



# NZMAT Child Protection Policy

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## 1. Overview

This child protection policy articulates the New Zealand Medical Assistance Team (NZMAT) zero tolerance approach to child abuse and child pornography. It provides a framework for managing and reducing risks of child abuse by persons engaged in delivering NZMAT deployment activities.

## 2. Goals

The policy's overall goal is: *To protect children from abuse of all kinds in the delivery of NZMAT deployments.*

## 3. Guiding Principles

The policy follows four guiding principles:

Zero tolerance of child abuse	Child abuse is not tolerated by NZMAT, nor is possession of or access to child pornography. NZMAT will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children, nor fund any individual or organisation that does not meet the NZMAT's child protection compliance standards in their operations and activities.
Recognition of children's interests	New Zealand is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and NZMAT is committed to upholding the rights and obligations of the convention. NZMAT recognises that some children, such as children with disabilities and children living in areas impacted by disasters (natural or conflict based), are particularly vulnerable.
Sharing responsibility for child protection	To effectively manage risks to children, NZMAT requires the active support and cooperation of NZMAT members. NZMAT members must meet the terms of the child protection policy and will be held accountable for complying with it.
Use of a risk management approach	While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of child abuse, careful management can reduce the incidence of child abuse associated with deployment activities. This policy introduces risk assessments and treatments for a range of recognised risks to children.

## 4. Scope

The policy applies to all NZMAT members.

## 5. Internal recruitment and screening processes

NZMAT's internal recruitment processes for NZMAT members already employ stringent screening measures to ensure inappropriate persons are not employed by the agency. These include criminal records checks and background checks on all successful candidates before they begin work.



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## 6. Ensure risks to children managed in disaster situations

NZMAT recognises that children living in areas impacted by disasters (natural or conflict based) are particularly vulnerable. All NZMAT members must comply with this policy. Risks to children must always be considered when developing disaster response activities.

## 7. Child protection code of conduct sample

I, <insert name>, engaged by the Ministry of Health, agree that while on a NZMAT deployment, I will:

- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child, the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws.
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible.
- use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium (see also 'Use of children's images for work related purposes').
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children).
- refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- comply with all relevant New Zealand and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.



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## 8. Use of children's images for work-related purposes

When photographing or filming a child for work related purposes, I must:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used.
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged by the Ministry of Health, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when taking part in a NZMAT deployment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 9. International child protection instruments

Instrument	Source
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	<a href="http://www.unicef.org/crc">www.unicef.org/crc</a>
Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	<a href="http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/dopchild.htm">www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/dopchild.htm</a>
Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	<a href="http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/protocolchild.htm">www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/protocolchild.htm</a>
Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child	<a href="http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm">www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm</a>
ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex">www.ilo.org/ilolex</a>



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## 10. Glossary

child (plural 'children')	In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child' means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.
child abuse	All forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.
child protection	An activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.
child pornography	In accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child pornography' means 'any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.'
child-sex tourism	The sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children.
criminal record check	<p>A check of an individual's criminal history record. In New Zealand, national criminal record checks are available through the New Zealand Police Department.</p> <p>Individuals need to give their consent to a criminal record check and should be informed of the purpose for which the resulting police clearance certificate will be used, including sighting by NZMAT.</p>
online grooming	The act of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient whom the sender believes to be under 16 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender.
particularly vulnerable children	Children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse, such as children with physical and mental disabilities, homeless children, child sex workers and children impacted by disasters.
police clearance certificate	The certificate showing the results of a criminal record check, issued by the police or other authority responsible for conducting such checks.
working with children	Working in a position that involves regular contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.



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## 11. Acknowledgement

NZMAT would like to acknowledge the Australian Government, AusAID *Child Protection Policy* (January 2009) upon which this document is based.