

DO WE NEED A POLICY FOR THAT?

A well written policy manual can make huge difference to the way your organisation runs. Why are policies important and which ones are essential to have in place.



**COMMUNITY
WAIKATO**

"Supporting strong communities"
Hiri tauwhiri hiri tauwhiri ki ngā hōpuni

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POLICIES

Policies are the guiding principles by which an organisation is run.

- **Policies** outline what needs to happen or not.
- **They** provide boundaries within which you can act.
- Policies can be useful in controlling activity and ensuring accountability.

Procedures outline the steps to follow to put the policy into action.

- Organisations need to develop key policies covering strategic & operational matters.
- Policies need to reflect the culture, size and stage of development of the organisation.
- Once developed the policies need to be implemented and communicated to all working in the organisation.
- Policies should be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current. As things change, the policies should be updated to reflect change.
- The process to review policies should be clear and everyone affected needs to know the latest version of the policy.

Why have policies:

- So people working in an organisation can have a framework for action that helps them get on with the job they need to do.
- So people in the organisation don't have to keep discussing the same issues every time they arise and that people know what the expectations are of their behaviours – no grey areas
- So legal requirements and standards can be met
- To be consistent.

Organisations policies are developed to provide:

- Guidelines for action to achieve the mission
- General directives to ensure consistent decision making
- A point of reference for precedent setting decisions

Policies should be:

Maintained in electronic or paper formats

Contained in a policy manual with all the organisations other policies

Available at board meetings

Accessible at all times to staff & volunteers

Regular reviewed with input from staff to ensure no changes/amendments they may identify

Dated

Risks with policies can be:

Policies are borrowed and therefore never owned by the organisation

Left on the shelf and not used in the day to day operation of the organisation

Things have changed and the policy is not amended.

Policies become out of date or updated versions not communicated to staff/management

Policies are created for funding requirements

Develop/review procedures

Organisations should have two levels of policy:

- Governance policies such as an organisations Strategic plan and Mission statement which are ratified and monitored by the board
- Operational policies designed, endorsed and monitored by management and the board.

It is a board responsibility to develop policies and ratify them. It is management responsibility to develop and circulate the procedures that give effect to the policy. The procedures are often developed at the same time as the policies and need to be reviewed at the same time as the policies.

Below is a checklist of policies and procedures a group may wish to have:

Governance (long term/high level)	Operational (day to day)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board terms of reference • Conflict of Interest • Cultural responsiveness • Treaty of Waitangi • Board • Cost of governance • Board committees • Chief executive performance evaluation policy • Board delegation to the chief executive policy • Protection of assets • Financial management • Reserves • Investments • Treatment of staff & volunteers • Reporting to the board • Protection of intellectual property • Public affairs/relations • Media • Compliance with legislation <p>Health and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & safety procedures, fire, earthquake, accident • Smoke free policy • Workplace injury prevention policy • Health & safety policy <p>Financial management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure and receipting procedures • Petty cash & reimbursement procedures • Misappropriation of funds policy • Financial management policy 	<p>Human Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & appointment policy • Remuneration policy • Time in lieu policy • Disciplinary procedures • Leave recording procedures • Parental leave policy • Wage and time recording procedures • Equal employment opportunity policy • Personal grievance procedure for employees • Annual performance appraisal procedures • Training and development policy (including study support) • Employee code of conduct • Anti-harassment policy • Coaching/mentoring/supervision • Volunteer management policy <p>Provision of services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy and confidential information policy • Internet/email and phone use policy • Complaints procedures for clients • Vehicle policy • Travel policy (including the use of credit cards and reimbursement) • Child protection policy and abuse notification procedures • Organisational monitoring policy

When developing policies:

Step	Tip
Describe the issue the policy needs to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep it simple
Consult stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will be affected by the policy or issue? What input do they have on the proposed policy?
Consider the internal & external environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider legal requirements such as Health & Safety
Draft policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use clear, simple and unambiguous language• Have a set format for all your policies
Present to board for discussion/ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board is responsible for approving the policies
Set up a system to ensure the policy is applied on an ongoing basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is management's responsibility to make sure the policies and procedures are known and in place, that they are understood & followed.• Have an up to date policies & procedures manual• Include policies in staff and volunteer induction training
Review at an agreed date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set an achievable review process• Some policies may need to be reviewed more frequently than others due to changes in the external environment.

Supporting material has been accessed from: www.community.net.nz & www.familyservices.govt.nz

