



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.

What must be done	If you are adding a new reliever to your reliever list or safety checking relievers currently on your list (normal practice)	If you are using a reliever agency	If you are engaging a reliever at short notice who you have not previously safety checked 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	Agencies that provide relievers are likely to complete some components of a safety check. You can agree with the agency in writing that it will complete some or all of those components on your behalf though you should still do an identity check and a risk assessment.	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.	Call the relieving agency to agree the details of the role and check relievers' availability.	Call the prospective reliever to agree the details of the role and check their availability.
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.	If you have previously agreed with the relieving agency that they will do this part of the safety check on your behalf you do not have to do it, otherwise you will need to complete this part of the safety check yourself.	While checking their availability, 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.
Confirm their identity	Ask the reliever to bring with them (to the interview): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.). 	Ask the reliever to bring with them (on their first day of work): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two forms of ID – one primary and one secondary form (one of which must have a photo). 	Ask the reliever to bring with them (to work that morning): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.).
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.	If you have previously agreed with the relieving agency that they will do this part of the safety check on your behalf you do not have to do it, otherwise you will need to complete this part of the safety check yourself.	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.
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.		
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.		

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.

2 - <http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz/search-the-register>

Licensing criteria and guidance can be found here: <http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ecce-service/the-regulatory-framework-for-ecce/>

Safety checking requirements can be found in Section II and III of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. <http://www.legislation.govt.nz>

More information about safety checking can also be found on the Children's Action Plan website at <http://www.childrensactionplan.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