Safety check – New and existing employees

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

These are the safety checking steps to take before engaging a new employee or undertaking a periodic safety check of an existing employee. Safety check requirements are prescribed in the Children's Act 2014 and Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015.

What must be done	New employee Safety check during the employment process (before they start working as a children's worker)	Existing employee Periodic safety check within 3 years of the previous safety check
Identity confirmation	Confirm the applicant's identity by checking: • an electronic identity credential (like RealMe); or • a primary identity document e.g. passport; and • a secondary identity document e.g. driver's licence. View original identity documents. If neither contain a photograph, use an identity referee. The regulations require you to check your records to ensure the identity hasn't been used by anyone else.	Confirm whether the employee has changed their name since the last safety check. If they have changed their name, you must get supporting documentation that shows evidence of the name change e.g. deed poll or marriage certificate.
Work history	Ensure the applicant provides you with their work history for the last five years. This could be provided in the applicant's CV or application form.	Not required
Interview	Ask the applicant questions relating to their work history and child safety. Use questions that allow them to talk about their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.	Not required
Check references	A referee cannot be related to the applicant or part of the applicant's extended family. Confirm with the referee that the information in the applicant's work history is correct. Ask the referee if they have any concerns regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children.	Not required
More information	Ask for any relevant memberships, licences and registrations. Get information from at least 1 relevant professional organisation, licensing authority or registration authority to confirm the person is a current member, registered or certificated by the authority. For teachers, do this by confirming with the Teaching Council that the person has a current practising certificate. For a new employee, ask for any other information that may be relevant to help with your risk assessment.	
Police vet (including consideration of overseas convictions)	You will need to Police vet all employees. However, if the candidate is a teacher who holds a current practising certificate, their Police vet and consideration of equivalent overseas convictions will already have been done by the Teaching Council. If required, allow up to 20 working days for a Police vet to be completed. *From **24 October 2026**, you must take all reasonable steps to consider any overseas convictions equivalent to Schedule 2 offences under the Children's Act 2014 when safety checking new core children's workers. A person with an equivalent overseas conviction cannot be employed or engaged as a new core children's worker unless they have been granted a core worker exemption.*	You will need to Police vet all employees you have not vetted within the last 3 years. If the employee is a teacher who holds a current practising certificate their Police vet will already have been done by the Teaching Council. If required, allow up to 20 working days for a Police vet to be completed. *A person with an equivalent overseas conviction cannot continue to be employed or engaged as a core children's worker **after 24 April 2027** unless they have been granted a core worker exemption.* *This means that from **24 October 2026**, you must take reasonable steps to determine whether any existing core workers have an equivalent conviction to*

		Schedule 2 specified offence under the Children's Act 2014.
Risk assessment	Evaluate the information you have gathered to assess the risk the person would pose to the safety of children. Is the person safe to work with children? Will they actively contribute to a culture of child protection, make the safety of children a priority, support your child protection policy, etc?	
Keep a record	Keep a record of the information you gathered, when you gathered it and the date when the safety check needs to be carried out again (within 3 years). Attach the safety check records to the employee's personnel file and ensure it is securely stored. Ensure you meet your obligations under the Privacy Act 2020 (Principle 9) and early childhood service licensing and certification criteria when retaining and disposing of employment records.	

Links:

The Children's Act 2014:
Children's Act 2014 – New Zealand Legislation

Safety check process prescribed in the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015:
Part 1 Safety checks of new and existing children's workers – New Zealand Legislation

Primary identity, secondary identity and proof of name change – acceptable supporting document types are listed in the Schedule of the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015:
Schedule Confirmation of identity – New Zealand Legislation

Teaching Council of Aotearoa's teaching register:
Find a registered teacher – Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

Record keeping requirements:
Privacy Act 2020, Part 3 Information privacy principles and codes of practice – New Zealand Legislation

Overseas convictions

Safety checking for education core children's workers - Ministry of Education

Early childhood service licensing and certification criteria:
Licensing and certification - Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education website:
Home – Ministry of Education

Disclaimer:

This resource does not constitute legal advice and you should obtain your own legal advice on any matter relating to the Children Act 2014 and its regulations.