



Operational Policies

7.08 Return to Work Policy

Classification: Health and Safety
Applies to: All staff
Approved by: General Manager

Date: August 2022
Review Date: August 2025

Purpose:

- Kaitiaki Kindergartens will facilitate the return of employees who have experienced an illness or injury, to their previous level of function as soon as possible and wherever practicable.

References:

- ACC - Te Kaporeihana Awhina Huna Whara
- Employment NZ
- Privacy Act 2020

Definition:

- Kaitiaki Kindergartens – is referred to as ‘The Association’
 - Head Teachers and Centre Service Leaders – are referred to as Service Leaders
 - Kindergartens and Early Learning Centres – are referred to as services
 - All teaching and non-teaching staff employed at the service – are referred to as employees
 - Senior Management – The General Manager / direct reports
 - Illness – refers to either physical or mental illness
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Policy

Responsibilities

Senior Management are responsible for:

- Identifying suitable alternative duties and/or reduced hours, where possible, to enable an early return to work for the affected employee.
 - Confirming that a Return to Work Plan is established, if appropriate.
 - Liaising with the affected employee, their medical provider and/or ACC on behalf of the Association.
 - Ensuring the affected employee has medical clearance to return to work.
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Employees are responsible for:

- Immediately reporting any injury or illness that impacts on their ability to work, whether work related or not, to their Service Leader and Senior Management.
- Participating in the development of their Return to Work Plan and complying with the plan.
- Advising Senior Management immediately of any issues or a change of circumstances that may impact on the outcomes of their Return to Work Plan.
- Providing medical certificates.

Early return to work for employees

An employee who has experienced an illness or injury and who has taken time off to recover will be supported to return to work as early as possible and in accordance with medical advice. This involves a partnership between the employee and the Association, medical treatment providers and others as appropriate in the circumstances.

At any stage the employee can choose to be accompanied by a representative or support person. A Return to Work Plan may involve a modification of the person's working environment, alternative duties for a temporary period, and/or changes to the normal hours of work.

Medical information

The employee must provide copies of their completed ACC forms and/or medical certificates to the Association.

Medical certificates will state the employee's capacity or incapacity for work and specify a date for review. Selected or restricted activities may also be specified for a certain period of time.

The employee must provide a medical certificate confirming they are 'fit for work'.

Capacity to work and the provision of alternative duties

The provision of suitable alternative duties is an essential part of rehabilitation. Alternative duties are aimed at providing appropriate and productive work while a staff member rehabilitates to his/her former role. This is a proactive approach to enable a staff member to return to work as quickly as possible and maximise the chances of full recovery.

When identifying suitable alternative duties, the Association will consider the following:

- The nature and severity of the illness/injury.
- The medical information provided and the restrictions imposed by treatment providers.
- The employee's ability to perform duties previously undertaken.
- The impact on the other team members and operation of the service.
- Where relevant, the impact on the children within the service.
- The predicted timeframe for rehabilitation (if known).



Kaitiaki Kindergartens

Regular Review

Senior Management will review the Return to Work Plan in consultation with the affected employee on a regular basis to assess their progress.

Alternative Placement or Permanent Disablement

Where at any point it becomes clear that an employee will be unable or is unlikely to return to former duties as a result of an injury or illness, the Association will explore the possibility of suitable alternatives with the employee.

When an employee's injury or illness is so severe as to prevent them from returning to their former position and all available options have been fully explored, then termination of employment will be considered in accordance with their employment contract.

Consent and Confidentiality

Written consent from the employee must be obtained prior to seeking medical information about the employee's injury or illness.

All medical and other information must be treated as confidential and not disclosed to other parties unless by written consent from the employee.

Signed:

General Manager

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Date:

30 MARCH 2023

Endorsed by

Signed:

President of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Date:

30 March 2023