involving the harm or exploitation of children.

Vetting is repeated at least every three years. Ministry of Social Development assessors will look at the vetting information. Vetting reports must be kept on file for OSCAR approval audit purposes and destroyed when they are updated.

Those under the age of 17 years cannot be police vetted; however, services can still employ staff aged under 17 years as long as they have been reference checked.

It is expected that vetting is carried out prior to appointment of an employee or volunteer. When this cannot happen, a provisional appointment can be made as long as vetting is completed as soon as possible.

- All employees are to be police vetted.
- Staff under 17 years and volunteers who are not vetted must be supervised at all times.

## **Financial management**

Competent financial management is essential to a programme's viability. The service must meet legislated requirements for taxation and financial reporting.

For more information go to Inland Revenue: [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz) or phone 0800 227 774. Also contact: [www.business.govt.nz](http://www.business.govt.nz).

Services are required to keep records to meet tax, legislative and other organisational requirements.

The service must be able to show evidence of their financial management processes, eg:

- recording of income and expenses
- budgeting
- banking
- management of petty cash and limits on staff spending.

## **Documentation**

This section consists of:

- policies and procedures required
- application for approval.

The application form must be used when making an application.

This can also be accessed online at:

[www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/providers/approvals/application.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/providers/approvals/application.html)

## **Policies and procedures required**

Written policies and procedures enable staff and parents to clearly understand how the programme will operate, and what is expected of them. The following is a checklist of the minimum requirements for written policies and/or procedures:

- Child protection.
- Health and safety.
- Fire, earthquake and other emergencies.
- Managing unwell children.
- Written procedures.
- Toilets.
- Enrolment.
- Attendance (including process to locate and confirm a child's safety if they do not arrive as expected).
- Collection and access to children.
- Transporting children which meets legal requirements.
- Management of petty cash and limits on staff spending.
- Complaints.
- Behaviour management.
- Responding to cultural issues.
- Children with special needs or disabilities.
- Other written documents.
- Staff code of behaviour.
- Employment agreements.

For sample forms go to [www.msd.govt.nz/oscarforms](http://www.msd.govt.nz/oscarforms).

## Response to suspicions or disclosure of abuse

**Adapted with permission from the Out of School Care Network, Auckland.**

