

Police Vetting Policy

Policy type	Year	Approved by
MTSCT Governance		Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Director Poutokomanawa - Fresh & Marine

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust Police Vetting Policy

Definition

The New Zealand Police Vetting Service provides criminal history checks and other relevant information on potential and current employees, volunteers and vocational trainees to Approved Agencies that provide care to children and vulnerable members of society.

Purpose

To provide an informative policy for the undertaking of police vetting the volunteers and staff of Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT). The creation of such policies enable MTSCT to remain consistent with the most recent Child Protection Policy for the Ministry of Education. This policy is consistent with our Child Protection Policy (see appendix of SMP)

Background

As an organisation frequently contracted to schools, all endorsed coordinators are required to undertake the New Zealand Police Vetting process under the requirements of the Child Protection Policy for the Ministry of Education. By undertaking this process, schools and parents/caregivers can be assured that MTSCT staff will take all appropriate action to provide a safe learning environment where all children are protected from any abuse, harm or neglect.

There may be cases where volunteers of MTSCT may be the sole supervisors of children, such as when providing transport of children to and from a field trip. Such circumstances will require the volunteer to undertake the New Zealand Police Vetting process to provide assurance that the children are in safe hands. This is ultimately the decision of the school as to what their policy is but it is important for MTSCT to be aware that the question needs to be asked.

Guidelines

All new MTSCT staff (coordinators not volunteers), whether permanent or seasonal (coordinators and Regional Coordinators in the role of delivering our programmes to schools and communities), who are likely to interact with children and young people are required to

undergo successful police vetting and safety checks prior to confirmation of their appointment. This is in accordance with our Child Protection Policy 2022.

Trustees of MTSCCT are to be satisfactory police vetted.

Volunteers are not required to be vetted unless, MTSCCT makes a risk assessment on the event/programme and MTSCCT has identified it would be best practice to do so. This might be when volunteers may be the sole supervisors of children or for an overnight camp hosted by MTSCCT or when the school/group requires it.

Strict procedures are in place to protect the privacy of those being vetted to avoid inappropriate information being released; vetting results (not the person in question) will be discussed at MTSCCT meetings.

Which offences are relevant? Violent or sexual offences are not acceptable. In terms of other offences, the factors to be considered are:

- When the offence occurred, age of offending, severity, pattern of offending;
- Rights of the applicant.

Police Vetting Process

- Prior planning is essential as the vetting process is approximately one month. The New Zealand Police Vetting form will be made available ASAP to be completed and returned to the manager as soon as possible for further action.
- The resultant vetting record will then be sent to the relevant Co-Director who will advise the volunteer whether or not their vetting record is satisfactory. Information regarding the results of the police vet will be treated in accordance with our Approved Agency Agreement
- The Co-Directors will undertake the vetting via the police website (we are an approved agency with the NZ Police).
- If a vet receives a police stamp indicating that adverse information is held about that person, then The Trust must not act until the person has had an opportunity to validate the information.
- All information shall be confidential.
- Vetting is compulsory, but consent forms need to be signed.
- A record of the vet having taken place must be kept.
- If the vet does not reveal any criminal offence or concerns by the police, the vet should be destroyed and a record of its destruction kept by The Trust.
- If the vet reveals offences or concerns by the police then consideration needs to be given as to whether the information should affect the position using the considerations established by The Trustees.

- Unsatisfactory police vets (with regard to existing coordinators) will result in removal of Trust endorsement and the person in question may be removed from endorsed coordinator list.

More information on the police vetting process can be found here:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/vetting-process>