Relieving Teachers
Safety Checking under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014
A Resource for Early Learning Services

A relieving teacher (reliever) is considered to be a new core worker each time they begin a new assignment, even if they have worked in your early learning service before. However, once a reliever has been safety checked and is on your list, you can rely on a previous safety check you have undertaken provided it was carried out within the preceding three years.

1. **Check practising certificate**
   - Search the online Register of NZ Registered Teachers to confirm that the reliever’s practising certificate and Police vet are current.

2. **Check their availability**
   - Call the prospective reliever to agree the details of the role, check their availability, and arrange a time for an interview.

3. **Do an interview**
   - At the interview ask the reliever some questions relating to their work history and child safety. Use questions that allow them to talk about their own behaviours, beliefs and attitudes.

4. **Confirm their identity**
   - Ask the reliever to bring with them (to the interview):
     - Two forms of ID – one primary and one secondary form (one of which must have a photo)
     - Contact details for two referees
     - Information about their work history for at least the previous five years (such as their C.V.).

5. **Check at least one referee**
   - Contact and consider information about the reliever from at least one referee. A referee cannot be related to the candidate or part of the candidate’s extended family. Confirm with the referee that the information in the candidate’s C.V. is correct. Ask the referee if they have any concerns regarding the candidate’s suitability to work with children.

6. **Assess risk and make your decision**
   - Evaluate the information you have gathered to assess the risk the candidate would pose to the safety of children if employed or engaged. 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? Make your decision based on your risk assessment.

7. **Keep a record**
   - Keep a record of the information you gathered, when you gathered it and the date when safety checks need to be carried out again (in 3 years time). Attach this to the reliever’s personnel file and ensure it is securely stored.

   Ensure you meet your obligations under the Privacy Act (Principle 9) when retaining and disposing of employment records.

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**Notes:**

1. You may engage or employ a reliever in an emergency without completing all components of the safety check, for up to five consecutive working days.


**Licensing criteria and guidance can be found here:** [http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/the-regulatory-framework-for-ece/](http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/the-regulatory-framework-for-ece/)

**Safety checking requirements can be found in** Section II and III of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. [http://www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz)

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